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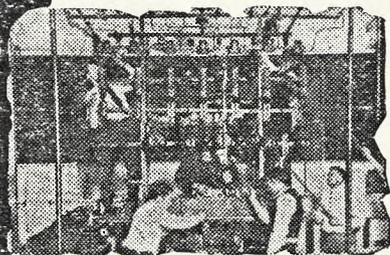
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Contents

My \$250,000 Ghost.....	James Bourgoyne	4
<i>If a phantom offered you a fortune—and a strange woman's love—would you accept BOTH?</i>		
The Phantom Corporal.....	Captain Nevil Gow	15
<i>The true story of a soldier's love that survived beyond the grave</i>		
The Spider.....	Grace Oursler	18
<i>New York's greatest theatrical sensation—printed exclusively in GHOST STORIES</i>		
A Strange Experiment with a Mad Woman.....	Doris B. Grigsby	34
<i>The school teacher, covetous of physical beauty, dared to juggle human souls!</i>		
The Flying Fury.....	Leon N. Hatfield	41
<i>An aviator's ghastly experience in the Pacific air marathon</i>		
Haunted River.....	Alan Schultz	45
The Prisoner of Life.....	Victor Rousseau	56
Is the White House Haunted?.....	Uthai Vincent Wilcox	67
<i>Washington gossip says positively that it is!</i>		
The Ghost of the Sideshow.....	Lyon Mearson	72
<i>Coney Island's weirdest mystery—the tale of the talking table that killed a man!</i>		
Seven Gray Wolves.....	Stuart Palmer	80
<i>The girl was at the mercy of the gray devils! Then the Other World intervened!</i>		
The Beloved Specter.....	Dr. C. Avelasquez de Hinedesone	88
The Thing on the Roof.....	Margaret Jackson	92
<i>Why should a grotesque monster haunt the roof of a Park Avenue hotel?</i>		
A Medium's Memoirs: Ghosts of Living Persons.....	Horace Leaf	99
The Stolen Crucifix.....	Eric P. Warndorf	103
<i>He robbed the dead—and the penalty was even more monstrous than his deed!</i>		
The Meeting Place.....	Robert Napier	108
<i>Some facts about an American heiress who spent \$15,000,000 on ghosts!</i>		
Skeletons in the Closets of Famous Families.....	Gordon Hillman	111
<i>How a specter played pranks on the family of John Wesley, the great religious leader</i>		
Spirit Tales.....	Count Cagliostro	114
<i>A sword-swallower's premonition of death, and other true stories.</i>		
Were Your Born in November?.....	Stella King	117
Prize Winners for the Month.....		119

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My \$250,000 Ghost

By
JAMES BOURGOYNE

So I tramped on faster and faster to escape my thoughts—when suddenly I felt a tap on my shoulder!

I spun around in fright, for I had heard no footsteps. Before me was a figure not calculated to reassure. It was an old, long-bearded man in a rusty-looking suit.

"My name *was* Edmund Bourgoyne and I am glad to meet you, *Mr. James Bourgoyne*," the old man said!

A panic flooded me. I could feel my heart hammering against my ribs and there was a spasmodic tremor in my shoulders that I had never before experienced. I felt unaccountably cold. The eyes of that old man . . . the amazing oddness of his stopping me! How had he happened to know my name?

I looked hard at him. Surely I had never before seen him. And the way he had just said, "*I was* Edmund Bourgoyne—"

"You must excuse me—" I began lamely.

The old man interrupted me. "Tut, tut, I am aware you don't know me. But you are James Bourgoyne. Correct?"

"Yes. Yes. But, sir, how—"

"Don't cross-examine me, young man."

And meekly I replied, "No, sir." At the moment I thought it was my hunger that made me so mild. But I learned the truth later. The old man was peering at me.

Abruptly he said, "Are you interested in possessing a great fortune?"

By this time I had regained a shred of composure. The man appeared to be a

"I TRAMPED the streets of New York disconsolately, not one cent in my pockets. As if racing against time or to outstrip a demon, I walked faster and harder, grimly, though there was no place to go.

Perhaps I was trying to escape from my thoughts. It was too painful to admit the completeness of my defeat. And it was even more bitter to know that my misfortune was due to my own inner weakness, to my proneness to be influenced by stronger personalities. That had always been my trouble.

My old army revolver rested in my overcoat pocket. I kept feeling it with a sense of reassurance. After all, it rested with me whether I chose to go on, or to take the leap out of life. A press of the trigger would do it. I did not even need to take the gun out of my pocket. Just to turn the nozzle end in an upward direction toward my heart, pull the trigger—and it would be finished. The end of Jimmy Bourgoyne. And not a shred of identification on me to tell the world whose corpse it was!

And yet—the idea was repulsive. Naturally enough. At my age—I was twenty-eight—one does not carelessly step out of life even though one is broke and there is no job in sight and, worse still, no sleeping quarters for the night, or food.

*The jobless young man
"talked business"
with a specter and
made the strangest
contract on record!*

crazy old duffer. I stroked my chin, thinking how to get rid of him.

"Wipe that doubt off your face, young fellow. It's a quarter of a million—and it's yours, if you're my man," the old one said.

I stared incredulously. A crazy man offering a failure like me a fortune that did not exist! Fate teasing me again, and I in no mood for play. The rain that had been threatening all afternoon broke out in an angry lash. I put up my coat collar, all set to cut away from my annoying companion. All set, and yet his eye held me!

Unexpectedly, I found myself saying, quietly, "I am in need of money, sir."

"I thought as much. Are you ready to obey instructions?"

A ridiculous readiness to say yes sprung to my tongue. My limbs felt heavy; the words of the old man rang terribly in my ears. I could not think.

The rain was falling harder. It drove against me in full attack. The old man stood directly in front of me. I wondered vaguely why he was not proving more of a shield against the sheets of water. A specially violent gust blew in on me and I stepped aside to meet it with a shoulder. And then, as I looked at him in profile, I realized that the rain was sweeping through the old man exactly as though he were not there at all!

I drew back hurriedly, partly to get into the shelter of a flight of stairs leading to an elevated railway station and partly, I must admit, out of fear of this ancient apparition in antiquated clothes through whom the rain could pass. And as I moved back, the figure followed me and I saw, clearly, that the dull light from a drug store window



was shining through his body as if he were translucent! I blinked my eyes hard and looked again, my face distorted in horrified unbelief.

"Don't be a fool!" the old man cried. "I am what you call a ghost. Yes, the ghost of Edmund Bourgoyne. No relation of yours, more's the pity."

"A ghost?" My own voice sounded uncanny to me.

"**E**XACTLY! I died—" a wan smile lit up the thin, wrinkled face—"not naturally, but nevertheless died, seven months ago."

I began to wonder whether this madman might be dangerous—and yet surely I had seen the rain drizzle through him and light shine through his insubstantial body. My mind raced around for a clue. None offered itself. A ghost, he had said. Was it possible? I became aware that the old man was asking me, pettishly, whether I was ready to assume the terms of his proposition.

"It isn't every day that a down-and-outer like you has the offer of a fortune, almost for the taking," he added.

I felt a little piqued, whether at the insult or at the incomprehensibility of my adventure, I do not know.

"Will you be good enough to explain?" I

said stiffly. I tried to appear dignified.

"Capital! Now, we're advancing. Listen closely. If you follow my directions, you will come into a fortune of over a quarter of a million dollars. At present it is in the possession of my only legal heir, a niece——"

The elevated train thundered overhead. The old man's voice rose shrilly, but it could not ride the din. He stood silent a minute and was soon in the midst of his explanation again.

"IN life they called me 'an eccentric man.'" The old fellow grinned horribly at me. His skin was an amber yellow and it wrinkled under the grin into thousands of fine lines. A greenish light seemed to play about his withered lips. "Well, perhaps I was. At any rate, I have only two great wishes left. And for the present we are concerned with one of them."

A policeman passed by and looked curiously at me. I had a strange feeling that he did not see the old man at all, and stranger still, he brushed so close to Edmund Bourgoyne that I was sure he should have touched him. Nevertheless, there was no contact.

The old man waited for the policeman to go by, and then continued: "I cannot bear that my wealth should be possessed by anyone not bearing the Bourgoyne name. I cannot rest till this is changed." The old man's voice held a wailing petulance as if he had been repeatedly thwarted in his purpose. "My niece is the daughter of a sister I had. Her name is Mary Louise Lampson. She is not a *Bourgoyne*."

By this time, I was no longer thinking clearly. The voice of the Methuselah held me with spell-like potency. I stood there, like a soldier awaiting the word of command. What did I have to lose? A few minutes before, suicide had been the only way out. Now, this ancient one spoke of a great fortune. Ghost? What did it matter if I were in communion with a spirit from another world? Even if his purpose were ominous, what weight did such considerations have with a man as destitute as I was?

"How can I serve you?" I asked.

The old man's face became shrewd. "I want you to marry Mary Louise. A Bourgoyne—I have searched for months for a man with that name who would be eligible."

I nodded assent. My brain was trying

hard to understand this puzzle which was weaving a snare about me. But lucid thought was impossible. From the old man's eyes an enchantment flowed. Their gaze held mine, and it was as if I was an automaton under the dominance of that veteran figure.

"I want you to possess my fortune," he was saying, "for you are a Bourgoyne. Only a Bourgoyne should own what a Bourgoyne worked so hard to gather. Understand?"

"But, sir, I am not of your blood, while your niece——"

"Never mind that! I have no love for my niece. But that is not our present business. I tell you I cannot rest till a Bourgoyne sits in my house. Will you obey me?"

A steeliness came into the eyes of the old man. I found myself unable to question or refuse him.

"Good! I have power. We cannot fail," he replied with unction, and green, ghoully lights shone in his eyes.

"I am ready to obey," I said, and as I did, I knew that I was no longer in control of my own will. My voice was talking, but I was surprised by its sound.

The same policeman who had passed me before crossed the street, regarding me curiously. He came closer, and was standing exactly in the spot the old man occupied! It was weird—as if the old man were just a haze around the huge figure of the policeman; and the latter entirely unaware of him!

Evidently the policeman, at no time, had seen Edmund Bourgoyne, for he asked me, after the manner of his kind, whether I was waiting for anybody. I told him I was trying to outlast the rain, whereupon he said significantly that the rain would last a long time. I took the hint, walking on, knowing well that my shabby appearance was no guarantee against unceremonious treatment.

I WENT hastily up the street, without any plan. I knew, however, that the old man would be following me. And there he was by my side, keeping pace with me, soundlessly walking at my elbow, and talking!

"You see, I have power. I am beyond the reach of policemen," he said.

I smiled back. It was something to be beyond the power of policemen.

The ghost of Edmund Bourgoyne continued: "Power enough for our needs. Go, at once, to 462 M—— Street."

The spirit of Edmund Bourgoyne no

longer waited for confirmation. It had become inevitable that I would follow his behests. Every nerve in me was at attention. I had become his creature. Both of us knew it.

"Number 462 M— Street was my home. Go there, and enter through the iron gate. There's a bit of a garden in front with a brick path. Take eight ordinary strides up the path and stop. Turn right angles into the garden—and in the sod, near the brick path, scrape carefully through three inches of earth. You'll find an iron cover."

"Like a lid, sir?"

"Don't interrupt! Time is short. Pry the iron cover up and you will find a bundle wrapped in old leather. There's money in that. Plenty. Take it and, as soon as you can, outfit yourself like a gentleman. Use the rest of the money for your maintenance while wooing my niece."

No longer did the announcements of this aged figure amaze me. I was listening as to the common talk of an old friend. The very abnormality had become reasonable to me.

"But how am I to meet her and—"

We were still walking along briskly, the ancient ghost seeming to float effortlessly by my side. My question seemed to amuse him. He nudged me in the ribs and a wan spryness shone in his face. I seemed to see the nudge rather than feel it.

"Just present yourself to her as an old friend of mine. Say you knew me in Quebec. I used often to visit there. For the rest, trust to your good looks, and my power to guide you."

IN the very act of saying those last words, the superannuated spirit disappeared. I felt as if a prop had been pulled from under me—as if I were in mid-air. I could neither think calmly of what I had just passed through, nor yet not think of it. For an odd moment I wondered whether I had not imagined the whole incident. And yet, there were indisputable evidences of its reality. In a subtle way, my whole being had changed. No longer was I Jimmy Bourgoyne, failure and outcast. I had been enlisted in a cause. My being mattered to someone.

Someone? A ghost! But I was ready to accept such leadership. Even then I knew enough of the unseen world not to flee in ignorant cowardice from its manifestations.

I hurried on, impelled with purpose. Though I did not remember the number on

M— Street, I knew that I would find the house. I could not stop. A volume of new force was at flood tide in me. I had to accept it.

On and on I went. Patently, I was going in the direction of M— Street. It was a two-mile walk from where I was, but never for a moment did I hesitate. I knew I was being guided by the old man. And sure enough, when I did reach M— Street, my feet carried me directly to a house, in front of which I stopped. . . .

MY pulse was racing wildly and I was keen, in every inch of me, on my new adventure. Beyond an iron railing stood a dark mass of house, with not a light showing. I looked about me cautiously. The rain had cleared the streets and there was hardly a passerby. I remember considering whether I could go into that garden unseen. But actually I had no fear.

I moved along the iron rail to a gate. My hand went unerringly to the latch. I was opening the gate—a moment's listening, and then I was inside!

A brick garden path lay before me. One, two, three, four—carefully I counted off eight strides along the path, and stopped.

To my right was a formally laid-out plot of shrubbery. No flowers as far as I could see. A sense of familiarity with every twig in that garden possessed me. I turned into it and stooped down, methodically, like a house gardener to his job. The earth was damp. The moist coldness penetrated my trouser leg. Behind me was a huge bush from whose disturbed leaves rain drops slid off down my collar.

Having carefully chosen my spot, I drew out my knife and set to scraping the earth aside with a blade. Steadily I scraped, piling the earth to one side. Lights flashed on at the top of the shadowy mass of the house! I stood still for a moment, but as no further evidence of life occurred I went industriously back to my digging.

My knife struck something hard. Iron! Yes, the iron cover Edmund Bourgoyne had foretold!

With increased zeal I cleared the earth from around it. It was an easy matter to pry the cover up, though it did make a rusty whine that gave me a turn.

I could not see the interior clearly, but my hand reached quickly into it for a few inches and, without groping, took firm hold of a small leather wallet.

A glow of satisfaction suffused me. That

leather wallet had a reassuring feel. It was fat and full of promise. I stuck it quickly into my pocket, clamped down the iron lid, pushed the damp earth back into place, stamped it down, crouched still for a minute, listening, then rose to my feet, regained the brick path and hurried down it and out through the iron gate.

ONCE on the sidewalk, I experienced a let-down. My high fever of action was over. The compulsion subsided. I was more myself, more able to think in a personal way. The motivating current that had been pulsing through me had ceased.

That night I dined sumptuously and hired a room in a hotel in the mid-section of New York. Immediately after dinner I went to my room, anxious to be alone. The room was comfortable and the bed with its soft mattress and fresh linen was inviting, but I did not sleep a wink.

All that night, I sat in the easy-chair, with all the lights in the room ablaze, thinking about my bizarre situation.

The wallet I had dug up in that dark garden, under the ghostly patronage of my new guiding spirit, had contained five hundred dollars in twenty-dollar bills. That the money belonged to me I did not question. I needed it too badly to be overfastidious as to my rights to it. But my obligations! The unnatural experiences of that evening were surely only a prelude. I knew that I had taken only the first steps on a road of which I did not know the windings.

At times, during that sleepless night, I considered the advisability of returning the mysterious money to its grave in that garden. Still, at the very moment of thinking of it, I scoffed at the idea. It would be like shunning Fate. I knew that I could not escape from Edmund Bourgoyne's purpose, whatever it was, on any pretext.

Not for a moment did I believe that the ghost had directed me to the windfall out of a mere whim. Some tremendous purpose was there, and I was the pawn in the grip of its ruthless force. I had only to wait for the old man's instructions.

And as morning broke, the room, myself, the very air and furniture were vibrant with this force. A compulsive urge took its hold. It was commanding me in no uncertain terms.

I shaved, tidied up and went out to the stores. I bought complete outfits of clothes and linen. Decisions as to color and style

clicked readily in my mind, *though I was choosing clothes different from my personal taste.* To the clerks, I seemed very much the man who knew what he wanted. In reality, I was a marionette on a string.

In the afternoon I went back to my hotel. By two o'clock most of my purchases had arrived and I arrayed myself carefully.

As I passed through the lobby, I bought a pound tin of Canton ginger, myself a mite curious as to the reason for my action but nevertheless knowing it was right.

Quietly, confidently, as though I had planned it all months before I left the hotel and hired a taxicab to drive me to M— Street.

While the taxi rolled on, I sat at ease, nothing passing through my mind. A purpose filled me and there was no need for my thinking. . . .

When we arrived at the house, I stood before the iron gate I had so strangely entered the night before. The house was one of those three-story brownstone affairs which lingeringly maintain a veteran's representation in New York. Most of the shades were drawn, and without the garden the place would have seemed dimly somber.

And as I was regarding my surroundings, the compulsion to be up and about my business seized me. My business! I entered through the iron gate, went up the brick path and ascended a flight of reddish shalestone steps.

In response to my ring a maid appeared. I explained to her that I was an old friend of the deceased Mr. Edmund Bourgoyne and that I wished to see Miss Mary Louise Lampson. At mention of my own name the maid showed surprise, but I explained that the similarity of names was a coincidence and that it was to be made clear to Miss Lampson that I was not a relative.

I WAS ushered into a spacious drawing room that ran almost the entire length of the first floor. An upright piano that had evidently not been opened in years and an overstuffed plush parlor set of a bygone fashion made a brave attempt to fill the bare room, which was uncarpeted.

Once seated, I speculated ruminatively on what sort of a person Mary Louise Lampson might be. A romantic excitement was beating beneath the engulfing preoccupation with my errand. The name sounded delightful. Mary Louise Lampson. Pretty? Young?

My remarks were interrupted by the entrance of a self-possessed woman, by no means the shy young creature of my previsioning. Miss Mary Louise was a sturdy, strong-looking woman of about thirty (this was a shock, for I was only twenty-eight at the time) fully at her ease, dignified, and with a plainness that you felt had once been beauty. It was a sort of faded charm. The eyes in particular were woeful eyes that had long been unhappy.

"I did not know that Uncle Edmund had any intimate friends," she was saying.

I rose, strangely at ease. I say "strangely," because I faced her with almost a sense of a conqueror approaching a victim.

"Perhaps 'intimate friend' is too grand a title for me. I knew your uncle in Quebec. We met through the coincidence of names and grew chummy."

"Uncle Edmund was not a chummy man," she answered, more as if she were considering the point rather than doubting me.

Then occurred one of the incidents that amazed me in this mystic pilgrimage. I held out the wrapped-up box of Canton ginger which I had bought at the hotel and asked Miss Lampson to take it. I told her that knowing how fond her uncle was of ginger, I had brought some along from Quebec and since I had learned accidentally of his death, I had decided to offer it to her as an earnest of friendship!

Miss Lampson smilingly accepted the gift. I could see suspicion drop from her like mist fading out. Evidently her uncle's taste for ginger was a well-known characteristic. I, of course, felt no shock at my lucky guess. For it was no guess. I was merely responding to a domination that was directing me. Edmund Bourgoyne was *in me*, when I was under his direction, as much as my own spirit. Maybe more. *Edmund Bourgoyne directed my every move.*

"YOUR Uncle Edmund liked to tell me of his art collection," I continued. "In fact, that is one of the salient reasons for my troubling you. When I heard of his death, I thought that I had better see the collection he had so often spoken of, before it was dispersed."

I heard myself saying those words without amazement. There was no resentment in me that I was being prompted by old Bourgoyne, or rather that he had taken possession of my body and was talking through me as an instrument. Physically, it was a comfortable feeling.

"Pictures—those old pictures," Miss Lampson said coldly. "Yes, Uncle was very fond of them. Most of his money went into them. You are just in time, Mr. Bourgoyne, for tomorrow I expect an art dealer who will likely buy most of them."

"It's very kind of you," I murmured.

MISS LAMPSON smiled. The smile lit up her face and she was attractive under its glow. I could see that she was carefully scrutinizing me and I knew, too, that I pleased her. No doubt, my choice of colors and style that morning had something to do with that.

We conversed quite a while. Miss Lampson rang for tea and for a half hour we munched and drank while we talked. At no time did I grope for words or ideas. My comments came pat. Her questions never found me wanting. Everything I said fitted definitely into the niece's knowledge of her uncle. I even gave dates! The number of weeks, for instance, he had spent in Quebec on his last trip in the summer of 1920. It was that summer, she told me, that she had first come to live with him. Previously, she had worked in a department store in Chicago.

"One of those places where your soul is not your own. You punch clocks going in and going out, and if you are a minute late you have to explain it to a big panjandrum," she said.

"Like a squirrel in a cage," I suggested.

"Worse," she said. "At least the squirrel is taken care of. I thought with Uncle I would have advantages, travel perhaps. I was tired of working, anyway." The young woman stopped. "Will you have more tea?" she asked.

"No, I'd much rather listen to you talk," I answered.

"We are losing too much time, if you want to see the gallery. We had better go," she said, smiling kindly. She rose and made it clear that I was to follow.

We went up the wooden steps, which I was surprised to find were bare like the drawing room.

"You'll have to excuse our shabbiness," said Miss Lampson. "Uncle Edmund was mighty close. Except about his pictures. He was queer about pictures."

"Very fond of them?" I asked, more to make conversation than to secure information. But Miss Lampson stopped on the stairs, turned about and looked down at me. I felt uncomfortable, as if I had com-

mitted an indiscretion of an unknown sort.

She eyed me icily for a moment and then decided to speak. "Much too fond! It used to bother him to think that there was no relative by his name to whom he could leave his collection. I almost think he hated me because of it. He was always on the hunt for someone—" She broke off. A wave of caution came over her again.

We resumed our trek up the stairs.

AT the top of the house, where you might expect a garret, was a suite of four rooms, beautifully carpeted and the walls hung everywhere with valuable tapestries. My mind flashed back to the lights I had seen at the top of the house the night before, when I was digging in the garden. Perhaps an art critic or dealer had been there at that time.

On the walls were paintings. Some magnificent oils, one by El Greco, two Zuloagas, and a Millet, besides numerous important canvases by less known artists, were carefully hung and expertly lighted with a system of artificial lights worthy of a Fifth Avenue gallery. Miss Lampson noted my look of wonder.

"It is the most valuable unknown collection in the world," she said.

"Without a doubt," I replied.

"I'm told it's worth over a quarter of a million. It's insured for almost that much."

"Marvelous—though probably not worth quite that much," I answered, and again I had the feeling of being prompted, for I was in no position to judge the value of such a collection.

"Oh, yes," Miss Lampson replied hurriedly. "I've had it priced—long ago. I expect to sell it soon and be free. Free, for the first time! I just ache to get away. To travel and be free. . ."

"You did not travel much with your uncle?"

"Certainly not. I was more of a slavey around this house—sort of a duster of the pictures. That's it. If I hadn't dreaded the department store work more, I would have deserted long ago. As it was—"

"As it was?" I was prompting her now, urged on by the voice within me, exulting like an inquisitor driving a suspect to confession.

"As it was, I almost left many times. But there was an old man. A sickly man, too. I knew one day he would have to die. . ."

"And since you were his only rela-

tive—" My voice rose *roughly* agingly, tempting her confidences. *—my b*

For a flash her eyes scanned me dubiously, but as I have said, Miss Lampson liked me, and consequently she assumed she had my sympathy.

She spoke again, "I was not always sure I would inherit his wealth, if that's what you mean. He was on the lookout for someone who carried his own name. He wanted a Bourgoyne to own this collection." And in a contemptuous wave of the hand she took in all the oils. "I was worried all right. I did not know whether the courts would consider it the action of an insane man or not. He *was* cracked." She looked shrewdly at me to see if she had said too much.

I felt the situation embarrassing. "Just eccentric," I said, to ease matters.

Miss Lampson came close to me and bent towards my ear. "No. *Crazy!*" She was whispering in an odd, confidential way. Her unhappy eyes had streaks of light in them. "You may not have guessed. He was clever at concealing it. But crazy, I tell you. *Crazy.*" Her whisper broke into a short falsetto note, like a stifled scream.

And in the shadows behind Miss Lampson I saw another shadow that I knew. The ghost of Edmund Bourgoyne stood piteously behind her, looking sorrowfully at the pictures that he had given his life to collect. I thought I saw his hands reach out pathetically towards them, and then towards me. I felt that somehow I had to help that uneasy soul adrift among its earthly lures.

I began falteringly, "Must you sell this wonderful collection—" And as I spoke, Edmund Bourgoyne vanished. I felt unsteady, but continued: "I mean, pardon me for saying it, but are you forced to, financially?"

SHE looked sharply at me. A smile widened on her features. "No. Uncle left money, too. He was so busy hunting a Bourgoyne toward the last that he forgot to tie up his cash. But what do I want with this collection?"

"I thought that it would be a pleasure to keep it, if one could afford such a marvelous hobby."

"Bah!" There was hate and contempt in her voice. "I suffered too much because of this collection. I mean to disperse it." And again she leaned confidentially over to me. "It will be like *killing it.*"

We remained for another half hour in that gallery. I wandered about and examined everything curiously. At times I had the illusion that Edmund Bourgoyne was walking with me—or was it an illusion? There were some rare bronzes and an excellent white marble head of Beatrice, beloved of Dante. Miss Lampson's eyes followed me about, but paid no attention to the collection. Her lips were smiling happily. She was gloating over the contemplation of breaking up that collection.

And while I was still viewing the paintings, Miss Lampson began switching off the lights. I accepted the signal to leave, wondering vaguely whether such action was also eccentricity—or more?

We went down the stairs. They were poorly lighted and, with no carpet on, creaked dismally. Neither of us spoke.

But once seated in the bare old drawing room downstairs, Miss Lampson broke into an amiable garrulity. She spoke of everything that ran into her mind quietly, gently, as though I were an old friend who understood her view-point. However, she said little that was personal.

Her whole attitude made one point clear—she was quite evidently “mashed” on me. I note the point in scientific neutrality. Much that followed was due to her irrational fondness for me.

As we sat there talking in the twilight, I became aware that Edmund Bourgoyne was hovering near me, bidding strongly for my attention. I could not see him, and in a sense I could not hear him, yet I was conscious that the ghost was *transferring thought to me*. It was almost as if he were writing lightly on my mind.

I realized that the ghost was influencing me to leave that house. I had been there long enough. I rose to go, looking at my watch. Miss Lampson rose, too, and switched on a light. She approached me, very graciously, and asked me to stay. I demurred. She insisted that I remain for dinner.

SMILING, patting me on the hand, she said: “Such an old friend of Uncle’s must stay. Perhaps you will be my friend, too?”

There was a deep pleading in her words. The pressure of her hands on mine grew stronger.

“I do so need a friend,” she added.

Somehow, I do not recall exactly how, it was settled I was to stay for dinner. Miss

Lampson rang for the maid and gave instructions.

I was beginning to feel uneasy. The psychic suggestion that I leave was still strong. I knew it was Edmund Bourgoyne telling me to depart from that house. And yet Miss Lampson’s pleading and my own curiosity urged me to stay. In a way, my being had become a battling ground for the spirit of a dead man and the spirit of a live woman, who was perhaps mad—as I was beginning to suspect. And so I was of two minds. For the first time since I had launched out into this experience, I was uncertain. Something prompted me to stay and something else urged me to go . . . until the latter force suddenly desisted.

I DID have dinner with Miss Lampson. It was served in the basement, in a long, low room that had fine pieces of black walnut furniture. The silver service and porcelain were of impressive quality. The dinner, too, was good and we had Chartreuse to drink and afterwards some crème de cocoa. I remember thinking at the time that all this splendor was new—since the uncle’s death. . . .

After dinner we sat about the table and we both smoked. Miss Lampson told me of the wonderful far places of the world which she had read about and meant to visit soon “when the collection was sold.”

In turn I told her of the places I had seen, during the War and afterwards. She listened, entranced.

“How wonderful it would be to go there, with you,” she said, and there was a longing and dreaming in her voice.

My conversation raced off into other channels. Uneasiness was growing on me. It was no longer possible to consider her actions and words as mere eccentricities.

Twice Miss Lampson moved her chair closer to me. She began patting my hand again. I felt I simply had to leave. With as gentle a withdrawal as I could manage, I rose and announced the absolute necessity for my going. Miss Lampson was not disturbed. Quite the contrary. It all seemed natural to her.

At the door she put her arms slowly about my neck, without a hint of hesitancy, kissed my cheek, and said, “Dearest, don’t forget to get the tickets.”

I controlled my astonishment. No longer did I misunderstand Miss Lampson. She had told me enough. Putting the story together I grasped the dénouement. Her

dreary struggle for years in a department store, her defeated hopes for freedom and travel, the petty slavery in her Uncle Edmund's home, the galling uncertainty of the months she had waited for him to die—all this had done damage to her mind. That was clear.

From our talk she had gathered the illusion that she and I were to cruise the world together. She had almost made me believe it, too. Anyway, there was no need to disillusion her.

WE walked out into the hallway and up the stairs to the parlor floor where I had left my overcoat. Miss Lampson led the way, and I kept my distance.

It was not her madness that I feared now, but I shrank from an evil quality—an aura of tragedy that was about her—which at the time I could not name.

Once in my overcoat, I made short shrift of parting. I was already down a few steps when Miss Lampson moved quickly after me. At the time, it seemed to me she ran. Perhaps I was mistaken.

But she did catch hold of my hand and say, "You are coming to see me again tomorrow?"

I began forming an excuse, when abruptly my mind cleared and I knew I was to say yes. This time, the spirit of Edmund Bourgoyne was communicating to me a command to accept—and accept the invitation I did.

Finally, I hurried down the brick path through the garden and past the iron gate.

As I walked, the compulsions of the past hours slipped from me. All through those days, when there was no immediate objective, I noticed that I relapsed into my normal habits of thought. It was only when specific action required, that I experienced that strange force. . . .

What was I to do? To marry this woman was a horrible outlook. I regarded it mentally with a sinking of my heart. And yet, to go counter to the set wish of Edmund Bourgoyne—how could I do that? By this time I knew myself to be hopelessly dominated. The last twenty-four hours had shown me clearly that I was no longer my own master. To break faith with Edmund Bourgoyne would be to betray the will of a strong and relentless superior—and as if to give deadly intensity to my thoughts, I became aware that the queer old figure in the seedy-looking suit was walking by my side!

The old man kept pace and said nothing.

Quarter of a mile, a half mile, a mile, we walked on and still he did not speak. With the noiseless tread of the dead he moved by my side. The silence became unbearable. It was unnerving.

I felt I had to say something and finally I did.

"Your collection is to be sold," I said.

"I know it," the spirit answered. "You must stop it."

"What can I do?"

"Marry the girl. Tell her the collection must remain intact. Understand me!" The ancient figure looked up toward me with eyes of genuine threat. "That collection must remain intact and *under the ownership of a Bourgoyne*. You were chosen to fulfill these conditions!"

"But there is no time," I was saying weakly.

The shriveled figure waved my objections aside with what seemed a snort.

"Stuff and nonsense! She likes you. And I have power. Go there tomorrow—before your appointed time. Make love to her. She is starving for affection. Tell her you will travel all over the world with her—only she is not to sell the collection." Thus, in rasping, jerky sentences, the spirit of Edmund Bourgoyne spoke.

And there was no answer in me. Not a solitary reply could I muster. I did not even feel any dread at the possibility of marrying that madwoman! The moment Edmund Bourgoyne uttered a command, immediately I accepted it as the most logical action in the world. It was as if he spoke directly to my inner self; as if he were my mind deciding for me. And it was strangely satisfying.

Edmund Bourgoyne was my spiritual commander, and he issued orders either in articulated words or in that indefinable manner—as if *writing on my mind*.

WE two walked on, the ghost and I. He did not speak again. Having made known his will, he was silent. Stride by stride he kept even with me all through that walk.

When I boarded a train in the subway, he sat down beside me! Up to my hotel and to the very door of my bedroom he went with me. No one else saw him. Of that I was sure. And I felt no astonishment that he was invisible to others. Not even when I saw him walk through people as if they did not exist!

I expected him to vanish at the hotel

lobby. But, no. My companion went up in the lift with me and entered my room, taking at once a seat in a large easy-chair.

Mechanically, I prepared for bed. Nothing in me questioned the right of that ghost to keep vigil by my bedside. It was all like a hypnotic spell.

I jumped into bed and was pulling the covers over me when I noticed the lights. Before I could attend to it, the wrinkled figure rose and switched them off!

He sat down again; in the dark, he appeared to be surrounded by a luminous haze, murky and greenish. I was utterly calm. Until I fell into a deep sleep, I stared fixedly at the unnatural specter.

Eleven o'clock the next morning I awoke, fully alert, and anxious to fulfill my destiny. I felt neither pleasure nor repulsion to what lay before me.

Again I dressed carefully in new clothes, purchased with the money from the iron box, and went down to the barber's.

Twenty minutes later I was on my way to M— Street, without having had breakfast! This was entirely counter to my strong habits. But on that day, through all its tumultuous happenings, I never once felt the impulse to eat. I was like a disembodied spirit.

I arrived at the M— Street address at twelve-thirty. I recalled that my appointment was for one o'clock, and also that Edmund Bourgoyne had told me to appear before that time.

At my ring, the maid let me in. She told me to hang up my coat and to go upstairs to the gallery as the mistress was there.

I started up the stairs. Almost half way up I heard footsteps descending. They were heavy steps and unlike those of Miss Lampson. Immediately a cold fright seized me. A doom pounded in those descending feet. I stopped on the stairs and stood against the wall. A tall man with a dark Vandyke came into view. He was taken aback at my presence and stopped still.

"How do you do?" I said.

THE man recovered his composure at the sound of my voice, nodded and went on. A feeling of calamity pervaded me. I continued up, hurrying, taking two steps at a time.

Near the top I broke into a run, throwing open the gallery door. At a little Florentine desk, sobbing wildly, her head lying on her outstretched arms, was Miss Lampson!

I hurried over, calling out to her. She

looked up. Her unhappy eyes were now bloodshot, tear stained and utterly peculiar. On recognizing me, she waved a flapping white triangle which I thought was a handkerchief, but I quickly made it out to be a document. As I neared her, she stood up and came quickly into my arms, for I had extended them in a gesture of help.

"I'm so glad you are here," she said in a low, tremulous voice. "Now we can go."

"Where?"

"Over the top of the world. We are free." She stepped back from me and waved the document at me again. "I've sold the collection! I've just signed."

"Sold it? Already?"

JES, sold it. *Killed it!* That man was Rouillet, the art dealer. Didn't you pass him on the stairs? He came earlier than I expected and we closed the deal. I've a certified check for twenty thousand on account. Now we can travel . . ."

Again, as on that previous day in the gallery, I saw the ghost! Edmund Bourgoyne was moving vaguely in the background of that long room. He seemed more ancient than ever before, the head bowed forward on his breast, the knees sagging. He was counting the paintings, with a finger that told them off, one by one. A limitless tragedy was in that ancient figure. I looked aghast at him and then back to Miss Lampson. She was watching my eyes, as if electrified! Slowly she turned her head. . . .

An insane shriek broke from her! She had seen Edmund Bourgoyne! The spirit moved towards us and Miss Lampson sank to the carpet, crying hysterically, throwing herself about, pounding the floor with the back of her heels, frothing at the mouth.

"Take him away! He has come for me! Stop him!" She was shouting as one possessed. I ran to the door leading out of the gallery and shut it. For the time I thought I could maintain secrecy. As I hurried back to Miss Lampson, I saw that Edmund Bourgoyne was standing over her. The ghost was shaking a long, thin finger as if in rhythmic threat. Miss Lampson was no longer screaming. Short, ugly gasps were coming from her. I listened in astonishment.

"Forgive me! Forgive me!" she was saying to the spirit. "I had to sell it. I could not live with it."

The old figure continued shaking his threatening hand above her. A sulphurous glow in the form of an arc trailed its move-

ment. It was a terrifyingly weird sight.

Suddenly Miss Lampson turned towards me again, reaching out her palms pleadingly.

"Take him away! He has come for me. He always hated me. *And I killed him!* I had to! *I killed him!* The old fool would not die. *I killed him!*"

I stood transfixed. Edmund Bourgoyne flashed a toothless grin at me and nodded his head. He was confirming her statements! My blood ran cold. I was being made the witness of a damnable confession. A whirling confusion took hold of me. I looked toward the ghost. It had vanished. But I could feel its beat on my consciousness. It was still prompting me.

By this time Miss Lampson was in a dead faint. I stooped and began rubbing her wrists, thinking all the while of the tremendous possibilities that were looming up before me. Had Edmund Bourgoyne triumphed after all? It was still possible. . . . I saw myself becoming a wealthy man. . . .

I was being prompted—as if the spirit were writing on my mind.

Someone had opened the door. It was the maid. Together we managed to revive Miss Lampson—revive her to the wakefulness of a completely demented and raving lunatic. For never again did she say a lucid word or have a moment's calmness. Not for an instant through the next four years of fevered madness!

The maid and I carried Miss Lampson to her bedroom. Drowsiness took a grip on her and I left the maid by her side, while I went out, ostensibly to telephone a doctor. But first I went, without a faltering moment, to a room on the second floor, dusty and foul-aired. It was a sort of an office. I moved about quickly. The familiar promptings were guiding me. In the rear of an old wooden file were some papers—a dusty pile. I stuck my hand in, pulled out a

certain packet and put it into the inside pocket of my coat.

Then—I went to telephone a doctor, and later the police. In the next two days the whole house was checked carefully. Miss Lampson's guilt was definitely clear. The body of Edmund Bourgoyne was exhumed and found to contain a liberal dose of strychnine! The maid gave confirming evidence. Miss Lampson's own mutterings revealed the rest.

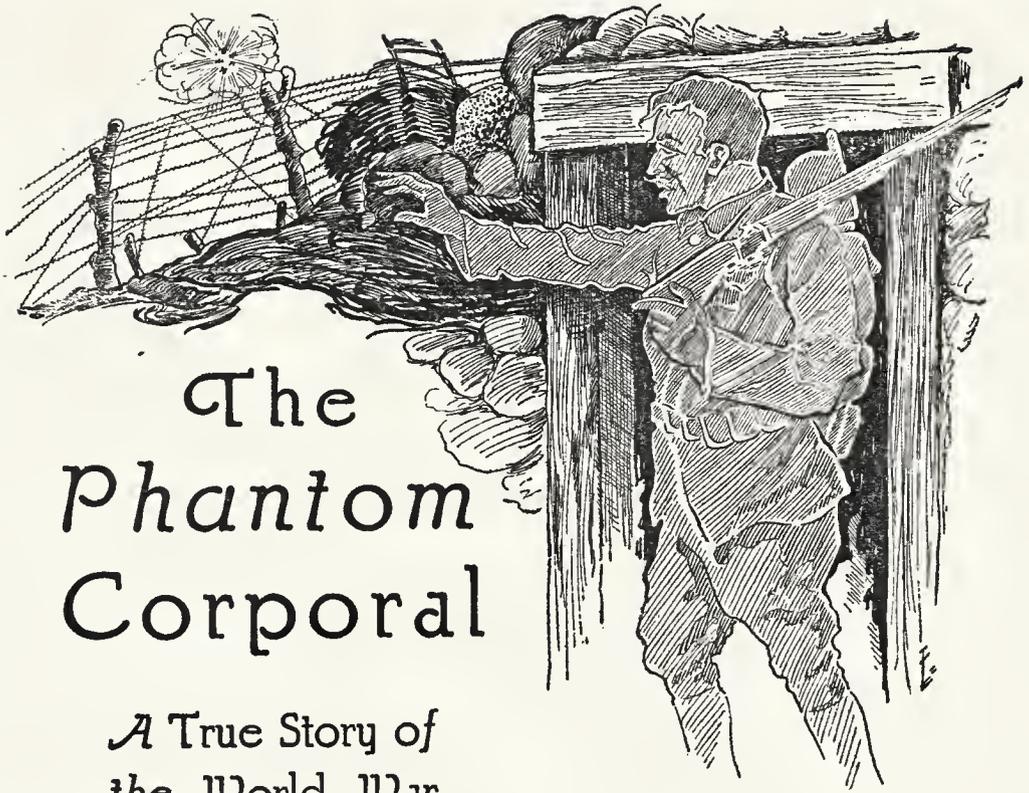
Of course Miss Lampson was committed to an asylum. For the four years she lived, I visited her regularly once a month. My arrival always gave her comfort; that is, *if I wore the clothes I had bought on that queer day, with the money dug up from the garden.* Other clothes frightened her. The reason for this I have never been able to find out.

As for me, I have been in easy circumstances since that strange meeting with Edmund Bourgoyne's spirit. With the aid of his continued promptings I managed to establish myself as the lawful inheritor of that estate. In that packet of papers I discovered a curious document headed, "To Bourgoyne, Who Will Inherit My Collection," which was a list of instructions made out by Edmund Bourgoyne during his life. Aided as I was by his spirit, and my knowledge of poor Miss Lampson's mad deeds, I succeeded, with a clever lawyer, of course, to convince the court.

Conscience on my part? I have never had an uneasy moment. I know that I have fulfilled Edmund Bourgoyne's dearest wish by upsetting the sale of his art collection to Roulet and by preserving it intact under my name.

For I shall never sell it. If, when my time comes, I have no direct descendant, then I, too, like Edmund Bourgoyne, will seek one out who, by his name, will prove to be the inheritor of the world's most valuable unknown art collection.





The Phantom Corporal

*A True Story of
the World War*

By
Captain Nevil Gow

*In a deserted trench I
heard a weird wailing—
and learned the secret
of imperishable love*

IN 1916 I was a subaltern officer in a British regiment. My battalion, which had been fighting along the Lens-Arras front, had departed to a new sector below Arras, leaving me, a somewhat raw but very enthusiastic second lieutenant, in charge of a small party engaged in special observation work. Our job was a complex one, the details of which I need not particularize, but I may mention that it consisted in endeavoring to locate enemy guns by means of cross-bearings. (This work was afterwards undertaken by a special Observation Group, which carried out the task by more scientific methods that were developed later; but at the period of which I speak, the work was only in the experimental stage.)

I and my party located ourselves in two large dug-outs in a spur of the hills known

as the Loreto Heights—so called because of their proximity to the ruins of an ancient church, Notre Dame de Lorette.

Our principal work was done at night. My own turn of duty fell between 2 A. M. and 6 A. M. Nightly at half past one my sergeant would waken me. I would then tramp from my comfortable dug-out to a forward Observation Post, which we had erected near the front line, about a mile away.

It was a lonely, eerie walk. In the darkness I clambered through shell-holes and stumbled across half buried trenches, trying to avoid the rusty barbed wire, until at last the black, shiny depths of a communication trench came into view. This trench was a long, grave-like passage, the bottom filled with sticky clay, through which (if the moon were shining) could occasionally be

seen the white bones of unburied men. I used to dread that weird walk—or, rather, crawl—along the trench, and was frequently tempted to walk overland and take my chance of occasional machine-gun bullets.

But orders were definite: "Don't leave the trench." (The reason for this prohibition was, I afterwards learned, that men leaving the trench and walking overland left footprints, which were visible to hostile airmen: a line of footprints leading to our Observation Post would naturally have disclosed its location.)

ON this particular night, however, the communication trench was too much for me. It was ankle deep in slime; it was lonely, deserted, repellent; and it smelt of decayed things. I left the trench, and strode along the dry ground, overland; beside me ran the long, twisting, dark ribbon of trench. It was disobeying orders, and risking a bullet, but I did it, anyway.

The night was inky black and deathly quiet. No wind stirred. The air was cold and raw. There was not a soul in sight or within hail. I was, I felt, alone in a black world—quite alone.

And then, coming along the trench, from the direction of the front line, I heard the sound of slow, dragging footsteps!

I stooped down and peered over the edge of the trench. At that moment the moon came from behind a cloud and lit the scene with a pallid, sickly light; and I saw, coming round the bend of the trench, a soldier.

He was a French soldier, dressed in the uniform customarily worn in pre-War days in the French army; his trousers were scarlet in color; and I noticed, too, that he wore the badge of a corporal. I could even distinguish the number of his regiment.

And then I realized that he was wounded—blood was trickling from his forehead! This fact drove all other considerations out of my head.

"Hullo!" I said. "You're hurt. Let me give you a hand."

I fumbled feverishly with my emergency bandage, as I watched him approach. He was a small man, with a reddish, almost a ginger-colored mustache. He made his way slowly past me but gave no sign of having heard me. As he went by—I could have touched him with my hand—he called "*Marcel!*" in that curious open-throated voice which one hears among the news-vendors who cry their wares in the streets

of Paris. It was a queer, wailing sound.

Again came that agonized cry, "*Mar-cel! Mar-cel!*"—and I found myself, half-hypnotized, watching his retreating back.

"*Holé! Arrêtez. Je vais vous aider* (Hullo! Stop. I'll help you)," I said, clambering down into the slimy depths of the trench, my sole thought being to give much-needed assistance to this wounded man, and get him to the dressing station.

He disappeared behind a bend in the trench—it was built without the usual square-cut traverses—and I clambered clumsily after him.

I rounded the bend, hastily ripping open my first-aid packet, and I found—nothing.

The wounded man had gone. I was gazing along a stretch of trenchwork, bare, deserted, and, in the bilious light of the moon, peculiarly gruesome-looking.

"Where the devil's the chap gone?" I grumbled to myself.

It seemed impossible. There were no dug-outs in which he could have crawled; there were no branch trenches along which he could have hurried. He could scarcely have climbed out onto the open ground in those few seconds, but, to make sure, I hoisted myself up and surveyed the silent, shell-torn plain. There was not a human being in sight.

Then suddenly I recollected something—something which brought the cold sweat to my forehead. *Red trousers!* What was a French soldier doing in red trousers in 1916? The old uniform, with scarlet *pantalon*, had been abolished months before! Since 1915 all French soldiers wore the new uniform—*bleu d'horizon*.

Anyhow, what was a *French* soldier doing in a British sector?

I can still feel, as I write, the cold, clammy horror of those few moments when I stood alone, in that slimy graveyard mis-called a trench, and turned these questions over in my mind.

Then, climbing out on the open ground, I ran alongside the trench, backwards and forwards, calling in broken French to the vanished corporal—peering down into those grim, moonlit depths in a fruitless search for a man whom I knew I would never find.

LAST year I was on a visit to friends near Brignoles in the Var area and, while there, was introduced to a charming French gentleman, a local landed proprietor, who had sacrificed an arm in his country's service. Our conversation naturally turned

upon the War, and when he mentioned that he had held the rank of Lieutenant in a certain Regiment of Infantry, mobilized in 1914, at once my memory began to stir. It was the same regiment to which my ghostly corporal had belonged! I remembered the number distinctly.

So I questioned him discreetly. Yes, he knew the Loreto Heights well—too well, he added with a bitter sigh. He had fought there early in the War—so early that he and his regiment were still wearing the old scarlet-trousered uniform.

THEN he told me stories about his life and adventures in those grim battles near the Loreto Heights—stories of almost superhuman valor and sacrifice, tales of horror relieved by that wondrous high courage which is the flower of French militarism. And among the anecdotes which he related was this one:

"In my company," he said, "were twin brothers, Anatole and Marcel Pascaud. They were both true Frenchmen, gay, witty, brave as tigers, and each one resembled the other so closely that only a careful scrutiny could enable their comrades to distinguish them apart. Ah! they were good lads—*braves garçons*—and devotedly attached to each other, so much so that one of them refused a promotion because it would have meant separation from his brother.

"They were more than brothers—they were twin souls. If one was in danger, the other—even though a kilometer distant—would somehow sense his brother's danger.

"This curious link between them naturally attracted attention in the regiment; my men used to say of the two Pascauds, 'What will happen when one is taken and the other left behind?'

"Then one day Marcel was killed—wiped

out by an *obus*, completely *anéanti* (annihilated). One moment he was there; then a thunderous crash, a burst of flame, and Marcel was gone—vanished. Not a trace of him was left.

"Anatole, *le pauvre* Anatole, was stunned. Never, Monsieur, shall I forget the agonized face of that unhappy brother. He looked like some damned soul in Hell. A fragment of the shell had struck him in the temple; I saw the blood fall, but he—he took no more notice of the wound than if he had been struck by a feather.

"*Courage, mon ami!*" I said to him. But he simply stared dumbly at the place where Marcel had been standing a few moments before.

"A few hours later word was brought to me that Anatole, too, was dead. He had wandered dazedly from trench to trench, calling his brother's name.

"When they tried to stop him, he pushed them aside roughly, muttering: 'I must find my brother—I must find Marcel.'

"My *poilus* let him go. They realized that poor Anatole was completely mad.

"And then the shell splinter did its work. He was wounded more severely than any of us knew, and his dead body was found later, lying in a communication trench some three kilometers away where he had wandered in his mad search for his dead brother.

"For weeks afterwards, however, my men swore that Anatole haunted that sector. They told me that sentries at isolated posts saw him; ration parties coming up the line at night met him; time after time it was reported to me that men of my regiment had heard and seen their dead comrade wandering through the lonely trench, seeking—always seeking the brother whom he had lost, and calling in an agonized voice, '*Marcel!—Marcel!*'"

The Thing in the Theater

Horror House furnished Broadway theater-goers with thrills aplenty. It used all the old gags, and some new ones: trick panels, shrieks and squeaks in the dark, weird lighting effects, and a stage "ghost."

Then, one night, something went wrong. Suddenly a long, thin Thing whisked across the stage—and left stark terror in its wake! The actors went mad. What was this Thing? Would it come again? Had the foolish mummery of the play drawn a real avenging spirit from the next world? It seemed impossible, and yet—

Read the blood-chilling facts in the January number of GHOST STORIES, on the news stands November 23rd.



The Spider

By
GRACE
OURSLEER

THE SPIDER is one of the most sensational recent successes of the New York stage—it has thrilled thousands upon thousands of theater-goers. The story is now presented to magazine readers for the first time—and in GHOST STORIES exclusively. It was prepared for publication with the help of Fulton Oursler, co-author with Lowell Brentano of the famous play.

CHATRAND, the great magician, frowned at the image of his own face in the mirror of his dressing room. As he adjusted his tie and buttoned his vest, his lips tightened into a thin and harried line. Now that the evening performance was over at the Fremont Vaudeville Theater in Washington, D. C., and all his make-up was removed, Chatrand looked strangely pale and gray.

The famous conjurer was a badly worried man.

He had good cause to be worried. Only that afternoon, his most important stage as-

sistant had abandoned him in a drunken fit of temper. For two seasons Chatrand had tried to save the man from his one besetting sin of drinking. He was a clever and competent man, and Chatrand had taught him the famous mind-reading effects which had made them favorites with audiences in theaters all over the country. But neither Chatrand nor the man's wife could rescue him from the paralyzing influence of alcohol—and now matters had come to a climax.

The very sight of his own face in the mirror seemed to add to the thorough dissatisfaction of "Chatrand the Great." He looked worn, he told himself—and what wonder? He had been working too hard—and to what end? His hair had already begun to gray at the temples—and to what purpose?

He scowled at himself—a blasphemous scowl—and kicked a black patent-leather slipper under the dressing shelf, as he muttered a few private remarks to himself. Then, with one reach of his arm, he lifted down his coat and slipped into it. His black-and-white blocked scarf he folded thoughtfully about his throat.

At that moment there came a timid knock at Chatrand's dressing-room door.

Quietly, with a deliberation that bespoke an effort at extreme control, Chatrand ad-

justed his overcoat, and reached for his hat and cane. Then:

"Come in!" he ordered tersely.

The door moved inward very slowly. Chatrand, one hand thrust in his pocket in a tight ball, regarded the pale-faced young woman whose tear-stained eyes peered at him from the hallway.

He did not speak.

"Oh, Chatrand—he's here. He wants to speak to you," said the girl in short, breathy gasps.

At the lack of any response from Chatrand, the girl turned and shoved half-way into the room a sturdy, well-set chap whose nervous fingers picked at the brown felt hat in his hands.

The man gazed sullenly at the successful, well-groomed figure before him, his blood-shot eyes defying Chatrand to speak. In the formidable silence, he stiffened sulkily under the cold steel-gray eyes of Chatrand, his lips quivered ponderously, and he turned with an abused air to the girl as if for protection.

"Go on," she urged harshly. "Go on. Tell him!"

The man shifted from one foot to another uneasily and his eyes examined the busy, if destructive operation on his brown felt hat.

"Well, Chatrand," he began in a low, whining mumble. "You see—lookahere! It's jus' like this, somehow. You see, I didn't mean it. I swore I woon' and I din' mean it, but somehow I jus' did, you see. You don' understand, you see, because you don' have the need of liquor like I do. Anyway, I swear I won't do it again—ever—I swear. . . ."

His voice wandered off into a series of throaty, sodden sounds, and then died away completely.

"Is that all you have to say, Alexander?"

It was Chatrand speaking, his voice strained and clipped.

"Aw, give me another chance—for the Lord's sake, Chatrand. Give me another chance! Besides, you got to give me another chance. You can't get nobody like

*When the magician
stumbled upon
the bleeding body
of a boy,
he entangled himself
in a web of
mystery and terror!*

me, not in a thousand years."

The fellow lifted his face in craven appeal which thoroughly contradicted the defiant set of his shoulders as he blurted out his sum and total of the situation.

Chatrand gave his derby a contemplative glance,

pursed his lips even tighter and put the hat on his head, fitting it down comfortably over his forehead.

"You're fired!" he announced shortly.

"No—no! Please!" cried the girl sharply.

"Yeah? Fired, am I? Well, you wait and see where you ever get another——"

"Cut that out, you poor fool!" his wife interrupted him, with a vicious shake of his arm.

"WELL, he won't," the man insisted thickly. "I hope he don't sit sucking his thumb until another assis—assis-assissan can be got like me. Besides, I jes' as soon be fired. He's a big swell. I hate swells—it's against my principles. . . ."

But his wife had broken from him with a helpless gesture and crossed to Chatrand, her pale face drawn and strained.

"For God's sake, Chatrand," she said huskily. "Please don't fire him! He don't mean what he's saying. Think what it means, Chatrand."

"I know. I know what it means." Chatrand spoke more gently. "But it's his own fault. I warned him that the next time would be the last. And it is. He's fired. I've already wired to New York for another assistant. I don't even want him to play tomorrow's matinée. I've given him too many chances. I'll leave out my mind-reading act and tell the audience Alexander is sick, before I'll face another such grueling, unpardonable performance as he gave this afternoon and tonight. Tonight—New Year's Eve—with the house packed and my assistant so drunk he can't read my cues!"

"But, Chatrand——"

"No, Alice. I'm sorry. But this is final. Neither you nor I can do another thing for him. We've both done our best. At least, I have. You're his wife. You'll have to stick to him, I suppose. It's a damn

shame. You're much too good for him, Alice. Much too good."

"Too good for me——" mumbled the man thickly.

"No, I'm not!" The girl wheeled swiftly to reassure her husband. "I'll stick with you, kid. You hear? I don't blame Chatrand for kicking you out. Not after all he's done for you. I don't blame him. But if you have to go—I go! See?"

"Come! I must lock up now!"

Chatrand's sudden sharp command broke in upon the domestic scene most effectively. The girl took her husband's arm and linked it in her own. Together they crossed in front of Chatrand. She half pushed her husband into the hallway and turned again to Chatrand.

"Alice," said Chatrand slowly, as his hand reached from his trouser pocket over to the worn little side pocket of her blue suit. "I know you're pretty much up against it. That might help you get settled—or get a new start. It might be good if you took him into the country."

Swiftly the girl's hand dove into her pocket and brought out a crisp new bill. Her eyes stared at it incredulously.

"My God!" she stammered. "Five hundred! Gee, Chatrand."

But Chatrand turned brusquely from her gratitude.

"One thing, Alice," he said sternly—"I want you to remember that the name Alexander belongs to me. My next mind-reading assistant will use the name. That was understood before you signed with me. Just don't let him forget it."

"No, sir. I won't. Gosh, Chatrand! I'm going to say this whether you want to hear it or not. You have been awful good to him—to both of us. Anybody else woulda kicked him out ages ago. I wish to God he wouldn't act like this. I don't know how to make him stop. But I'll find a way. Maybe, if he was cured, we might write you and you might consider him again. Maybe? There's ways of curing a man like that. I know there is. Maybe—huh?"

"**M**AYBE," muttered Chatrand, "if he were really cured."

She pressed his hand impulsively, and then turning quickly, she guided her wholly unresponsive and uncommunicative husband down the hallway into their own dressing room. Chatrand watched them enter and close the door. In there—*he* would

sit and blink and complain, and she would pack their trunks. She would do all the work, she would hustle the luggage, she would check them out of their third-class hotel, she would arrange for tickets to New York, she would collect their salaries . . .

Again Chatrand's lips pursed themselves into a grim line. What was the answer to a woman's devotion to such a man? A man who drank, who cheated her, who spent the money they earned together on bottles of rotten liquor? What was it that made a woman fight for such a man, cook for him, sacrifice, plead, humor, cajole, amuse him?

THE shoulders of the most famous magician on two continents shrugged beneath his great overcoat. Chatrand thrust his hands in his pockets and, with a curt good night to the wrinkled, tobacco-chewing doorman who sat nonchalantly tipped at a precarious angle against the stone wall, passed out of the theater and down the long, dark, narrow alley that led to the streets.

He paused a moment, when he reached the sidewalk, as if contemplating his next move. He was to have appeared at a midnight entertainment at a private and select club, but it was impossible with an assistant so drunk that he could hardly stand and Chatrand had sent a telegram of regret.

Standing there now, he considered the matter. The sharp wind caused him to turn up his coat collar and bury his chin deeper within the folds of his scarf.

He rather regretted missing the entertainment. Not only because he loved his work and was never so happy as when he was performing his mysterious feats; but for another and even better reason. He was lonely—damnably lonely. His loneliness had become an obsession with him—a disease, growing on him and gnawing at his vitality, haunting and probing him until it had become an almost human thing with which to grapple through his sleepless nights.

His ghost, he called it! The ghost of his life as it might have been. To the world, he was Chatrand the Great, a title earned by years of dogged work, by the exertion of that strange, adroit brilliance of mind of which even he himself stood in humble awe. Chatrand the Great—heralded to the last ends of the world; wealthy, successful, respected, influential with his battalion of political friends who more than once had

sought his advice and acted upon it secretly.

Beyond that, however, what was Chatrand the Great? Nobody knew, nobody seemed to care. It was sufficient that he was what he was. Some score of wild stories had been formed about his past, his background, his history; most of them had caused Chatrand a private and thoroughly delighted chuckle. Even if it had not suited him to guard his identity for reasons of his own, Chatrand would not have destroyed the public's illusions. The public—yes, even the people who called themselves his friends—wanted their entertainer an entertainer, not an individuality. They wanted their man of mystery; they gloried in it. To have known that he was a little bit better or a little bit worse than themselves would have cost Chatrand a good forty per cent of his fame.

Did any one of them guess that he was

automaton to be considered, to be watched, to be paid off weekly for a modicum of personal service, would have driven him wild.

The motor turned over with a sigh of defeat, and Chatrand sat back to draw on his warm driving gloves and wait for the engine to heat itself to a point of enthusiasm.

THERE were many places to which he could turn at this hour. Certainly he knew as many people in Washington as if the city were his home. Yet, though he knew he would be greeted with a warm and sincere welcome, he scowled at the thought of driving to any one of the doors that were open to him.

A night club? One of the usual, blaring, highstrung, hysterical celebrations of a new year? He shuddered. Why was it that he had lost his taste for parties, for polished and insinuating flirtations? He

"From the white lips of the entranced boy came a mad stream of terrible words—and Chatrand felt icy fear stab at his heart!

"My God! *Those were the very words a dead man had spoken twenty years before!* And the voice was a voice from the grave!

"He shrieked, 'Stop! For God's sake, stop!'"

lonely—hungry for a friend who knew and understood and cared?

Another blast of sharp, poignant wind brought him back to his situation. He shook himself slightly, and glanced at the passers-by who were hurrying to their New Year's spree, not heeding any silent figure that stood in the shadows of a closed and darkened theater.

HE hurried to the end of the street and turned the corner to where he had left his huge blue Packard parked against the curb. He unlocked the door slowly, stepped inside and bent his energies to teasing the cold engine into starting. Long ago Chatrand had dispensed with chauffeurs, valets and dressers at the theater. They annoyed him. In his present mood, which had possessed him for nearly eight months, another strange face, another figure of an

was, at heart, a showman; a showman one hundred per cent, and the personal performance he had made a point of giving in every gathering had always been a source of subtle amusement to him. Damn it, he was losing ground. He was young. A man of thirty-five should not be satiated.

"Come on, you clown! Snap out of it!" he told himself.

He reached forward and threw off his brake. It wouldn't take long to run out to Chevy Chase. Senator Ludlow and Mrs. Percy Long would be there. . . .

Off he started, his face set with as much determination as if he were driving to his own execution. A man comes to a point where he must take himself in hand. Surely, he couldn't face his hotel room—that bleak, soulless, correctly appointed room so like every other hotel room, from its inadequate ceiling lights to its white porcelain spittoon

and Gideon Bible, that often he would wonder which city he was in! Gosh, it certainly would be good when this tour was over; when he could get back to New York and seek the comfort of his own restful, home-like apartment. . . .

The thought made him frown again. Great guns, was there no escaping himself? Hadn't the very home-like atmosphere of his own rooms driven him to this tour on the road? Hadn't their hollow emptiness tortured his very soul and started all this restlessness? The silence that he had secured after heated arguments with a stubborn architect and at enormous cost—hadn't it given him a numb and paralyzed feeling from which he had sought escape?

When the tour was over—when he returned to New York and took up his solitary abode again in the expensive five rooms that guarded the priceless treasures he had picked up from China to India and back again—what would be the result? He could smile grimly now, at the wheel of his car. He knew. It would be a matter of three weeks, perhaps, before he would hie himself off on a voyage of some sort for a "change."

He frowned in exasperation and subconsciously he drove more slowly toward Chevy Chase. What was the use of running out there? Senator Ludlow would be loud and pompous, the inconsequential, swaggering pose of his particular group. And what a group it would be. The "young things," thin ghosts of beautiful womanhood, bony fashion-plates *engorgoned* with their straight, curveless figures and their ugly, mannish hair-cuts. "Do you really read minds?" . . . "Wouldn't that slay you!" . . . "Don't you just cherish that!" . . .

Yes, he could hear their waspish, unmusical voices—these society girls!—before he reached the place! Gad! What tripe! And Mrs. Percy Long with her bad French and her languorous attempt at sultry beauty, and her diamonds from her wrists to her Adam's apple—for Mrs. Percy Long did have an Adam's apple, Chatrand could swear to it.

EVEN as his disgruntled mind played with these visions, Chatrand had turned his car off the main road.

He would take a long run out through the frozen, white-surfaced suburbs. Maybe he would drive all night. No, he couldn't afford to do that. He must rearrange his act to tide over a couple of performances

without an assistant. Damn that fool who drank himself periodically into a stupor! Why did he have to drink? He had a job, a good salary, a wife who loved him and took care of him and worked with him and for him! Some men just didn't know when they were blessed.

IF he, Chatrand, had a woman—a woman who was sweet as well as beautiful—a woman who didn't need to be common and vulgar in order to be popular and smart—a woman who understood him and loved him! God, what he wouldn't do for her! He would do the fighting, the working, the earning, the taking care of—he would probably spoil her with his devotion. . . . No, the sort of woman he wanted *couldn't* be spoiled. . . . Somewhere, perhaps, there was a girl like that! A girl who would love to sit beside him in his car and drive through moonlit, snow-covered towns like this and let him pour out his heart to her. . . .

Somewhere—perhaps!

Chatrand reached into his inner pocket with one cold, ungloved hand, while he guided the car with the other. He fumbled for a cigarette and his lighter, and settled again to enjoy the tang of his smoke. It had come to a point where he refused to scoff at his romantic dreamings. Why should he? A man wasn't a man who did not long for the dear necessity of a life companion. Companion! What a beautiful word that was!

Perhaps, he considered wryly, perhaps if he wasn't a magician—an entertainer—he might be in a position to meet the sort of girl he could love. Perhaps if he were not Chatrand, but *himself*, he would have found his idol. . . .

He smiled grimly, as again the ghost of his life as it might have been took possession of his thoughts. *Himself!* Lord Horace Ingle-Howridge. That's what he was; or what he might be this moment if he choose to claim his title. Yet, why consider the absurdity? He was the same man now who had run away from that title seventeen years ago. The boy of fifteen who had given fist-battle to his father, because his father had dared to marry himself to a notorious woman and offer her as a stepmother!

Yes, he was at heart the same boy who had fought for his mother eight months after she had died. And then—he had run away. Gone to sea for two unforgettable

years. Joined a traveling group of cheap theatricals after that. Worked his way to America where he had made his home. Changed his name, and through a chain of freakish and wondrous circumstances had made himself, Chatrand the Great.

NO one had ever known. No one had traced him.

He had thought that he had forgotten, that he had shed his real identity as a snake sheds its skin. Yet, eight months ago, in those rooms of such ominous quiet in New York, he had read of his father's death. And that woman—that woman who had taken his mother's place in spite of her reputation—that woman and her two sons (queer to think of having foster-brothers!) were in possession of the fine old estate where he, Chatrand, had spent his happiest years.

No, he didn't regret it. His life was as he had made it, and he would not wish to change. Only one thing would cause him to reveal himself. Let one of those young rascals belittle or disgrace his family name, and by God he would—

A low, throaty gasp, half of fear and half of shock, escaped from Chatrand's lips at that very moment.

His right hand subconsciously gripped the emergency brake, and wrenched it with a banshee howl toward him. The huge Packard, protesting and trembling, jolted to a standstill, its back wheels twisting in the soft snow until the car had almost turned a half circle in the deserted road.

Chatrand leaned forward in his driver's seat and stared at the object, under the glare of his headlights, that had so startled him.

It was a figure, face downward, lying prone in the snow! The figure of a man—without a hat or an overcoat.

Chatrand's eyes closed tightly, and his huge frame shook with a slight spasm. What had saved him from running headlong over this figure in the midst of his own self-absorption? Just his strange beggar's luck, as he called it, which had made him see the figure in the nick of time.

His eyes opened again and then narrowed at the sight of the human being sprawled less than five feet from his front wheels. A blotch of blackness on the wide, white stretch of road—for all the world like the gangling shadow of one of the huge, naked trees in the moonlight.

The figure did not move!

Chatrand moistened his lips slowly and looked about him. He had no idea where he was; he had not thought of what direction he might be taking. Around him were vast stretches of snow, which occasionally rolled and whipped like the spray of the sea in the lash of the cutting wind. A long, formidable row of bared tree-trunks lined the straight road ahead of him. Not a house in sight. Not a glimmer of a light.

Again Chatrand's glance returned to the figure on the road.

What had brought a man out to such a god-forsaken place at such an hour, on New Year's Eve? Perhaps he had been lured here by someone who had left him lifeless like that in the middle of the road. . . .

Perhaps the man wasn't dead! Maybe he had fallen there in a drunken stupor.

Irritated, Chatrand brushed such a thought from his mind. Somehow, he knew, as Chatrand had known many things in his life that he could not account for, that the man before him was a victim—a victim of some sort of foul play.

Immediately he opened the door of his car and climbed stiffly out into the snow. He shuffled his way through the icy, slippery mounds and stooped over the figure.

Another gasp of horror escaped from his lips.

Good God! This was no man! The fine, sandy hair, the white, delicate skin—this was a boy! A kid!

Swiftly Chatrand bent down and grasped the boy's shoulder. Kneeling in the snow, he turned the figure over, so that the shoulder and head rested against his arm.

Just a kid—hardly more than a child in long trousers! Couldn't possibly be over sixteen.

Chatrand lifted the pale, frozen face upward toward the light of the car. A handsome young face it was, though the lips were bloodless, and the long, slender nose was blue with cold. Across the forehead was a deep gash, the sight of which brought a muttered oath from Chatrand.

HE examined it carefully. The wound was not new, but it was unhealed. Perhaps four or five days had passed since it had been an open cut. Obviously, it had received no care. As Chatrand brushed, with infinite care, the clinging chunks of snow from around the wound, he saw that it had been healing itself in jagged clots that were hideously raw and angry.

A wave of pity, an awakening of the protective impulse that he could not define but that moved him deeply, swept over Chatrand. Without another moment's hesitation, he lifted the slight frame of the boy in his two arms and plodded slowly back to the car. It was difficult lifting the boy in; difficult and horrifying to attempt to adjust him in the front seat so that the jolting of the car might not disturb him and to wrap him securely in the black plush robe that Chatrand kept folded in the rear of the car.

ONCE the boy was settled, Chatrand seated himself grimly, slammed the door of his car shut and with some effort guided the wheels back to the road, turned completely around and headed for Washington.

He drove slowly, with infinite care, one hand on the wheel of his car and the other on the arm of the boy beside him in a strong, steadying grip.

To all appearances the boy was dead! His head slumped forward against his chest and rolled with every lurch of the great car along the road. Only the insistent clutch of Chatrand's hand kept the body from toppling, more than once, into an inert heap on the floor of the car.

Yet, as he drove, lips set, eyes straight on the white stream of highway, Chatrand *knew* that the boy lived. It was not merely the rationalization of his hope; he *knew*! In his heart was a strange and certain conviction that this particular incident was to be the most important in his life. He was impressed with the fact that he had been guided to this road—to the very spot where this poor boy had lain. It had all been planned—foreordained. The boy at his side was his, Chatrand's, singular responsibility.

More than half his life Chatrand had been dabbling in magic, in mind-reading, in spiritual phenomena. Slowly, with the passing years, his soul had become amazed at the strange processes of the psychic forces. Nine years ago he had experienced a particular shock at a time when his own life had been saved by that strange inner prophecy of danger. He had set about studying with serious earnestness the mysteries of occultism—or such, at least, it was termed, for lack of a better name. He had spent two years in India among the Yogi: he had sought and grappled with the esthetic beliefs of the adepts, in the white silences of the Ganges and the vast temples

of the Mahatmas. He had been fascinated.

After those years of fervid, hysterical faith, he had emerged with a clearer understanding of himself in relation to the universe. Later, when he returned to his own country and to his own life of tricks and breath-taking magic, the wild enthusiasm had tempered. Sometimes he had laughed at his own credulity; again he had stormed at the change and vowed to return to the further study of the greatest truth that man can seek. Gradually he had found balance and peace. He knew his own powers and he accepted humbly his exalted concepts, understanding in his heart from whence they came, and never daring to use them for any personal or ulterior purpose.

Now, in just such a spirit, his mind became crystallized in his new resolve. This bruised, ill-treated boy beside him had been delivered into his hands. Not for one second did he intend to shrink from the charge.

Chatrand had no realization of how far he had driven, though he had noted carefully the direction on his return trip, when at last he halted the Packard at the side entrance of the Mayflower Hotel, at half past two that first morning of the year 1925.

"I want to see Mr. Bond, the manager. Right away, please. Ask him if he won't come out here a moment," he directed the doorman sharply.

The holiday smile on the pale old face of the doorman vanished, and his eyes bulged bleakly as he spotted the ghastly figure beside Chatrand.

"It might take a bit of time to find him, Mr. Chatrand," he mumbled helpfully. "He's here and there and everywhere tonight, sir. You know——"

"Well, tell you what," interrupted Chatrand shortly. "You give me a hand, and ask Mr. Bond to come up to my room as soon as he can. Friend of mine, here. He's in a bad condition. Hurt. An accident. I want you to get him upstairs and call a doctor. We can get a bed put in my sitting room for the time being."

EVEN as he spoke, he had scrambled out of the car himself, his hand digging deeply into his pocket. He held out a yellow-back bill gravely to the doorman.

"I want you to help me all you can and as quickly as you can," he said quietly. "Can I count on you?"

"Sure, Mr. Chatrand," agreed the doorman with an attempt at assurance that did

not conceal his mingled suspicion and annoyance.

"We'll take him up together," suggested Chatrand without more ado. "We might cause some disturbance or comment going through the lobby. Is there a back elevator or a service car we could use?"

"Yeh—I guess it would be all right."

THEY leaned into the car and began to coax the figure into an easy position.

"My God!" moaned the doorman suddenly, his voice heavy with terror. "He—ain't—dead, Mr. Chatrand? You can't bring a—"

"He's not dead!" exploded Chatrand sharply. "Here, let me take him."

With one sweep of his strong arms, Chatrand lifted the boy out and hoisted his burden half across his shoulder.

"Come—let's go!" he ordered impatiently.

But the pale-faced doorman had been frightened out of his poise. He stood, hunched with cold and terror, his two hands clasp and unclasp nervously as he stared open-mouthed at the figure in Chatrand's arms.

"For God's sake, man!" snapped Chatrand with a snarl. "What's the matter with you?"

"Look!" gasped the doorman in a hollow tone. "Look! Look there! Will you?"

Chatrand's eyes followed the man's terror-stricken gaze to the hip pocket of the unconscious burden he had shouldered. The awkward, strained position of the youth's body had drawn his sack coat up, and now, in full view, was a pistol. More! The butt end of the weapon was covered and caked with blood; dry, dark, old blood that hugged the handle in a dull brick stain!

For a moment Chatrand faltered. Perhaps this boy was a gangster mixed up in some horrible crime. Perhaps he had committed murder and, himself wounded, had staggered from the scene of his crime to fall unconscious in the snow. . . .

Rotten business to be mixed up in something like that. What had prompted him to take this boy to his hotel instead of going straight to a police station or a hospital?

The question answered itself. The inner voice that had prompted him was right, as it had always proved itself right. Whatever the story involved, whatever the consequences, he, Chatrand, was the appointed guardian of the limp figure that hung across his shoulder.

Chatrand's lips tightened in a short line

of determination. His eyes were smoldering.

"Don't be a fool!" he snapped at the terrified doorman. "Do as I say and help me upstairs."

While he spoke he eased the boy's position so the pistol was again hidden. Then, ignoring the quizzical looks of the attendants, Chatrand followed the doorman to the back entrance of the hotel and up the service elevator. It was with a sigh of relaxed tension that he stepped across the threshold of his own suite as the doorman unlocked it and snapped on the lights.

Chatrand crossed to the stiffly unholstered divan at the far end of the sitting room and lowered his burden with infinite care. For a moment he stood contemplating the boy. A pallor that could easily be taken for death, not a stir or flutter to promise any hope, yet Chatrand could not relinquish his inner faith that the boy lived.

Quietly he straightened up, slipped out of his coat and gloves and tossed his scarf and hat on a near-by chair. Then he turned to the disapproving and thoroughly frightened doorman.

"Is there a doctor in the house that you could get?"

"I guess Doctor Joachim might be in," ventured the man resentfully, "but it being New Year's and—"

"Well, try to get him at once!" broke in Chatrand tersely. "If you can't, get someone else. And do it as quick as you can! And ask Mr. Bond, the manager, to come up here, will you? Meanwhile I'm going to telephone the police."

At this last statement the face of the doorman resumed its usual expression. Such a contemplated action on the part of this strange magician, who had suddenly appeared with a corpse and a bloody pistol, restored the man's sense of reality. His eyes, somehow, seemed a trifle less blood-shot as he again accepted a bill and mumbled a few words as he shuffled out of the door.

ALONE, Chatrand whipped off the coat and vest of his dress-suit, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and kneeling beside the divan, bent over the prostrate figure. He frowned and his lips twitched as he bent his ear in vain against the boy's chest. Pushing back the lids, he peered closely into the boy's eyes, and after fumbling for his pocket flashlight, he breathed an audible sigh of relief when the beam of light caused a slight contraction of the youth's eyeballs.

"Of course! Of course he's alive!" he

muttered, in a very decided tone of relief.

With that belief sustained, the magician sat back on his heels and regarded with careful scrutiny the boy's person.

Slight of frame—not more than sixteen or seventeen surely . . . Delicate, sensitive features, and hands that seemed to have known little or no toil . . . Good family to judge from the fine materials and excellent cut of his outfit . . . a ring of some value and a good wrist-watch . . . High forehead and finely proportioned head . . . A mental type, no doubt . . . Such childish, sensitive lips, blue with cold . . .

THIS last observation brought Chatrand again to action. He rose and crossed into the bedroom, where he opened a bureau drawer and fumbled through a jumble of linen for a bottle of rye. He took a glass from the bedside table as he passed, and with these he stalked back into the sitting room.

Again kneeling, he was attempting to force some of the liquor between the boy's teeth when he heard a voice and the rattling of the door knob.

"It's Mr. Bond!" announced the voice crisply, and almost as he spoke, the door opened and the man entered.

He was a tall, sedulously groomed chap, with sleekly brushed blond hair, large brown eyes and sharply cut features. He stood in complete amazement at the picture that he had so suddenly confronted. A Southerner, with the Southerner's curve to the shoulders that belied the athletic figure, he gave the impression of being the spoiled son of a rich man, so utterly did he possess the Southerner's air of competent indolence. Yet Andrew Bond was famous as a hotel manager from California to Atlantic City.

"Fight at the theater, Chatrand?"

"No. I found this boy lying in the snow. Damn near ran over him in my car. I had the blues tonight and went for a drive instead of going to any party. I haven't the faintest idea what road it was, but we can trace that in the morning. He's pretty badly knocked out."

"Um," agreed Bond with a pained expression, as he came nearer and made his own summary. "Doctor Joachim will be up in a minute. He's working over a woman who passed out in the ballroom just now. What did you bring him here for, Chatrand?"

Chatrand looked up into the agreeable face that held an expression of abused in-

dignation, and for the first time that evening a smile crossed his lips.

"Probably because I knew if I did, you wouldn't have the heart to throw me out, Andy," he explained easily.

"But, lookahere——"

"Listen!" Chatrand got to his feet. "I'm just fool enough to want to take care of this kid. Look at him! He comes from fine people. I don't know what kind of scrape he got into, but I want to see him through. I'm pretty much of an idiot in many ways, Bond. I have a feeling, somehow, that it was Fate that sent me out on that road to find this kid."

For a moment Andrew Bond's eyes were narrowed with disapproval.

"Well, I don't like it!" he grumbled presently with a shrug of his comfortable shoulders.

Chatrand knew he had won.

"It's all right, Andy," he assured the manager confidently. "I won't get anyone into a jam. If Joachim says he's too sick, we'll move him to a hospital right away. If not, I want to keep him here until I can get him back to his people. In the meantime we'll call the police if you say so. The boy has a gun on him."

"Yeh? I'll get Kearn, the house detective, up here."

Bond, as he spoke, leaned over and lifted a wallet out of the boy's vest pocket. This he opened with quiet judiciousness. From within, he took two one-dollar bills, some small change, two keys, a magazine article that had been torn from a current magazine, on which were marked several references to modern music, and a small packet of tissue paper in which was wrapped a pressed flower.

"GOSH, there's no identification here," frowned Bond, for the first time aroused.

Together the two men proceeded to search further. Neither the ring nor the watch was engraved. Except for the pistol, a small penknife, a fountain pen and five or six two-cent stamps hopelessly stuck together, there was nothing in his pockets. There was absolutely nothing to establish his identity.

Bond straightened up slowly, his accustoming air of polite laziness returning.

"Oh, well," he drawled. "There will be laundry marks, anyway."

"Like hell there will!" snarled Chatrand, who was still pursuing the search, "This

is a new shirt! And new underwear!"

"Say, if this kid is badly hurt—if he should die before he came to——"

But Bond's line of thought was cut short by a second rapping at the door. He stalked swiftly over to admit the tardy Doctor Joachim, and in his greeting he failed to hear a gasp of surprise from Chatrand.

The magician, still bent in his survey, had come across a small, stiff object in the boy's inner coat pocket. This he had taken out and his gaze had met a photograph that had sent a sudden shock through him such as he had never before experienced.

IT was a small photograph, the picture of a young and radiantly beautiful girl, the wistful sweetness of whose smile brought a tightness to Chatrand's throat which he could not explain.

"My God!" he broke in on the voices of the two men at the door. "Look what I just found! Look at that! Did you ever see a girl so—so lovely! She's like a magazine cover!"

"Yeh!" admitted Bond casually, as he studied the picture minutely. "She's good-looking all right."

"How long has he been unconscious?"

It was the quiet, crisp voice of Doctor Joachim, as he edged his way between the two men and bent over the figure on the couch.

"Must be fully an hour since I found him," Chatrand said. "But—he's alive, Doctor."

Doctor Joachim did not answer. With an air of appalling gravity, he was examining the boy, loosening the clothing and ripping open the shirt at the neck. He seemed wholly unaware of Chatrand or the hotel manager, who stood by in that helpless, numb expectancy that people invariably adopt in the face of quiet efficiency.

At length, Doctor Joachim turned and reached for his black bag. He neither glanced at the men nor spoke a word. With slow deliberation he took off his coat and vest and turned up his white shirt sleeves. He drew a chair close to the divan, seated himself and resumed his work.

Andrew Bond drew a deep breath of relief.

"If you want us, Carl," he directed the Doctor, "we'll be in the next room."

The Doctor nodded, and together Chatrand and Mr. Bond withdrew and quietly shut the door between the bedroom and the sitting room.

"You're right. The boy is alive!" Bond

announced with an air of satisfaction. "I could tell by the expression on Joachim's face."

"Loquacious chap, isn't he?" Chatrand muttered sarcastically.

"Never says a word while he works," Bond said, smiling good-naturedly. "He's famous for it."

"Well, if his silence is golden," Chatrand remarked, "I never want to be rich. Anyway, I knew the boy was alive. And what's more—I'd take my Bible oath that somebody deliberately tried to put that kid out of the way."

"That, or vice versa," agreed Bond, as he crossed over to the telephone. "I'm going to get the house detective. He can take Joachim's report and we'll get some action on the case. It's all pretty simple now that he isn't dead. After all, he's probably a Washington boy; somebody will report him missing; we can tally up on the girl's picture—and that's all there will be to it."

Chatrand nodded and lit himself a cigarette while the hotel manager talked over the phone. He threw back his head gratefully with the first long puff of smoke and, drawing close to the closed door of the sitting room, listened intently for some sound. All was deadly quiet.

He strolled over to the window and looked out unseeingly into the white, unsuspecting night. Though he would not express the opinion, Chatrand had the feeling that all would not be as simple as Andrew Bond had explained.

Presently, as if by an impulsive answer to a thought that had struck him, his hand reached into his coat pocket and drew forth again the picture he had found on the boy. He studied it intently.

THE girl was very young, hardly more than eighteen or nineteen, surely—yet an eighteen that must have known many troubles, or some sort of sorrow, to bring that steady, quiet and peculiar light of understanding into the blue eyes and that soft, unchildlike smile of wistfulness on the tender young lips. The hair seemed wind-blown, natural and free, and gazing at it, Chatrand wondered if the girl would be forcing it, in a few years, into the corrugated marcel of modern coiffure. To Chatrand, it seemed as if every young girl felt obligated to set about destroying and distorting each of her natural charms in order to appear modish. The utter "unspoiled" quality of the photograph in his hand was

what stamped itself so vividly upon his emotions when he had first glanced at it. And now, upon further study, it was that unspoiled, trusting wholesomeness that drew him closer to this picture of a girl than he had ever felt toward any real girl. He cursed the fact under his breath that the pose included only the head and shoulders. Presently he noticed about the white young throat a slender chain and a little locket; a square medallion in which no doubt the girl kept the picture of the one she most loved.

What was she to this boy who lay on the divan? Were they sweethearts? Was his picture inside that medallion? No doubt! They were just about the same age; an age of romance and illusions and light-hearted laughter.

Above the tones of Bond's voice speaking into the telephone, Chatrand heard a sharp rap on the door. Again he slipped the girl's picture into his pocket and hastily crossed the room to swing open the door and face Doctor Joachim.

"He seems to be resting easy," the Doctor announced without any preliminaries. "Are you going to leave him there?"

"No," decided Chatrand. "Can't we get him into my bed? I'll get him a set of my pajamas——"

"Fine. I'll send my nurse up to make him comfortable."

"Hell, no!" retorted Chatrand irritably. "I'd rather not have her around. Unless—does he need a nurse?"

"I think it would be best," insisted Doctor Joachim, a touch of suspicion in his tone. "I can't tell about the young man yet. He doesn't seem to be seriously hurt. His wounds were minor matters. Yet he shouldn't have been unconscious so long. He wasn't frozen. I guess he was pretty badly stunned. I think I located a bad bruise on the back of his head. I suggest we let him rest the night through if he can. In the morning we can examine him further. We may have to have X-rays taken."

"You sound mighty serious, Doctor," said Chatrand.

"WELL, to be frank, I have a suspicion that the boy may be paralyzed. We'll see. But I'll send Miss O'Brien up to stay with him through the night. She might have to call me."

"Oh, in that case, certainly," Chatrand assured him. "I'll take a room across the hall."

"Says you!" cut in Bond as he caught the end of the conversation. "There isn't a room in the house, and I've got my two brothers bunking in with me tonight. Looks as if you'll have to sleep in the Turkish Bath."

"Well, I've done it before," decided Chatrand wryly.

"Come on down now, and talk to Kearn, then," Bond suggested. "Joachim and the nurse—who is a pretty little devil—can make the boy comfortable. Kearn can come up later and look over his things. In the meantime you can give him the details."

CHATRAND was always thankful that this particularly eventful New Year's Eve fell on a Monday night. It gave him the week in Washington to attend to all the consequences of his strange adventure, and since his next stand was booked in Baltimore, he felt relieved at the thought that he would be near enough to the sick boy to see the matter to some conclusion.

True, that week in Washington was chaotic enough to tax his strength. To begin with, it was necessary for the magician to change the routine of his act while he was without the services of a mind-reading assistant. In addition there were the endless telegrams and long-distance calls to secure a new "medium," the eventual engagement of a man that seemed suitable, and then the regular process of training the new mind-reader for his act. This in itself was a gigantic and nerve-racking task, in spite of the experience Chatrand had, for the rehearsals called for the patience of a monk, the assurance of a bond-salesman and the persistence of a time-clock. There was nothing that so exhausted Chatrand's nerves or so racked his spirit as the training of a new assistant. So exacting was the routine, so particular and accurate were Chatrand's requirements, that the mere thought of the task generally lowered his vitality and ended in a siege of insomnia and chronic indigestion.

Yet in the case of this new "Alexander" who was rather hastily chosen to succeed the sodden fool who had played him so foul at the holiday performances, Chatrand found himself giving less of his time and worry to the matter than he had thought possible. Surely it was important to him; and yet there was only one matter uppermost in his mind during that entire week in Washington.

All day Monday, the boy who usurped

his quarters at his hotel, lay in a coma. By Tuesday it was necessary to remove him to a hospital where he could be given elaborate examination. The X-rays taken showed nothing beside the slight flesh wound in the back of the boy's head.

On Wednesday night of that week the boy roused himself. He sat up in bed and regarded his private ward and the nurse who sat beside him with bewildered, frightened eyes. Like one in a dream, he felt himself over as if seeking some recognition of his condition. He asked where he was, and why, how long and what had happened to him. The quiet answers of the nurse seemed to baffle him and the mention of New Year's Eve only seemed to puzzle him and send him into a reverie of dumb wonder that he finally gave up with a sigh.

HE sank back slowly against the pillows and his eyes studied the huge, blank white wall in front of him. Shortly afterward he fell into his first natural sleep, and it was in this condition Chatrand found him that night when he called after his performance for a report.

The following morning Chatrand reached the hospital around ten o'clock to be conducted soberly into the office of the head doctor and told the result of their morning investigation.

The boy had waked early, in full possession of his physical faculties and experiencing almost no pain or discomfort from his slight injuries. His mind, however, was a total blank! He could not remember who he was, from whence he had come, what had happened, where or how. They had questioned him slowly and carefully, abandoning the process at the first sign of agitation in him.

Chatrand was shocked by this development and probed the doctor in regard to its probable consequences. Beyond doubt, the boy was a victim of amnesia—his memory was gone, his past was completely blotted out of his consciousness. Unlike many afflicted with this weird malady, he had retained his memory of speech and of his habits. In many cases, the patient is reduced to the helplessness of babyhood and requires patient instruction in how to talk, how to walk, how to eat and read and write. This boy, however, suffered no such handicaps.

The fortunate aspect of these retained faculties, however, was offset in other ways. As soon as the boy fully realized his pre-

dicament it would be necessary to guard against hysteria that might lead to insanity. The boy was a sensitive type and every precaution would have to be exercised to prevent a mental strain that might throw him into a dangerous high fever. Then again, he might adopt a personality entirely different from his former and normal self. Where the boy had, perhaps, been quiet, docile and fastidious, he might conceivably show himself now as defiant, reckless and adventurous. Where he had been honest and truthful, he might be unreliable and sneaky. Such changes in character had frequently been caused by amnesia.

To Chatrand, whose very life was devoted to the study of all that was strange and unusual either in physical or psychic phenomena, this situation held a strong fascination. Not only was he strongly attracted to this boy who had been thrust into his life so dramatically—not only did the plight of the youngster rouse his sympathetic and lonely nature to deepest pity and tenderness—but the very condition of the boy presented a problem of unique interest.

All these things ran through Chatrand's mind as he stood later that morning by the bedside of the sleeping boy and gazed at the pale face and the slender, almost childish hands that rested motionless outside the coverlets. More than ever he felt impressed with a sense of singular responsibility. This boy was his particular charge—delivered over, helpless, into his hands for some reason that only the future could reveal.

As he was about to turn and leave, the boy moved slowly, heaved a prodigious and troubled sigh and opened his eyes. For a moment, their eyes met, questioningly, and then the boy leaned forward slightly with a smile of hope and delight.

"I've seen you before," he gasped breathlessly.

THE nurse sitting by the window rose hurriedly and laid a restraining hand on Chatrand's arm.

"You'd better not talk to him. The doctor said——"

"Of course you're seen me before," Chatrand answered casually, smiling, as he broke in on the nurse's objections and brushed her hand lightly off his arm. "You know me!"

"Yes!" the boy cried as he reached out a hand gratefully to clasp the one Chatrand offered. "Gee! Sure I know you. I just

can't—remember—I don't remember who you are!"

"Well, that doesn't matter," Chatrand assured him with a large air of cordiality. "I'm here, and you're glad I'm here, and that's all that counts."

"God!" choked the boy, his lip trembling, his hands clutching Chatrand with a fierce, tight grip. "I can't—tell you. Gee, I do remember, you see—I remember you. Maybe I'll remember everything—if—I—you know—gradually——"

"SURE!" agreed Chatrand heartily. "You'll remember everything, if you just don't worry about it. You've been a pretty sick fellow, you know, and it takes time to get well. Don't try to rush it. Take it easy and everything will be all right."

"It just takes time, doesn't it?" the boy repeated pleadingly.

"Now, you turn over and take forty winks," suggested Chatrand.

"Don't leave me! Please! Don't leave me!"

"I won't. I'll be here when you wake up," promised Chatrand.

With a sigh of contentment and relaxation the boy sank back against his pillows and his eyes closed wearily. For a moment Chatrand sat rigid, watching the boy's grasp of his hand loosen gradually. When he was sure the boy slept again, Chatrand shuffled softly to his feet and crossed to the door with the nurse.

"Did he really remember you?" she whispered in hoarse amazement.

"Of course," explained Chatrand as they reached the corridor. "He saw me at the hotel *after* the accident several times, while he was only half conscious, but he thinks he knew me before, that's all. He'll probably recognize Doctor Joachim and Andrew Bond as well. I think it best to let him think what he pleases about us. I'll ask the head doctor."

"It's a good idea," agreed the nurse solemnly. "You handled him beautifully there. If something like that is kept up I guess there won't be any risk of his losing his mind."

"Exactly," Chatrand nodded thoughtfully. "I can handle it. It would bridge him over. I might even make him believe he *did* know me before his accident, and keep referring to things that have happened until I form a new set of memories. I'll have to find a name to call him—as if it were his own name. I must discuss this with——"

But the clang of the hospital bell interrupted Chatrand's rush of thought and called the nurse away to her duties.

Chatrand found little sympathy with his plan, however, when he talked to the head doctor. There seemed to be a strange barrier in the doctor's mind, as if there were a moral issue at stake, in remodeling his patient's life, that was quite apart from any science of medicine. He admitted that the idea seemed logical and humane, but the old delusion that cruelty was often the surest kindness seemed to fetter his experimental impulses. Here was a human life delivered into their care. What right had they to play God and remodel the boy's entire existence?

Chatrand became irritable at this attitude, and the more impatient he became the more obstinate was the doctor. At length the well-meaning old gentleman, seeking a rationalization of his own obstinacy, hurled suspicions upon Chatrand's head. Why was this more important to him than to the hospital officials? Was this boy, then, really something to Chatrand? Perhaps the boy *had* known Chatrand before the accident; Chatrand surely had no witness to substantiate his story of having found the boy on the road!

Here, then, Chatrand found a new tangle to unravel.

He had been visiting the police officials daily, urging a most intensive investigation as to the boy's probable identity. After the list of eighty names of the "missing people" in the precinct had been consulted, and after the lists of all outlying precincts and then of all the suburbs and near-by towns had been combed without finding a single request for the tracing of a young boy answering the description of the lad who lay in the hospital, Chatrand had interested the newspapers in the search. A complete description of the boy; together with details of his discovery on the road by Chatrand, and the picture of the girl, were published.

BECAUSE of Chatrand's prominence, the newspapers played up the story for all it was worth. A large news-service copied it and sent it out to every paper in the country. There followed, consequently, a deluge of replies, requests, demands and claims from all over the country, until police headquarters in Washington were almost crippled in the effort to handle the case and still function normally. Chatrand himself hired two extra stenographers to help in the mat-

ter, but the authorities were only too glad to accept the suggestion that followed close on the accusations of the chief doctor at the hospital who insisted that Chatrand's interest was a matter for investigation in itself.

CHATRAND, certainly, was harassed between his regular performances, the training of his new assistant and this important worry about his new charge. Perhaps, then, he could be excused for his hot, intolerant anger at the doctor who opposed his plan for improving the boy's condition. The two gentlemen became open enemies in the matter. Chatrand appealed to high authorities. The doctor brought his argument to his own officials. Chatrand promptly sought the help of his influential friends. The doctor tried to match him power for power. If the two had not been so intent on winning their points, the matter would have reached the height of the ridiculous.

Meantime the boy tossed and writhed in his bed, calling for the friend he had recognized and whose name he could not remember. So engrossed was Chatrand in fighting for the guardianship and responsibility of his charge, that for two days he had not a moment to spare to visit the boy. The boy's condition grew worse, and the head doctor promptly seized upon it as a bulwark in his argument. See what Chatrand had done by deceiving the boy once! Need more be said?

But the doctor did not count on his opponent. Chatrand was relentless by nature, once he had undertaken a definite project. If worse came to worse, he would have gone so far as to kidnap the boy under the eyes of an entire string of authorities, and anyone who knew Chatrand could easily believe him capable of it.

Abducting the boy was not necessary, however.

Chatrand had kicked up a dust in the newspapers that swamped the Washington offices with replies. For a time it seemed as if the whole country were interested in the case. But public interest is fleeting, and the Washington police were left with a mountain of claims to attend to in its own sweet time. Consequently when Chatrand offered to take complete responsibility of the case, everyone turned against the agitated doctor who opposed the plan. Chatrand threatened to withdraw all funds. The boy would become a charity ward now. What did they intend to do with him? Who would care

for this lad without friends or money?

He put forward his arguments carefully and with a repetition that would have worn down the rock of ages. He himself would take the boy and provide for his best care. The authorities could keep track of every move he made, and of every step in the boy's treatment. The boy was not physically incapacitated. He needed rest and kindness and care and no excitement. Well, those things would be taken care of privately—and not in the atmosphere of a sanitarium or a hospital, which would surely affect such a sensitive nature. Whenever claims came that warranted attention, Chatrand would see to it that the claimant would be permitted to see the boy. Indeed, he would even pay the fare of such a person himself, even though it were from California to New York!

What possible objection, then, could the doctor have to Chatrand's offer? None, if the truth were told, except that the good gentleman resented having been called an old fogey and a "damned old alarmist."

These arguments, since they could hardly be expressed, had little weight and by Saturday morning Chatrand was permitted full liberty to execute his plans. The moment he received notification of this, Chatrand arranged for the boy to be brought to his hotel. It was indicative of his character that he breathed a sigh of relief and satisfaction only when his charge was out of the hospital and seated, pale but contented, in the armchair of his hotel sitting room.

The boy was extremely grateful for Chatrand's triumph. They had seen each other but a few fleeting moments in the week, yet between them there existed a strange, undeniable bond. Perhaps because the boy believed that first day that he had known Chatrand before his illness, he still felt, though he was aware of the true situation of things, that the man was his friend. Whatever Chatrand did was right; whatever he said must be so. The boy clung to his protector; his eyes followed him about the rooms with the confidence and trust of a child.

ASIDE from being weak, after his five days in bed, the boy was perfectly well physically. Good food, plenty of rest and sleep, gentle exercise and fresh air were all that he needed to regain high health.

But as Chatrand gazed at the boy across the supper table that was set in the sitting room that evening after his *matinée* per-

formance, he realized that he had shouldered no slight obligation. It would be necessary to watch and guard the boy constantly. For a time, perhaps, he would need a nurse or a man to be with him while Chatrand was at the theater. He must be protected from any shock or strain; more than that, Chatrand determined that the boy should be taught to laugh, to be light-hearted and joyous in order to counteract the natural mental brooding that his strange situation inspired.

ALL this and more Chatrand swore softly, that night at the supper table, that he would do himself. He would make a companion of the boy. He recognized the deep cavern in his own loneliness that this self-imposed ward would fill. Even now there was a surge of generous affection in the man who sat opposite the bewildered and grateful boy.

Even while these thoughts were running through his head, Chatrand kept up a barrage of bright banter throughout the meal. He explained about the travels they would take, the towns they would visit, the work he did at the theater and some of the wonders of his magic. Never once did he err by asking the boy a question that would bring the white, strained expression that came whenever anyone took it for granted that he knew or could remember certain matters. Hence, the boy thawed and relaxed during the quiet twosome meal, and by coffee-time he was laughing restrainedly at some of Chatrand's obvious good-humor.

At length Chatrand pushed back his chair, with the announcement that he had but an hour before he must return to the theater. Doctor Joachim's nurse would be in to talk to the boy and keep him from being lonely, providing, of course, the boy gave his promise not to fall in love with her! For the moment he was to sit still and look at a magazine while Chatrand threw a few things into his valises.

As a matter of fact, Chatrand never packed until late at night, but upon this occasion he decided that it would be best not to disturb the boy after the performance was over. He had sent down his hotel trunk early in the day, and there remained only his light luggage to be packed. He turned into his bedroom and set about the task that he always despised, whistling softly as he moved from drawer to closet.

He was busy in this way for almost a half hour when he suddenly heard a voice

from the next room. It sounded very hoarse.

He stopped short in the midst of folding up some pajamas and listened in puzzled surprise.

The voice rose again in a strange pitch of excitement.

"What's that?" demanded Chatrand sharply, and stalked to the door.

"*You take that back, you impudent young puppy!*"

Chatrand had reached the threshold of the sitting room as these words struck his astounded ears. So great was the shock that he dropped the pajamas from his hands without even noticing them. Those words! They struck a familiar chord in his memory that sent a shiver of ice-cold anger down his spine.

"*You take that back, or you get out of my house! You hear me!*"

Chatrand leaned forward, white and startled, and gazed at the boy.

He was sitting—almost reclining at full length—in the huge armchair where Chatrand had left him. At his feet lay an open magazine that had slipped from his hands. His head was thrown back against the chair and his eyes were closed. The hands that rested quietly on the arms of the chair looked almost lifeless, they were so white in the glare of the ceiling lights.

And now from the white lips of the entranced boy came a mad stream of terrible words—and Chatrand felt icy fear stab at his heart!

My God! *Those were the very words that a dead man had spoken twenty years before!* And the voice was a voice from the grave!

He shrieked, "Stop! For God's sake, stop!"

But the voice went on inexorably—the voice of Chatrand's own father as he had stormed at his son on the memorable night of their quarrel—the night Chatrand had run away, never to return again.

THE terrifying effect of the boy's voice was rendered doubly weird by the passive unchanging expression on his face.

"*I'll make him apologize to you, Edna! So help me God, I'll make him apologize to you!*"

The words brought the wretched scene of that night back to Chatrand with such awful vividness that he almost saw himself, a boy of fifteen, defiantly facing the white-haired old gentleman who was his father. He could see once more, as if it had oc-

curred yesterday, the woman called Edna standing scornfully and haughtily behind the old gentleman—the woman his father had married, and whom he was supposed to accept as his mother. And his mother but three months under the ground . . . his mother, who. . . .

"You have just two minutes to—"

But Chatrand wheeled at the sound of the boy's voice this time.

"DON'T say it!" he mumbled throatily, "For God's sake, boy, don't say it!"

He half swayed over to the huge chair and dropped on his knees!

Who is this strange boy who can drag to light the secrets of the dead past? What is the mystery of his own personality and past? Chatrand has embarked on a course of action that leads to romance, danger and—THE SPIDER, who spins his subtle web in the very shadow of death. You will be held spellbound by the swift developments in this amazing tale of murder, intrigue and the glamorous life of the theater. GHOST STORIES has never presented a greater or more thrilling story to its readers. Don't miss a single word of it! Watch for the January number of GHOST STORIES—on all news stands November 23rd.

The Phantom Messenger

ABOUT a year ago James Kissinger, a New Jersey construction engineer, accepted a commission to supervise the erection of two railway bridges in the mountains of central Brazil. In accordance with his custom when following his profession in out of the way places, he left his wife and youthful son at home. The principal reason for this course was, that he was unwilling they should share the hardships of his excursions into the wilds. Other reasons were, that he was desirous that his boy's schooling should not be interrupted, and because it was necessary that his wife should look after the considerable real estate holdings which they held jointly.

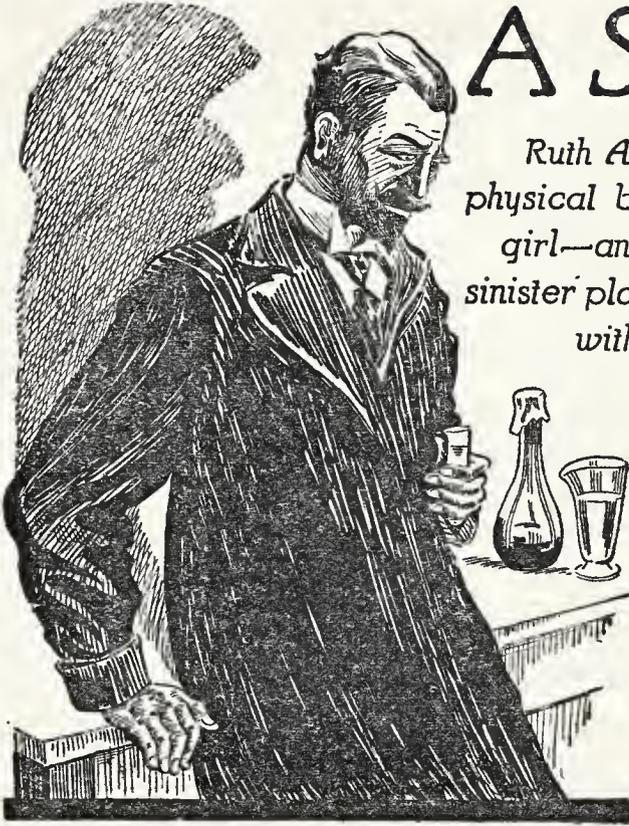
For eight months he communicated with his family regularly once a month through the office of the contractors who employed him. Then came a lapse. But it caused no particular concern among his relatives and friends, who reasoned his work had carried him so far into mountains that he had been unable to send his customary letters.

Late one night, when nothing had been heard from him for two months, an intimate friend was amazed to note Kissinger hurrying toward a Jersey City ferry, from which boats ran to New York City. The friend stopped the engineer—who recognized him, spoke his name but did not grasp his outstretched hand—and began questioning him concerning his unannounced return. Kissinger said he was in too great a hurry to explain, as he must catch the boat about to leave. He stated he had been to his

home, but found no one there. Then he requested the friend to tell Mrs. Kissinger that the deed for a certain piece of property, for which she had been offered a large sum by a firm desiring to build a factory upon it, and which she had been unable to locate, had been misplaced among some old papers in his desk.

WHEN the message was delivered, the woman located the document in the place indicated. But, when her husband did not appear, she went to her husband's employers and told the story. A cable was sent to United States Government representatives, requesting an investigation. Some days later a report was received stating that the engineer was still in Brazil and that at the time specified he could not have been in New Jersey because he was ill with fever and delirious in a mountain construction camp. The report added he was recovering and had written to his wife.

The outstanding points of the puzzle were, that the friend could not have been mistaken in identifying Kissinger and that the document had been located through the alleged message from the engineer. When Kissinger's letter reached his wife, it shed only a dim light upon the mystery. In it he stated that she should examine the contents of his desk carefully because, while ill, he had dreamed time and again that he had inadvertently left an important paper there which he should have placed in their bank vault compartment before leaving America.



A Strange

Ruth Avery coveted the physical beauty of the insane girl—and she conceived a sinister plan. She tried to play with human souls!

By

RUTH AVERY

As told to
DORIS B.
GRIGSBY

WHEN I resigned my position as art instructor at the Blaxton Academy and went to Rockwell Hall as private secretary to Doctor Raoul Rockwell, I was severely criticized by the faculty of the Academy as well as by the people in the little town of Blaxton.

Doctor Rockwell, formerly professor of psychology in a great French institute, was neither understood nor appreciated in that quiet Southern community. He was known, far and wide, as a student of the occult and as the originator of the "Rockwell Method of Hypnotism." This, in itself, was enough to damn him in the eyes of the village folk.

However, I was much pleased at this opportunity to associate with so brilliant and learned a man, and I heeded neither the buzz of gossip nor the storm of criticism but took up my new duties with enthusiasm.

The Doctor was writing a book on psychic phenomena, and day by day I found it more thrillingly interesting. Also, I had a very lively curiosity concerning his theory of astralization and its possibilities. I say "theory" and "possibilities," but he spoke

of it as an established scientific truth, in so far as his own experience was concerned.

He was able, he declared, to place the human body in a condition that made it possible to set free the spirit and send it on long journeys across land and sea. At any time he desired, he could recall the soul to its body.

"It is simply another triumph of mind over matter," he said on one occasion. "Of course, as much depends upon the subject as upon the operator. The two, in order to accomplish the best results, must be completely *en rapport*."

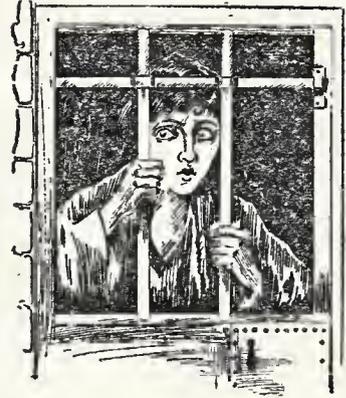
He took up a sheet of manuscript which I had just finished typing, read it for errors and laid it down. Then, fixing his bright steel-blue eyes upon me, he remarked quietly:

"You, Miss Avery, would make a wonderfully fine and intelligent subject."

I smiled, not especially complimented. I knew that he often used his coachman as a subject for his experiments.

He shrugged his shoulders. "I can read your thought—but you are wrong. It is not a question of a strong mind dominating a weaker one; rather, it is the blending of

Experiment *with a* Mad Woman



two minds for the accomplishment of a definite object, the reaching of a certain goal. Two persons born under the same sign of the zodiac, whose reactions are similar and temperaments akin, could go far in this particular line of research."

All day I kept thinking of what the Doctor had said, until finally in a remote cranny of my brain the germ of a thought was born. So interesting, so fraught with possibilities was this idea, that I lay awake half the night considering it.

I WAS still thinking of it next morning, when, happening to glance through the library window, I saw the graceful figure of a girl walking in the garden.

At my involuntary exclamation of surprise, the Doctor, who had just entered the room, glanced at me oddly. "My niece, Shalimar Rockwell," he informed me. "She came last night to make me a visit; I hope, if it is at all possible, to keep her here."

"She is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen!" I said frankly.

"Yes, she is exquisite—which makes her condition seem all the more tragic. Poor child! For many years she has been a victim of dementia præcox—her mother died in an insane asylum."

Later, when I walked for an hour in the garden, I came upon the lovely Shalimar, sitting beneath a great lilac bush and, child-like, playing with a tiny black kitten. Upon seeing me, she was frightened; she sprang to her feet, caught the kitten up in her arms and ran away, looking back, every now and then, over her shoulder.

Transfixed, I stood gazing after her, watching her dress of vivid blue flash in and out among the shrubbery. Her beauty affected me strangely—she was so pathetic a figure, so unaware of her physical charms.

Later I met her face to face upon the

stairs and found her even more beautiful than I had first thought. As she flashed past me I saw that her little hands were covered with gems, and I caught a whiff of fragrance, faint and elusive like the perfume of white hyacinths.

From my artist father I had inherited a love of the beautiful, a love so painfully intense that it amounted to a mania. Not only did I love beauty, both in nature and in art, but I desired physical beauty for myself. That night, after I had seen the exquisite but luckless Shalimar, I looked at my own plain face in the mirror—my face with its array of freckles, its nondescript features and its frame of straight red hair! And I wished from the depths of my beauty-starved heart that the gods had seen fit to bestow upon me, too, a rose-leaf complexion, purple pansy eyes, and hair like a cloud of black silk!

Then, suddenly, that germ of an idea, which had sprung into life the day before, grew into a plan, mature, definite, and filled my mind to the exclusion of everything else. A plan? Why, it was an inspiration—it possessed me.

DARINGLY I unfolded this plan to Doctor Rockwell. For a long moment he stared at me incredulously; then, his eyes shining, he grasped my hands.

"Miss Avery, you are a wonder woman, brave beyond belief! Such sublime forgetfulness of self I have never before known! What vistas you open up before me: research and experiments whose results are incalculable! Science will be richer through your act—posterity will bless your name."

I felt myself blush, for I did not deserve this extravagant praise. I had no thought of posterity, no desire whatever to offer myself upon the altar of science. On the contrary, I wished to make use of science in

order to acquire the one thing I had desired my whole life long.

"For you, Miss Avery, this will be sailing uncharted seas," continued the Doctor, "but you will find me no unskilled pilot; we are sure to succeed. But we must have an understanding on one point. My niece is a very great heiress and I, being her guardian——"

I interrupted him with a laugh. "Money! What do I care for money? Why, if you succeed, I shall be rich beyond the dreams of avarice!"

HE nodded, smiling. "Of course, that is true; personal beauty is the greatest capital a woman can have! Then prepare yourself, and tomorrow we shall know all."

At midnight, the appointed hour, I sat in my darkened room, waiting. Bathed, clad in fresh garments, I reclined beside an open window, trying to compose myself. In my hands I held a small Testament that had belonged to my mother, and the touch of the worn little book seemed to soothe my jumping nerves.

Outside, the velvet darkness of the night, unrelieved by a single star, pushed like a dense wall against my window. A brooding silence hung over the garden; no breath of air stirred the limp-hanging curtains. I felt already, in a sense, as if I were keeping watch beside my discarded body.

A tap at my door—and the Doctor, a tall figure in a black gown, silently beckoned me to follow him. Down the long corridor we passed softly, our footsteps making no sound on the thick carpet. Suddenly I caught the faint fragrance of hyacinths—we were passing a closed door.

The Doctor pointed toward it. "All is well—she sleeps deeply and is perfectly passive to my suggestion."

At the end of the corridor he swept back a heavy curtain, led me up a stairway to the corridor above and thence into a room, where the walls, hung in black, seemed like the darkness of an unknown and threatening night encompassing us. The floor was a thick, dark shadow, while the one piece of furniture in the room, a table-like couch draped in somber-hued velvet, seemed swimming in a black void, wavering, unsubstantial, a part of the shadowy walls of this place of shadows, where the very darkness was intensified by the flickering light of one tall, solitary candle.

My knees had long since begun to tremble, my heart to beat madly; but with grim

determination I controlled a sudden desire to turn and flee from the awesome place and permitted the Doctor to lead me up the three shallow steps to the couch.

Darkness, except for the flickering candle! I lay flat upon my back, arms extended, and stared straight ahead, trying to pierce the shadows at the end of the room. Suddenly a muttered command, a rapid pass before my eyes! A light sprang up, seemingly emanating from a crystal globe that floated above my feet, and spun rapidly, as it floated.

Then out from the shadows of the opposite wall appeared the great black pool of a mirror! A dozen crystal globes seemed spinning in its polished depths—spinning at the foot of a bier-like couch on which I lay like one already prepared for the grave, while beside me stood a tall figure with thin, ghost-like arms and hands that waved grotesquely back and forth.

The light grew very dim, then turned to a ghastly green, while above me a voice spoke in singsong fashion: "Sleep—sleep—deeper to sleep—going deeper—deeper."

Sudden darkness for an instant; then, above my head, a disk of lavender-gray began to whirl dizzily and hummed as it whirled. The Doctor's face became ghastly and cadaverous in the eerie light; his long, white hands, waving before my eyes, were coming nearer and nearer—now they almost shut out the faint light!

All at once a sickening horror of what I was about to do, swept over me. I was afraid to go on with this thing! Suddenly the experiment seemed monstrous, inexplicably evil! I would *not* go on with it!

I started to sit up but had no strength to move—I tried to speak but could not open my mouth! Motionless, almost breathless, I lay gazing up at the whirling disk, listening to the monotonous voice that drove me on and on.

"DEEPER—deeper! Down through the stages—through the cataleptic stage—then deeper to sleep!—deeper—on and on through the fourth and fifth stages and down into the deep sixth, where all is clear, where all things are *here* and all time is *now*! Go still deeper—on—on—into the first degree of the seventh stage, where mind, triumphant, leaves the frail body. I command thee: GO——"

Lights spinning faster and faster, muttering words going on and on, white hands pushing me deeper, deeper, down into Stygian darkness!

And then, after an interval whose length I had no way of determining, it seemed that I had been dreaming of music—soft, distant music—that I was running after it, trying in vain to catch up with it. Then I awoke.

WITH eyes closed, I lay still, reveling in that wonderful feeling of well-being so often experienced after a sound night's sleep. It was morning, for I heard the sounds of the day: birds twittering outside the window, the hum of a bumblebee, the crow of a rooster.

"Lazy, lazy!" I sang out, stretched myself, then leaped from the bed and ran the

and bright with gems. My body trembled.

I lifted them in wonder, touched my face, then rushed back to the mirror. Shalimar again, with her rose-leaf complexion, her silken hair and pansy eyes! Shalimar, and yet, with a difference—for now a dominant personality, even though shocked and amazed, looked out from those wondrous eyes.

Then, memory—a horrible, sickening wave of memory—rushed over me. Again I saw the room of shadows, the crystal globes, the white hands that pushed me into a whirling, smothering pool of blackness! One by one I shudderingly recalled the

"Then I became aware of IT—the Thing that walked at my shoulder, one step back, keeping pace with me.

"Merciful God! It was the spirit of the mad woman....

"Nearer, it was creeping nearer—I could feel the coldness, the dampness of it. In a moment I would be done for — "

shade up so that I might feast my eyes upon the dew-spangled rose garden.

Why, the roses were not there! Instead, I saw the fountain flashing in the first rays of sunlight, the shrubbery glistening with dew. Dazed, I turned from the window, and stood in perplexed amazement, staring at the objects around me. I was not even in my own room! This room, which I had never seen before, was a boudoir, a nest of blue and gold—fit for a fairy princess!

Curiously I examined the glittering trinkets on the dressing-table and sniffed the faint fragrance of hyacinths that seemed clinging there. Then I happened to raise my eyes to the mirror and saw—lovely Shalimar Rockwell!

Oh, I had blundered, somehow, into her room! Confused, I turned. "I beg your par—" Why, she wasn't there!

I must be dreaming! Shocked, mystified, I stood motionless a minute, then chanced to glance down at my hands. Mine? No! Mine were square, capable hands, while these were fragile and delicate as rose leaves

events of that awful night. So! The great experiment had been a success! But if so, what had become of my body, *my own body*? Suddenly I became panic-stricken and rushed toward the door; at that moment it opened and Doctor Rockwell stood smiling at me.

"Allow me to congratulate you, my dear niece. After your long rest you are looking well, indeed."

His niece! Then I *was* his niece. Oh, yes, of course, I was suffering from dementia præcox—that explained why I had fancied myself his secretary, that plain, red-haired Miss Avery! And yet—

I RAN to him and grasped his arm. "Tell me, for God's sake, am I crazy? Or did it all really happen?"

He came into the room, sank upon a chair and mopped his face with his handkerchief.

"Good heavens! I have been almost crazy myself with the uncertainty of this thing! Thank God, you, at least, made the

journey successfully!" His face was ashen.

Then it was true that I had been Ruth Avery, his secretary! I was still Ruth Avery, but now I lived in this exquisitely beautiful body. I had my heart's desire, at last—I was beautiful!

"Yes," the Doctor continued excitedly, "the experiment has been a success, a marvelous success! What a triumph for science! I wonder what my former colleagues will say to this, my latest exploration of the Unknown? Will they believe that man has the power to control the forces of the spirit world? You and I know the truth—can we convince others?"

HE had jumped to his feet and was walking rapidly up and down the room, the perspiration standing out on his brow, his large eyes fairly blazing with excitement.

Motionless, I stood gazing at him, scarcely understanding a word, incapable of connected thought. A sensation of loss, of great and irreparable loss, had swept over me. Mentally, physically, I seemed, all at once, but a husk, a hull, in which a piece of disconnected machinery, I, myself, failed to function. The thing—what was it? What ever it was, I had lost it—somehow.

Oh, God in heaven! My body! It was my body—where was it? I rushed to the Doctor, clutched at his arm.

"Tell me, oh, for mercy's sake—my body—where did you leave it?"

He stared at me; his features became ghastly pale.

"That's the terrible part," he said hoarsely. "Let me explain. You see, while my niece's body was, and is, strong and beautiful, her poor spirit was weak and distraught—and it was unable to make the journey which your stronger spirit made so easily. When it left the beautiful temple, which you now occupy, it was too frail to enter another; instead, it went back to the great universal mind which gave it birth."

"Then—my body—where—"

The Doctor became even paler than before. "You see, it, the other body, was left tenantless, and it went the way of all bodies when the spirit has departed and—it is now forty-eight hours since Miss Avery was found dead in her bed."

He drew me to the window, swept back the curtains and pointed.

I saw a funeral cortège winding slowly past the house; I saw the black hearse with its nodding plumes, heard the *clop, clop* of the horses' hoofs, saw the carriages slowly

following—carriages filled with mourners whom I knew!

"A long procession," murmured the Doctor, "and lovely flowers! Miss Avery was well liked; she had taught at the Academy for a number of years and had many friends."

My body, my poor deserted body—the *alter ego* of myself! For thirty years it had served me faithfully and well! And how was I repaying that service? Why, I was a traitor, an ingrate.

Then a terrible thought came to me: When my body was buried and beyond recall, what if Shalimar's spirit, wandering homeless through space, should return and claim *her* body again—somehow, some way, push me out into fathomless darkness?

Suddenly I found myself leaning from the window, my arms outstretched in uncontrollable longing! And as I yearned toward that other self, now being carried to the grave, I seemed to be stretching out, still farther out, leaving Shalimar's body, just as a hand is pulled from a glove.

A sudden cry from the Doctor! Then I experienced a feeling of shock, followed by a sensation as of ethereal lightness! I seemed to be floating through the air and then—blackness!

Finally, after an indefinite time, the blackness became thick, damp, choking, and I was conscious of struggling.

The most horrible dream I have ever had is that of being buried alive. I have dreamed it often. Now, as I lay, closely cramped within the narrow confines of my coffin, I thought I was dreaming again. Then I opened my eyes—blackest night surrounded me!

I GROPED with my hands and, on either side, felt close, tight boards, while above was a lid that almost touched my face! Ugh! The cold, damp, slick feel of the shirred satin lining of that coffin! The sick-sweet smell of the funeral flowers beneath my hands! And then the cold, suffocating darkness, so thick that it seemed to knock with a strange thumping sound upon my brain!

Oh, God! This was no dream but a terrible reality!

In a veritable frenzy, I turned and twisted my body, tore desperately at the sides of my awful prison. Oh, to get out, to get out before I choked, before my lungs burst, before my thread of consciousness snapped! If only I could make an opening, I'd bur-

row through, to the top, like a mole! There would be some air seeping through the soil, enough to keep me from choking, anyway. So I reasoned, as I tore the suffocating satin into shreds and tried to claw through the wood with my nails. Then, crazed with the consciousness of being hopelessly trapped, I turned upon myself, biting my hands, tearing at my garment, until, exhausted, beaten, I lay gasping and choking. I felt my head growing bigger, lighter, while all the time the queer thumping sound beat louder and louder in my brain.

THEN, just as I was sinking in a gulf of horror, I heard a crashing sound as of a blow against wood, a splintering and tearing above my very face! Then came a gust of glorious air—voices!

"Some job, I say! That lid was heavy."

Ah! I breathed deep of the life-giving oxygen; never before had I known how to appreciate that common thing, the air we breathe!

Two men were standing over my coffin, but I lay perfectly still, content. I was thankful just to breathe.

"Give me a hand, Bill—let's lay her out! We got no time to lose."

They lifted me out of the coffin, laid me on a sheet and drew it around me.

"Damned spooky job—we don't get paid near enough, neither, Bill."

"We got thirty bucks for that last one—what more you want? Ain't that pretty good pay for a coupla' hours work?"

Thick black clouds covered the sky but occasionally the moon peeped through, and by its ghostly light I saw the two grave robbers dump the coffin back into the grave and then set to work shoveling in the dirt.

Silence, save for the clods rattling on the coffin and the gritting sound of the spades against the soil. The moon disappeared again; the hoot of a distant owl cut the silence, and the men finished patting the mound of dirt into shape.

"Now you stay here, while I go get the cart."

"Naw, if anyone stays, Bill, you do. Catch me stayin' here by myself! God! What was that?"

"What? Where?"

"There, back of that tombstone! Now it's gone. No, there it is—there, back of that stone! Did you see that?" The man's voice sank to a horrified whisper.

"Naw, I don't see nothin'! You got the heebie-jeebies, that's what's the matter with

you! Come on, we'll both git the cart; reckon there's no danger of *her* runnin' off while we're gone."

Bill laughed hideously; the other muttered something and the two moved away. Then, although stiff and sore in every muscle, I finally managed to get to my feet, wrapped the sheet around me and went tottering, stumbling, from the gruesome place. Though I owed my life to the two grave robbers, I had no desire to meet them face to face.

In and out among the white stones I stumbled, while all around I sensed the spirits of the dead, silent, watchful. I seemed to feel their white hands reaching out to pull me back. I dared not look behind me.

Finally the long driveway with its border of weeping willows! Now I knew where I was, and I could walk more easily.

On I went, my clothing flapping in the wind, while above, in the willow trees whose trailing branches brushed my face with their ghost-like fingers, there was a sighing, moaning, whispering sound that made my blood run cold.

Then I became aware of IT—the Thing that walked at my shoulder, one step back, keeping pace with me!

Merciful God! It was the spirit of the mad woman!

Desperately I tried to walk faster but my feet had become leaden. Only by exerting my will to the utmost, could I lift one foot and put it in front of the other; and all the time It was there, just one pace back! Nearer, It was creeping nearer—I could feel the coldness, the dampness of It! And suddenly, faint, elusive, the odor of hyacinths—white hyacinths! Perspiration ran down my face; in a moment I would be done for!

MY life would be snuffed out as a light is snuffed from a candle—I knew it!

Then I came in sight of the great gates leading onto the highway; they were wide open, and a one-horse cart was entering the drive! The grave robbers had returned! Thank God for that! Though grave robbers, they were at least human beings. Throwing up my arms and calling to them, I rushed forward.

I, who was so frightened myself, had no thought of frightening the two men; yet, as I appeared to them in that place of shadows, my grave clothes streaming in the wind, I must have seemed a fearsome and threatening figure. There was a series of blood-

curdling yells; the two men leaped from the cart and fled. The horse plunged forward.

WHEN I finally darted through the gate, the men were nowhere to be seen but I could hear in the distance their fast receding footsteps. In the driveway, back of me, the frightened horse was still running, the cart bumping along at its heels.

A moment I stood motionless, my hands clasped against my fast beating heart. Fearfully I looked all around—I was alone! But back there, in the dense shadow of the willow tree nearest the gate, I saw a blur of white, which, as I watched it, gradually became fainter and fainter until the shadows had absorbed its dim outline.

I knew a short cut to Rockwell Hall and I took it. It must have been two or three o'clock when I staggered around to the back of the house, entered through a kitchen window and dragged myself up the back stairs to my room. Exhausted both mentally and physically, I fell at once upon my bed, and went immediately to sleep. . . .

When I awoke to consciousness again, it was in the ward of a hospital, where, my nurse told me, I had been for two weeks, suffering from brain fever and nerve shock. Another two weeks passed before I was able to see visitors.

Then Doctor Rockwell, the shadow of his former self, came to see me. Pale, drawn and haggard, his eyes larger than ever, he stood looking down upon me, with agony and fear on his face.

I smiled up at him and he dropped heavily into a chair.

"God in Heaven! I have been beside myself with the maddening uncertainty! How did it happen—how did you—"

I told him that I owed my life to two grave robbers.

Then I learned that the whole country had been swept by a wave of superstitious terror since the woman, known to be dead and buried, had been found in her bed, alive, and raving in delirium.

"I knew there must be a rational explanation," continued the Doctor, "but you can't reason with the mob. I have been accused of practicing black magic, of being in league with Satan himself! The fact that my niece had, in the meantime, met death accidentally—"

"What! Shalimar dead?"

"Then you don't remember? It is strange—beyond human understanding—the way things happened. Why, you were there, in

her body, in her room; you talked with me. Then we were looking at the funeral cortège and you leaned from the window—"

"Yes, yes, I remember now; what then?"

"Why, you fell from the window; your, that is, her neck was broken. When we got to her, she was dead!"

"Then I—I—"

"Evidently you returned to your own body—it was tenantless—"

"Undoubtedly I am—back home again," I agreed.

His eyes flashed with sudden admiration. "You are marvelous. Miss Avery—such strength, such poise, such will-power! And what an experience has been yours!"

He smiled, rubbed his hands together briskly. "On the whole," he said, "I am pleased, immensely pleased with our experiment. Shalimar's death, of course, is to be regretted; still, it was in the name of science and, after all, who could wish to die in a greater cause? Yes, even though our experiment did not turn out, or I may say, 'stay put,' as we had planned, still it was a success, a great success! What a book we can write on this and further experiments along the same line!"

I RAISED a somewhat feeble hand to stem the flow of words, and shook my head most emphatically.

"No, absolutely no, Doctor Rockwell! I've had all the experience I crave, in the realm of the disembodied—more than enough, I assure you, to last me until I go in the old-fashioned way."

He used every argument possible in the hope of changing my mind, but to no avail. Fame, fortune, even the lure of beauty, left me unresponsive.

As soon as I was strong enough to travel, I went to visit an old aunt in New England. In her neat little cottage I slowly regained my health.

A tabby cat purring upon the hearth rug and a kettle singing on the hob, both are conducive to peace and contentment of mind—not to mention that dear, devoted old aunt, with her straight red hair, freckles and cheerful grin!

One deep regret I have: I can never forget that my reckless vanity, my thoughtless greed, cost the lovely Shalimar her life. And there are times, when, in the dead of night, I awake suddenly, as if a hand had touched me. Then I feel, near me, a presence; and I smell again the faint fragrance of white hyacinths!

The Flying Fury

By

LEON N. HATFIELD

Above the clouds, five hundred miles from land, Captain Cooper faced death—and something infinitely worse



I WAS alarmed at the appearance of Captain Nathaniel Cooper. It was the first time I had seen him since his almost fatal attempt to span the Pacific Ocean by airplane in one continuous flight. He sat in the dining room at The Alcazar. He was much thinner than when I had seen him last, three weeks before he sped down the sands and turned the nose of his monoplane into the setting sun.

But it was not his thinness that alarmed me. It was his demeanor. His eyes looked over the crowded dining room, but I felt certain, from the blankness of Cooper's face, that they registered nothing of the fashionable happiness of the place. I was certain Cooper was unconscious of the liveliness of the music of the orchestra and of the grace and color of the two dozen dancers, who swirled past him so close he almost could have reached them if he had stretched out his arm.

His hands were clasped before him so tightly that his knuckles showed white. His dinner was spread untouched before him, and I could tell by the manner in which the waiter eyed Cooper that it had remained un-

touched for some time. I walked quickly to his table.

"Hello, Cooper," I said.

He looked at me with the same blank eyes and asked me to sit down. There was nothing of warmth in his greeting, though we were close friends.

"Say, old man," I admonished him, "you'd better snap out of your stupor. The young lady probably will say yes next time. Or are you still fretting because that silly old boat of yours got tired and wouldn't cross the Pacific?"

Cooper smiled faintly.

"If you care to listen," he said, "I have something interesting to tell you. When I am through, you may call me a fool or whatever you wish. But I've got to get this off my mind."

I was surprised by his manner and could think of nothing to say.

"I introduced you one time, I believe, to Herman Sucro," he began in a far-away voice. "You remember him, don't you? He was the little red-headed fellow from New Jersey, who came out here with that funny-looking yellow plane to take part

in the flight competition. Fine pilot, too.

"I got to know Sucro pretty well while we were loafing around 'Frisco, having our machines examined and testing our motors for the hop to the Islands. He was one of the best sports I ever met in most ways, but when it came to flying he was about as jealous as any mortal it has been my misfortune to meet.

"HE was in California two weeks ahead of the rest of us and when I first saw him he was patching his ship after a bad landing. He was a good flyer, but that yellow thing of his wasn't safe to run on the ground, let alone in the air. He bought it from someone who had used it three years doing stunt-flying at country fairs. It had already flown several times its normal life.

"Sucro was a poor lad and had his heart set on winning the twenty-five thousand dollars that was to go to the first aviator to cross the Pacific to the Islands. In fact, he was too poor to equip his plane properly for the flight. He had barely enough gasoline capacity to make the flight if he could maintain a constantly high speed and a direct course. But disaster was certain for him, if he got as much as a hundred miles from the true course—and when one is directing himself by nothing save his compass and is flying over an uncharted waste of restless water it is mighty easy to get much more than one hundred miles out of line with his destination.

"You remember, no doubt, that the rules of the flight committee required that we have a reserve gasoline supply that would permit us to fly at least six hours longer than the time estimated as a minimum for the trip.

"Sucro was turned down by the committee when his plane was examined. I was with him at the time. His disappointment was great, but he said nothing. He went dejectedly to his hotel room. I saw him later in the day. His hands were nervous and his lips drawn tight. He told me he had a notion to try the flight independently. I argued with him against it and he told me he knew he would be a fool to start. I supposed that ended things as far as he was concerned. But the next morning I saw in the paper that Sucro had hopped off, had turned the nose of his plane westward over the water and had disappeared below the horizon.

"He had no wireless, but the next day a

ship reported he had been seen three hundred miles off the coast. His plane seemed to be laboring along with difficulty. Sucro's ship was easy to identify with its yellow wings. The next day a passenger liner came into port and reported seeing a yellow plane fall into the sea in flames. The liner had put down boats and stood by for a rescue, but the man never appeared above the surface. To verify his story the Captain brought with him a strip of yellow silk. There was no doubt that it was from Sucro's plane. The piece had been picked up five hundred miles out.

"Naturally Sucro's death made the rest of us think a little. But we did not take it seriously as applying to ourselves. It was just that we felt sorry for him. He was a good fellow and we knew he had made a foolish attempt. His ship had not been fit. Ours were pronounced in perfect condition. My own had been run just far enough to loosen the motor well and I carried a twelve-hour emergency supply of gasoline.

"Two days after the news of Sucro's death came to us, eight ships hopped off over the same path. Mine, the last to leave the beach, was the only one ever seen again, as you know. The rest of them made wonderful starts. They had attained good altitude and tremendous speed before they disappeared from view of the crowds who saw them off. But somehow they all mysteriously passed into the unknown. Judging from radio messages received from two of them, they all went down about five hundred miles out, at approximately the place where Sucro's yellow wings took fire and he plunged to his death.

"I HAD experienced no real fear of the flight before time to hop off, but naturally I expected to be a little nervous when the time came. But I hadn't expected to feel like I did. I became cold all over. My hands perspired until they slipped on the control stick, and I felt ill.

"My ship responded beautifully and I experienced not the least difficulty in getting off the beach with my heavy load of gasoline. I climbed easily and soon was well on my way. When I got in the air, some of the nervousness left me and I swooped low over a ship that came toward me from the left. I could see persons lining the deck waving at me.

"Then I looked backward to where the shore was just a dull, dark irregularity. I froze in my seat and almost sent myself

into a spin, gripping the control. Rising from the shore I saw a yellow plane! When I left the field, there were no planes there besides my own! And what was more peculiar, though the shore-line was barely distinguishable, I could see every line of this plane. Its color was clear at that distance and in it I thought I saw Sucro's helmeted head!

"I took my eyes from it and shook myself. Naturally I didn't believe I really saw that plane. What frightened me most was that I had so far lost control of myself as to believe I had seen it. I had no idea poor Sucro's death had left such an impression on me. After a moment I reassured myself and looked about again. The ship still was there! It was traveling at tremendous speed and was flying perhaps five hundred feet lower than I was.

"I looked at my speedometer. It showed that I was flying one hundred and twenty-seven miles an hour. My ship would do one hundred fifty miles and I sent it up to that speed, though it was not my most economical gait.

"Still that yellow ship came on! After a long while, it passed me! It had climbed until it was level with mine. And as it passed, Sucro leaned from the cockpit and motioned to me.

"Come on," he seemed to say.

"As the ship passed, I noticed another peculiar thing. Its yellow, though just as bright as ever, was a transparent yellow. I could see right through it to the horizon on the right!

"I FELT like turning back, for a moment. Then I reasoned that my mind was just playing tricks on me. The strain of the uncertainty of the flight had told on me a great deal more than I had realized. But even while I was 'seeing things' in my fear, I was flying the ship perfectly. My compass showed me I was on my course and I judged that I had flown perhaps two hundred miles.

"I looked again at the yellow ship and saw it disappear in the west.

"I felt easier. I looked back again. Of course the land had passed out of view long before. Below me I saw a rough sea. Great waves were breaking against each other in their anxiousness to reach the shore and they sent up white spray. As far as I could see in any direction there was dark water and white spray. It was a beautiful scene. It is an impressive one from the

rail of a ship, but three thousand feet in the air it is a greater scene. One can see so much farther.

"I WAS letting that thought pass through my mind when out of the waves emerged that yellow ship! It bobbed to the surface, careened crazily for a moment and then was caught by another wave which tore it into a hundred pieces and scattered it over the water. A dark blotch appeared on the surface and as I watched it, paralyzed with fear and horror, I believed I saw a man raise his arms toward me pleadingly. Then the blotch floated away, or sank. I saw it no more.

"I had flown another two hours when I felt a queer feeling come over me. I don't know how to describe it. It must have been the feeling a bird experiences when the eye of a preying snake is fixed upon it. I was afraid and yet not afraid. My mind would not work and yet it seemed to respond normally to every requirement of the flight. I could pilot my ship, but I could not resist an impulse to turn my eyes again to the water. I dared not look at it, but I had to! You can't realize how I felt unless you have had a similar experience yourself.

"Down there, three thousand feet below me, Sucro's yellow plane was taking off! It was running along the surface of the water, though I knew it was a heavy, clumsy thing, made only for the land. It could not possibly have lived three minutes on the bosom of that angry ocean. But it was there!

"It circled higher and higher and then looped around me. Sucro's face, which had been pleasant when the awful thing had passed me before, now was ugly with rage. The Thing in the ship hated me. There was no doubt of that. I was afraid I was going to crash with Sucro's plane on its second loop, but it was handled expertly and went several yards over my left wing.

"Then I was conscious of a voice. It was Sucro's voice! I had heard it too often not to recognize it. But at the same time I could not see how it could be. Sucro was dead, I knew. What I saw and heard was caused by some terrible trick of my mind.

"Then I realized for the first time that I had heard no noise from the plane which was darting madly about me, as a hawk might dart about an unfortunate sparrow on which it was about to pounce.

"Come on, you!" I heard Sucro yell as

he went around me again. 'I told you once nobody was going to beat me on this flight—and they're not! Just follow me, big boy! I'll take you as far as you'll go!'

"**T**HEN came an ugly laugh. My engine began to miss. I quickly examined my gas line and found it intact. The instruments before me showed the wiring was all right. Yet I could get no response from the engine. I tried speeding it up. Then I slowed it down. It continued to miss, getting worse and worse. Frantically I tried to put the plane into its maximum speed, hoping to get near a ship or to sight some island that would mean security in the forced landing that was certain to come before long, if the engine continued to behave as it was.

"It seemed I could get no speed. I looked at the speedometer. It showed a bare ninety-seven miles an hour. That was the maximum speed of Sucro's plane!

"Suddenly with a final spurt my engine died all together. I held fast to the control to maintain what altitude I could and to forestall the fatal plunge into the water as long as possible. That the plunge was coming, I knew as certainly as I knew I was alive! And I prayed! I don't do that often, but when one is faced with an unpleasant death he will do things he is not in the habit of doing.

"I closed my eyes for probably five minutes, but I did not feel the water. I opened them and looked downward. I was still as far from the water as I ever had been! It had been about seven minutes since my engine stopped!

"Ahead of me still darted that yellow plane! I was on an exact level with it! It was perhaps a hundred yards ahead of me, and the distance never changed. It seemed that something about it was drawing my plane after it. The yellow thing

swooped down a few yards to go below a cloud bank. My plane swooped down.

"On the sea ahead I could now see the smoke of a steamer and in a few minutes could distinguish the outlines of a ship. It was my only hope. I tried my wireless. As I feared, it was dead. I tried to go into a long glide. I could neither raise nor lower the ship though I moved the rudder in such a manner that at one time I would have fallen nose first into the water, had it responded.

"Then ahead of me I saw the yellow ship burst into flames and turn its nose downward!

"Almost as the same instant I saw smoke come into the cockpit of my plane from behind and felt the sting of flame against my neck. I turned to look at the wings. They were on fire exactly as were the wings of the ship ahead of me! My ship tilted sharply. I jumped, taking with me the life belt I carried for such an emergency. My parachute opened after about one hundred feet and I struck the waves lightly. I could see my own plane beaten about by the sea a few yards away. There was no sign of the yellow ship!

"For minutes that seemed like an eternity I fought those waves. They completely submerged me. It was necessary that I hold my breath until they had passed and I found myself in a trough. My breath became shorter and shorter. Then darkness came.

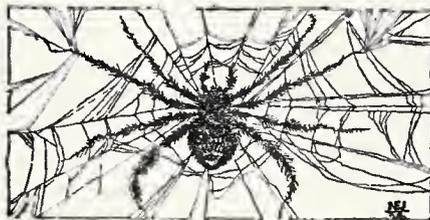
"**W**HEN I awoke, I was on the deck of a ship. An officer was bending over me.

"'Take it easy,' he said to me. 'You've had a narrow call. It's too bad we didn't get to you in time to save your partner. We couldn't find him.'

"'I was flying alone,' I replied.

"'But I saw two planes fall in flames,' the officer said.

"'Mine was the only one,' I told him."



Haunted RIVER

*The lord of the jungle hated Will Droste, the trader,
and he put the curse of living death upon him!*

By JIM CARTER

As told to ALAN SCHULTZ

WILL DROSTE and I were sitting, quietly chatting. The bungalow was cool and the nice long drinks made a cheering tinkle as we sipped and talked. I was wholly at my ease, despite a friendly dispute.

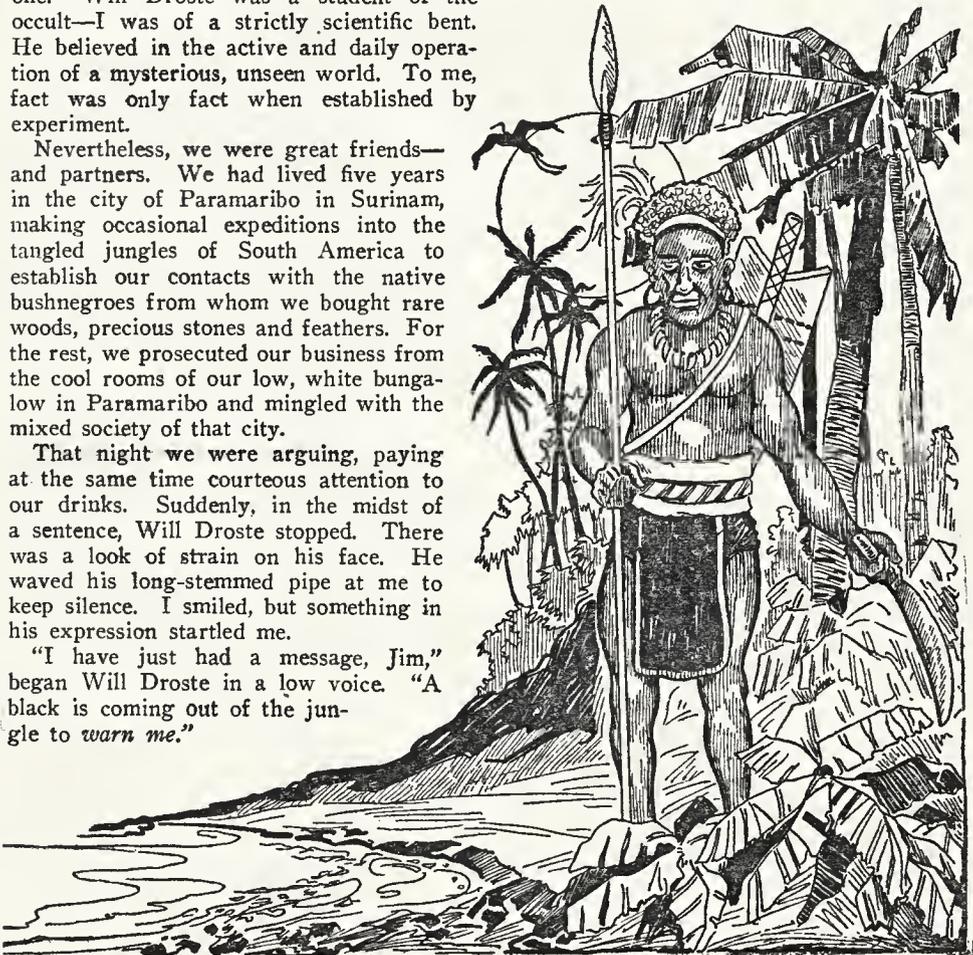
The difference between us was an old one. Will Droste was a student of the occult—I was of a strictly scientific bent. He believed in the active and daily operation of a mysterious, unseen world. To me, fact was only fact when established by experiment.

Nevertheless, we were great friends—and partners. We had lived five years in the city of Paramaribo in Surinam, making occasional expeditions into the tangled jungles of South America to establish our contacts with the native bushnegroes from whom we bought rare woods, precious stones and feathers. For the rest, we prosecuted our business from the cool rooms of our low, white bungalow in Paramaribo and mingled with the mixed society of that city.

That night we were arguing, paying at the same time courteous attention to our drinks. Suddenly, in the midst of a sentence, Will Droste stopped. There was a look of strain on his face. He waved his long-stemmed pipe at me to keep silence. I smiled, but something in his expression startled me.

"I have just had a message, Jim," began Will Droste in a low voice. "A black is coming out of the jungle to warn me."

I stared incredulously—but only for a moment. In a way, I was glad. For here I had a definite statement as to the future from Will Droste, a statement that would be subject to immediate verification, and not, like his other stories, just memories of the past. *A black coming from the jungle to warn him*; here was a statement I could



take hold of. I welcomed this odd test. "I'll believe that, when he shows up, Will," said I.

But my skepticism had a short life. It could not withstand the rapt look of horror I saw spreading on Will's face. He was sitting tensely, now, every muscle taut, listening as if to an unseen speaker. And I, I found myself listening, too.

THREE, four, maybe five minutes passed with Will Droste not moving or changing expression. I no longer had the courage to scoff. In fact, I may as well admit it, I was scared. Never before had I seen Will Droste so shaken.

Will's hand, with the pipe, was still extended in a gesture towards me. It began moving slowly. He was summoning my attention.

My lips moved to say, "What?" But no sound issued.

Will's arm was pointing toward our front door. I cocked my ears more sharply. Suddenly there was a sound of pattering feet—someone was coming along the walk toward the house! We both sat rigidly, waiting. Moments passed with terrible slowness. And then my heart leaped with excitement—the soft tread of naked feet sounded on our veranda steps!

When the unknown visitor reached the top step, there was a moment of silence as if he had paused uncertainly. Then the footsteps moved across the wide veranda, shuffling unmistakably over the wooden boards: and there was a knock at the door!

Will Droste rose, trance-like, and walked into the hall. I followed. There was a reserved caution in his movements. Almost as if he were afraid, like a man conscious of a lurking foe, he turned the door-knob and pushed the door open, himself standing well back in the shelter of the house.

Before us stood a wizened, bent bush-negro! I studied him, trying to catch his eye, but the old man kept his head bowed. The negro's hair was gray, and his half-naked body was shriveled and ancient.

Will Droste was breathing hard. I put a hand on his arm to steady him, and I felt him tremble when the negro raised one hand and greeted us in the native dialect. I answered. There was a pause.

Then the ancient black turned toward Will and began speaking:

"I bring you warning! This has Barooda spoken: *The jungle is forbidden to Will Droste. It is the birthright of Barooda.*

There is no place there for a white man's magic."

Will answered, surprisingly calmly, "I mean no harm to Barooda."

The bushnegro looked up quickly, smiling for an instant. "Harm?" he repeated. "Barooda fears no man." He hesitated and a somber expression masked his features. "Nevertheless, Barooda has spoken, and the jungle is taboo for Will Droste. It is well for you to remember—*never set foot within it.*"

Almost before the bushnegro ceased talking, he started to move away with amazingly quick movements. He disappeared in gliding sweeps, down the steps and out by the path that led to our gate, hastening like a young man on the run.

In an amazement that made me powerless to speak, or almost to think, I stood behind Will Droste. He took a few uncertain steps forward onto the veranda and made a half gesture toward the vanishing bushnegro. Then he turned to me. His eyes were terror-stricken and he was pathetically rubbing his hands together.

"You're not letting a crazed savage give you a scare, are you, boy?" I said soothingly.

"Jim," he replied, "didn't you hear? That man was from Barooda."

"I heard. What of it?" I affected a nonchalant tone.

"Barooda—they call him Barooda the Magnificent—he's the mightiest living practitioner of magic in the world. He's powerful—in every way. And he's forbidden me to enter the jungle!"

I knew, then and there, that I was up against a serious problem. Our prosperity—in fact, our livelihood—depended on our trips into the jungle of Surinam. It was the source of our business. Will Droste was at home in the jungle. If ever he got cold feet about these expeditions, I would be ruined. Alone, I would be helpless, for I did not have skill with the natives.

ESCORTED Will Droste back into our combination office and library, just a bare white-washed room with a bookcase, a pine table and two comfortable chairs.

We seated ourselves, as before, and I made an attempt at drinking again and bantering Will. But he did not even listen. Finally, I called sharply for his attention. I had to discuss this jungle taboo. All I had in the world was staked on our business success.

When I did get Will to speak, it was not encouraging. It would be fatal for him to ever set foot in the jungle again, he said. No man could defy Barooda and live.

"But why?" I cried in vexation. "Why, if he is such a terrific panjandrum, is he afraid of you?"

"H^E's not, Jim. Barooda fears no man. But he hates me. Once, in the jungle, I tried to impress a group of bushnegro guides, by showing them how much I knew of magic. Word of this must have reached Barooda. They say he is very jealous of every other medicine man in Surinam. Particularly he cannot stand white men dabbling in his field. And so——"

Will Droste stopped. The rest was unnecessary to say. I tried to argue with him but I saw quickly it was no use. The old fanatical look was in his eyes. I knew that no word of mine could ever change him. He believed wholly in the spirit world, in the practice of magic. He was wrapped up in it like a devotee in his religion. I had always laughed at him, but what avail was laughter now when Will Droste considered himself under the dread taboo of Barooda, the internationally respected medicine man of Surinam? I decided to wait. Time might prove an ally.

And it did, in the oddest way imaginable. Paula Brinkerhof, the daughter of one of the Dutch government officials in Paramaribo, was Will Droste's fiancée. They had continued a desultory romance for over three years, ever since Paula's arrival at the capital. I had never seen any great demonstration of affection, but Will must have loved her very deeply. In view of the strange thing that happened later, I am convinced that he loved her as few men love.

Paula fell ill. It was a curious skin eruption, accompanied by an intermittent fever. The doctors said it was not dangerous or infectious, but, beyond that, they were baffled. A hundred salves and washes were tried. Drugs were administered by needle, in solutions, in capsules. Nothing helped. And it was getting serious, because of an unexpected psychological development.

Paula had always been a sort of belle. She was very pretty. No doubt, she was conscious of her beauty and valued it greatly. This skin disease had covered her face, and the disappointment and chagrin were undermining her moral stamina. When weeks passed and no cure had been

found, Paula became hysterically uncontrollable. She even threatened suicide.

At this point Will Droste entered the family councils. He was convinced that Paula was suffering from a malignant jungle disease known as *trapaya* and that in all the world there was only one man who could cure her. That man was Barooda. Barooda would have to be seen.

Inquiries were made among some bushnegroes who were in Paramaribo at the time, and they all confirmed Will's opinion.

The Brinkerhof family decided that the dangerous trip into the jungle would have to be risked. But how could it be arranged? They buzzed with plans. Every day it became plainer that only Will Droste could manage it. No other white man could negotiate the jungle as safely as he could, and no other would have half a chance with Barooda. Will Droste would know how to talk to the great medicine man, *et cetera*.

I watched these plans in an agony of apprehension, for I was the only one who knew how Will dreaded to enter the jungle—especially to seek out Barooda.

He did remonstrate. He advanced reasons why he could not go. But when he had a personal talk with Paula and she made it plain that she would die if something were not immediately done for her, Will broke down and decided to take the risk.

It was late on a Saturday when he told me that he meant to go into the jungle. He said that it was his duty. Besides, he believed that Barooda could be made to understand his mission and would feel flattered because it was recognized that he alone could save the girl. That is, if Will ever found a chance to explain to Barooda. Of this, Will was a little doubtful. But he cheered up as he spoke to me. At any rate he would try it.

"When do we start?" I asked.

WILL DROSTE'S eyes lit up. "Would you come?" A sense of happy relief spread over his face.

"Why not? Your old Barooda is just a stuffed owl as far as I go."

"Jim! Don't talk like that. I want you to come, but say, take my word for it, Jim, that's no way to talk on this trip. Barooda hears everything, when he wants to."

"I don't believe it for one thin second," I replied. "But I'll be as mum as you please. You're in command on this trip."

Will Droste grew thoughtful. "Don't be-

lieve? You didn't believe when I foretold the coming of that bushnegro with the warning, either?"

"Oh, that?" I answered, and let it drop. I was actually mystified on that score. How had Will Droste known? Telepathy? A queer coincidence? But that was not the time to discuss such a matter.

TWO days later, we started for the jungle—Will Droste, Paula Brinkerhof and I, with two bushnegroes we knew well and could trust.

The interior of Surinam is no country for travel. Especially with a woman. The jungles are almost impassable. No trails lead through the tangle. If you do travel, you must use the rivers. They are the only routes. And those rivers are wide torrents dotted with angry rocks. The white man who can manage a craft in those waters does not live. Only the native bushnegro and his queer boat called a "corial" can navigate safely.

In such a corial our party was cramped as soon as we reached the head waters. Paula was in fine fettle over the approaching cure. She demanded little attention. We arranged it so that either Will or I acted as a pillow for her head, and for the rest she took her chances. At each end of our corial was one of our bushnegroes, guiding us down the raging streams with uncanny skill. They had nothing but long poles in their hands, and yet we were absolutely safe in those mad waters. The negroes learn such navigation as we learn to walk.

On the third day of our journeying we were approaching the Galawaba Trails where Barooda was understood to maintain headquarters. The Trails were nothing more than dank, swampy footpaths little known, as the whole district was zealously avoided because of the unsavory reputation of Barooda. His "magic," indeed, was supposed to include the river itself, which was called, in the native dialect, "Haunted River."

It was on this third day, past middle afternoon, when Will gave the signal to pull in shore. Neither of our boatmen made a move. I looked up, thinking they had not heard. There was a frightened concentration on the face of the rear fellow. Will ordered again. The boatman whom I was watching called back in his native dialect.

"We dare not. One does not come here unless called by Barooda."

Will looked quickly at me. Evidently he had not told the negroes our real purpose.

He leaned towards me and whispered, "They might quit us if I insist on landing."

"It cannot be helped. We must try," I answered.

Will Droste sat back again and called to our forward boatman. That fellow was certainly not heading for shore and was making as much haste to midstream as he could.

"Pull in! I command it!"

The forward boatman seemed to wince. This time he said not a word. The faintest sign of a signal passed between him and his fellow tribesman at the other end of the corial. Then both shifted sharply into shore. The man at the front stabbed out for an overhanging limb of a tree with both hands, while with his feet he held the corial steady. The other bushnegro gently nosed the boat towards the protruding root of a huge tree, which made a fair cove.

There was a bit of grassy, sloping earth and we managed to beach the corial. Will sprung out and with his aid I lifted Paula, holding her until the negroes shook out a homemade canvas litter we had brought along. She was smiling, bravely joking with us. Once in the litter we settled her on a dry spot, and Will Droste and I went up the sloping shore for an exploratory view.

We were just turning back when we heard a shout from Paula. It electrified us and we went racing down-hill as fast as we could. Half way down we realized what had happened. The two bushnegroes had shoved the corial in a mighty sweep, back into the yellow stream, and were racing away! They were working their poles like men pursued by the devil himself.

I SHOUTED after them. Will roared the threats of the entire Dutch army, but it all was so much wind to the panicky tribesmen. They were soon beyond the sound of our voices.

We walked up by the litter where Paula lay. Neither Will nor I spoke, though her eyes questioned us dumbly. It was a mess all right. Without a corial we could not travel by way of the river. Without the tribesmen to lend a hand we could not move far by foot, for there was Paula to carry. To stay where we were was impossible—we had hardly enough food for more than three days. Besides, what would we do after the three days were up?

It was at this point that I began to ex-

perience a stifling oppressiveness. The air was pressing in as if pushed by huge, flat boards against us. There was, too, a strange humming in the air.

Our first concern, of course, was Paula. Will and I struggled to carry her up the river bank, through the tangle of brushwood, to a small, open circle of ground. It was quite high up there, but the atmosphere seemed as oppressive as ever. And the humming was even more pronounced.

WE fixed a resting place for Paula. Will began foraging in our knapsacks to dish up a meal.

Suddenly I felt that we three were not alone. Unexplainably I became aware of another's presence. Something was burning into my back, and I knew it was not the sun. To turn and see what it was, became a test of will-power. Sweat was pouring from all over me. Was I afraid? I think not. Rather, I was under a spell. I fairly wrenched my head around. At first I saw nothing, and then—I thought I saw the eyes of a snake! Two powerful eyes—staring at us from a scrubby bush! The air was thick with that staring. It was the oppressiveness I had felt. Like a fog settling down on us.

I steeled myself for effort, though in a hazy way I realized even then that we were in a presence that defied any resistance of ours. Those eyes were gripping me like clutching hands. I felt choky. Will Droste was looking at me. He rose from the knapsacks and took a step towards me. I riveted my mind on the thought that I must not yield to those eyes. Painfully I forced myself towards them . . . A torpor was enveloping me. . . . I strained against it . . . And at last, desperately, I lunged out at that scrubby bush and struck the branches aside, crying, "Who is there?"

There was a movement in the bush. A huge figure came into view. A veritable giant of a black man with cheeks corrugated in vertical welts that looked purple under the black skin, his mouth twisted in a leer. A forbidding figure with two eyes that were burning coals!

"I am Barooda," he said, in English.

There he stood before us, naked except for a loincloth, motionless. The humming was more than ever in the air, and it was my impression that it came from the breath of the huge black. And all the while I was growing shaky in the legs. Barooda the Magnificent. . . .

His eyes slowly swept our group. He moved toward Paula in her litter.

"The girl is sick," he said, now speaking in the native dialect, "and you dare come to me?" The words were lashed out fiercely at Will Droste, whose head was bent respectfully.

"I do not come as one daring, but I creep as a beggar to your good heart—" Will was saying.

"I know!" shouted Barooda. "You come to the black man for a cure. The white man's magic has failed."

"Everyone knows that Barooda never fails," replied Will.

My astonishment grew on me. I had never heard Will Droste talk like that. It was evident he was sincere. But Barooda seemed unimpressed. He was in a rage, stamping one foot, standing there between Paula's litter and Will.

"A plague on you," he roared, "you defier of my word! You who dare enter my jungle against my command! I will punish. The girl? There—" And the giant black stooped over Paula, concentrating his fiery eyes on her. "I do not choose to cure her! *I pronounce her dead!*"

A violent ague seized me. But I stood, rooted in indecision. The world had become unreal. I was a swimmer beyond my depth. The talk and manner, both of Will Droste and Barooda, I did not understand.

Will's face was ghastly. His hand began a nervous arc from his chin to his side, up and back, spasmodically. I saw him move slowly to Paula's side, bend down and take hold of her wrist and feel her pulse. My own heart was beating thunderously in my ears. Will glanced toward me. There was horror and terrible anger mingled in a half mad look on his face.

Barooda was chuckling in an odd way, like an animal imitating human laughter.

A drowsiness blanketed me. Through half shut eyes I watched Will.

SUDDENLY he rose to his feet and swung round! His hand shot to his belt. His gun flashed out. There was a thundering report. The big black Barooda buckled in two, and went down on his face!

And at the same instant strength surged back into my body as if a spell had been vanquished. There was sense of relief. I felt able to act, and the first thing I did was to drop to a knee and feel Barooda's heart. He was stone dead, all right. Shot by a bullet from the revolver of Will Droste,

who was standing stupefied, like a man turned into stone.

I looked hurriedly about, thinking Barooda might have an escort lingering by. No one was in sight and no one appeared.

"Hadn't we better clear out?" I said to Will. My words brought him around. He pocketed his gun; his shoulders began a heaving and I could see that he was sobbing.

"What's the matter?" I cried, though I knew well enough.

"He's killed her, Jim. Killed her with his evil eye! To punish me. My fault——"

I APPROACHED the canvas litter and leaned over. I put my ear to Paula's heart. She was dead.

Will Droste was running on incoherently: "Never listened to me—would have been different. With his evil eye. Punishment. With his evil eye. Saved her—if only he had listened——"

He was walking about, up and down, wailing like an Oriental woman in grief. The bullet scar on his right cheek, which always twitched when Will was in distress, was pulsing like a revolving screw thread.

And then, abruptly, in that thick air came a voice:

"You have made Barooda your eternal enemy. Death is not the end! I shall call you back to answer."

The voice, the words, that ominous threat, had come from the dead body of Barooda!

It was as if a blow had felled me. My head spun like a top. Barooda had pronounced a curse, cavernous and rumbling from his corpse!

Will was frantically motioning to me to take up an end of the canvas litter on which poor Paula lay. We grabbed our knapsacks, too, and, each of us holding on to one of the handles at the ends of the litter, we marched off from that awesome spot.

For a few steps we hurried, but it soon became plain that it was impossible for us to carry the inert body of Paula with any speed. Still, we persevered.

We had covered less than half a mile when we were forced to stop. We were both stumbling under our load. In that matted stretch of jungle we were literally forcing our way through a woven wall. It was plain that we were doomed if we persisted in carrying the pathetic remains of Paula. The body simply had to be abandoned. There was no alternative. Will

agreed, his face white with grief and pain.

We lashed the canvas litter about Paula's corpse, stood silent over it, and then, leaving it under a knot of ancient jungle growth, we marked the spot on three trees and started off again.

Will was a few steps ahead of me. "Will his tribe follow?" I asked.

"Probably not. They would not dare interfere with the vengeance of Barooda. But we better cover ground. They might," he answered.

I could see he was making as much haste as was feasible.

The jungle at best is slow going. Without our machetes, it would have been impossible. Slashing our way with these cutlasses, we went scrambling, slipping, climbing—foot by weary foot—leaving behind us those two corpses, the beloved of Will Droste and Barooda the Magnificent.

We fled—that is, our minds fled, but in reality we were creeping wearisomely. We could make progress only by bleeding force. For in the jungle two miles a day is not a bad rate overland. I was wondering whether we had any chance for survival. Our food could not be eked out beyond three days. And the tropical forest is a bare place for food. There are berries and roots, but mostly of poisonous species.

It was soon too dark to move on. We stopped to pitch camp. Neither of us was speaking. Once or twice I had made an attempt at light, cheery talk, but it had failed.

After a sketchy meal we made bed out of our one blanket. Will kept tossing about. I did not sleep a wink.

Toward dawn I saw Will rise in a strange way, take a few uncertain steps back in the direction whence we had come and vanish into the jungle. When he failed to return at the end of a few minutes, I grew uneasy. I rose and followed.

NOT more than two hundred feet from our temporary camp I came on him. He was crouched on his knees, his arms frantically hugging himself—and on his face was the horror of utter suffering!

I gripped him by the shoulders and brought him to his feet, shaking him violently. His eyes were glassy.

"What's up?" I cried.

"Terrible, terrible," he began in monotonous repetition.

"What? Let's have it," I said encouragingly.

"That was Barooda!" he whispered.

"Barooda? How do you mean?"

"Barooda, himself. Calling me back to his dead body!"

"Did you see him?" I asked.

"No. No need. I felt him. Drawing me like a magnet."

"But you say you did not see him," I put in quickly.

"NO, I tell you! Don't be such an idiot."

Will's voice was pitched higher than usual and had a trace of hysteria. "I saw no one but I felt him. . . . He was drawing my life out . . . calling me . . ."

"Calling you?" I asked, dubiously, and at once realized I should not have asked. I changed tack and added, "What did it feel like?"

"It was like giving up the spirit. Terrible, terrible, terrible."

And no more would he say. Perhaps he sensed my skepticism—or remembered our disagreements on the subject of the occult. I, on the other hand, dared not tell him how much I was impressed by our calamitous experiences. It might further unnerve him.

To forestall such unnerving, I kept up a running fire of irrelevant talk as we went back to camp and gathered our few belongings together. Will was all loose wires. He kept mumbling to himself and when I caught any of the words it was very disquieting, for he evidently was in conversation with—I guessed it was *Barooda*, although I had nothing to go on at that time.

Later that day, after we had hacked our way through several miles of jungle, Will Droste recognized the terrain we were crossing and decided to strike for a village that he believed was in our radius. But we blundered the day away and pitched camp that night, both of us in the lowest spirits, with no notion of where we were.

Every drop of confidence had gone out of Will like water through a sieve. He was apprehensive in his movements and constantly looking around him. I had to watch him like a hawk, night and day. Though I did not admit it to myself at the time, I was afraid he would lose his mind or kill himself.

It was on the third day that we struck the trail to the village Will was seeking. What a relief! At last, we knew our location. With renewed courage we plodded on. For the moment he seemed to regain control of himself and talked of plans to

later fetch Paula's body from the jungle.

We came at length upon a bushnegro seated on a crude stool before his wattle house, crooning to a brown baby in his arms. The man was called Kleet and he knew Will Droste well, having brought many a hardwood tree down to Paramaribo to sell.

Kleet understood our plight, though we suppressed the story of Barooda's death, and he agreed to guide us back to civilization. We sat before his hut while he went into the village to secure food. He returned with cassava cakes, some greasy river fish, rice and a few bananas. After attending to his domestic arrangements, he presented himself as ready. We started on our way.

In his satisfaction with Kleet, Will Droste perked up—but only for a while. As we trudged on, he reverted to his gloom. His depression increased hourly. In a desperate, blind way, his head on his chest, he tramped on.

His depression began infecting me. By this time I understood our fundamental status—that we were up against a force that was terrific and malignant and was neither understandable nor visible. There were times, during the march, when I distinctly felt a strange hypnosis. Will was continually in a daze. Our guide, Kleet, began to avoid him. In the way of his race, he had a premonition that Will Droste was under a spell.

Dozens of times in the sweltering five days that our journey took, Will, who had turned into a taciturn, shadowed man, went into deliriums of fright. It was only by gripping his hands tight in mine that I could control him. He had a fixed idea that we were being followed—by Barooda. Will would stop and listen . . . and then make a gesture of warding off someone—though I never saw anyone. And he walked always as if an enemy were dogging every footstep. On the one occasion when he voiced his real thoughts, he said only these words:

"BAROODA is much more to be feared in the spirit than when in the body."

He refused to enlarge on the statement and relapsed into silence.

Just as that unhappy expedition began to seem endless, we came to a clearing not far from Paramaribo. The realization that we were nearing our destination was more than welcome; I almost jumped for joy, so anxious had I been to get Will Droste back into civilized conditions.

When we pulled up at our bungalow I leaped the garden gate, in spite of my weariness, for I was anxious to be in the house before Will, in order to warn old Dirker, our houseman, to greet Will as if he noted no change in him.

Old Dirker and I got Will to bed, and I washed and dressed preparatory to calling on the Brinkerhofs, Paula's family. I hesitate to tell of that tragic meeting with her folks. Suffice it too say it was one of the hardest tasks I have ever had to face.

ON leaving the Brinkerhof home I hired a carriage and directed the cabby to drive as quickly as possible to our bungalow. I was uneasy for Will.

And the moment I alighted at our gate, I sensed trouble. The very windows seemed to be calling for help.

I made short work of paying the cabman and dashed up the veranda steps, through the hallway and swung open Will's bedroom door.

He was lying very still on the bed. A blackness was growing on his face and peculiar welts were on his forehead. I grabbed a drinking bottle from the night table and dashed water in a splash over Will. In the hall was a cupboard and I flew out to it for a bottle of Scotch. In a few seconds I was pouring the liquor down Will's throat. I had to keep his mouth wide open with a sturdy letter opener that I had grabbed from the desk. Will's body began to throb oddly. A rhythmic surging took possession of him and then he seemed to be beating it back in spasms.

I was massaging him vigorously. Even as I labored, a numbness was growing on me. My arms were unwilling servants and I was panting. I ripped my collar open the better to breathe. The odd pulsing in Will was invading me. It began a raid through my system. I kicked a reed chair over toward the bed and worked on Will from a sitting position. My head was a block of cement; my eyes were flame points. The room was thick with humidity. Air! Air! I had to have air. I hurled the empty water jug through a window pane. I took a gulp at the whisky bottle. All the time I was rubbing his wrists and forehead. Gradually a fluttering moved his eyelids. Then his eyes came open. I sank back exhausted in my chair.

The murkiness in the room cleared. My own stupor evaporated. I stood up. Will was lying back weakly. I propped him up

with pillows and gave him another drink. He tried to speak, but his lips moved inaudibly.

When he had recovered sufficiently to talk, his report was a stunner. He had been lying quietly in bed, when the old feeling that had haunted him on our trek through the jungle began to overwhelm him.

"It was Barooda," he said, eyeing me to see whether I doubted. "Barooda again, *trying to take possession of my body.*" He hesitated.

"Go on," I urged. "Maybe we can find a way to fight back."

"Listen, Jim; I'm no fool. I know when I'm done for. You can't fight back with a fiend who has all the power of the unseen world at his command."

"There may be a way," I answered consolingly.

There was defeat and resignation on his face. "It's useless. Don't think me mad. But what could we do?" And he went on to tell me how he had struggled with the spirit of Barooda. This time, as previously, he had not seen the wizard. Barooda had only made himself felt. He had filled the room with a sense of his diabolical strength and he had drawn at Will Droste's life force as if it were water that could be run through a tap. Will had struggled, but he had battled in vain.

I tried to reassure him and went out to telephone a doctor, and to think, and, what was the most urgent of all, to get away from Will's eyes. He had been trying to read my face for a sign of hope and, speak as I would, I was unable to feel any optimism. My heart was loaded with despair. For I had seen the murkiness and felt the paralyzing numbness in that room—and I had seen, too, the blackness of Will's face and the peculiar lines on his forehead. I was utterly perplexed and could find no clue to the cause of the weird manifestations.

THE doctor came and gave Will a sleeping powder. He thought it just a case of nerves and that rest was necessary. I did not discuss the more complex angles of the case. For the rest of that evening and through the night I sat by Will, watching him, occasionally dozing off myself, but always coming awake with a start. Once I thought I felt the burning intensity on my back that I had first experienced when Barooda's eyes were on me. But when I arose and painstakingly searched the room,

I found no trace of anything out of the ordinary.

Through part of the next morning Will stayed under the potion. He awoke about noon, with a plaintive cry, like a child lost in the dark. I put my hand on his shoulder and told him to be of good cheer, that he was improving and had nothing to fear. He brushed my hand away.

"DON'T feed me nonsense, Jim," he said gruffly. "I have lived too long among these bushnegroes not to know my danger, Jim," and again he became the pathetic childlike creature, "will you help me?"

"Say the word. Anything."

"Good boy, Jim. Stick to me until—until it's all over."

"You'll be up and going with the best of us yet, Will. I don't care what you say. Where's the old grit?"

"Nice boy, Jim. Cheering me up. I know. Nice boy. All the same it's almost all over with me now——"

"If you mean that damn old hocus-pocus——"

Will's face blanched. He lifted a thin hand from under the coverlet and waved a warning finger at me. "Don't talk that way. Barooda is here night and day. He is waiting. Biding his time. No hurry. Soon it will be all over."

Such talks we had many a time. Nevertheless, his health improved. His body grew full. His voice lost its quaver. I was beginning to hope that all our forebodings had been mere hysteria.

I was glad of the change. It gave me a measure of freedom again. I was able to get about and tie up some of the broken business threads. On my return to the bungalow I always made it a point to talk matters over with Will Droste. My purpose was to revive his interest in our trading affairs and thus win his mind from the dark abyss he had been contemplating. There were times when I thought I was succeeding, but on the whole he treated me as if I were a child who had to be humored. Though his body was knitting together, he refused all interest in the daily routine. There was a far-away look always in his eyes, and once or twice I found him mumbling incoherently.

And then came the strange climax. It was about three months after I had brought Will Droste back from the jungle—three months after the death of Barooda. I had left him alone with the houseman for a few

hours to complete export papers at the Custom House. As soon as I was through, I hurried back. When I entered Will Droste's room, he was not there! Nor was he anywhere in the bungalow.

The houseman was unable to give me the slightest information. He had not seen or heard anything. I searched the house and neighborhood with the utmost diligence. I sent the servant over every inch of the surrounding gardens and to make inquiries from the kitchen help in the scattered homes near us. Not a clue did we find.

My mind began conjuring up all possible horrors and I was forced to notify the police. They were of no use. They even suspected me of a hoax. By telephone I rounded up half a dozen young fellows I knew, and enlisted them in a thorough search of every nook and cranny of Paramaribo. All to no avail. Will had completely vanished.

In a hundred ways I mulled the matter over in my mind that night. Suddenly, as I was wandering dismally about the town, the solution of this mystery flashed on me. I knew what Will Droste had done!

There was no time to lose. At one in the morning I almost ran half across Paramaribo to rouse an old trader I knew who was sure to have information as to what bushnegroes were in town. He was sleepy and a trifle disgruntled but he told me of a party of black men who had left that evening on their trek back to the hinterland and were probably spending the night on the outskirts of the city.

I rode out to this group on horseback, reaching them some time before dawn. I waited for them to bestir themselves, afraid to seem too urgent. If any of these men suspected my errand, I knew they would not help.

WHEN the black men began the simple rites of their breakfast, I approached one of the elders and greeted him politely. I told him that I was uneasy about a friend who was lost in the jungle, and that I needed the assistance of two stout fellows and a corial. When the old man heard it was Will Droste I sought, he at first scouted the idea that such an experienced trader could be lost. Nevertheless, he agreed to provide the two guides. Will was a favorite with many of the tribes that traded out of Paramaribo and, though the old man doubted my story, he consented.

Two lithe negroes, their muscles gleam-

ing under their skin, came up. We set off at once, walking the eight miles to the river bank, where they had hidden their corial, paddles and pole.

A difficulty developed when the two discovered that a corial belonging to others in the party was missing. But after much haggling on my part they agreed to start and let the others worry about the loss.

In my own mind, I was already sure as to the fate of that corial. . . .

SOON I was seated amidships, and my two guides, naked except for their red loin cloths, their sweating bodies gleaming in the sun, urged the corial with their carved paddles into the center of the mud-yellow stream.

The first two nights I had no difficulty with my guides. We camped peacefully and started fresh each morning. On the third day they were plainly uneasy. We were spending the night in a hollow that reminded me of ancient grove temples, hushed and awesome. But the bushnegroes had their minds on the disturbing fact that we were near Barooda's Trails. They disliked the direction I was following.

"When do we go back?" they asked.

"I go on alone, tomorrow. You two will wait for me, here."

"No one should venture that way." They pointed in half gestures toward Barooda's domain. "It is taboo."

"On the morrow we will see," I replied, and we made ready for sleep.

In the night I was awakened by one of the guides. The man was in a turmoil.

"Someone go by," he said. "Someone—run like a man and breathe like an animal."

I was on the alert at once. Was this a clue?

The other bushnegro joined us. "That way, he go, that way!"

"Follow!" I cried. The black men hesitated. "Are you afraid?" I called out tauntingly, going off alone. In a moment they were after me, as eager almost as I.

My flashlight was ineffective and confusing, with all the shadows and trees. The moon helped, though, and we were on what might be called a path. But the fugitive we trailed was desperately forging ahead. Even with the moonlight it was like threading a needle in the dark. Luckily, however, the fleeing man was sticking to the slight footpath that ran some hundred yards along the shore. By this time, the bushnegroes were sure it was a man we were chasing,

and I guessed even more closely than that.

There was a commotion, a confused growling and snorting. The bushnegroes had closed in our quarry. There was a wild shriek of remonstrance and my breath looped into a knot and stopped! That shriek was Will Droste's! I ran to the spot. The bushnegroes were dancing about the figure, uncertain whether to grapple with him. The fugitive stood as if paralyzed, his back in the moonlight and his face in shadow. It was Will, and yet he was strangely different. Was it the shadow on his face?

"It's I, Jim," I called out.

"Jim?"

"Sure."

"Oh, my God——"

And he stumbled forward into my arms. The bushnegroes moved off, slowly, doubtfully. They kept looking oddly at Will. I took his arm and led him back towards the bivouac for the night. He was chattering queerly, in half hysterical sentences.

"Easy, old man. You're safe now," I said, utterly at sea. And I added, "What made you bolt? You have given me a scare."

"It was his call! Barooda. I had to answer his call."

The words sent a chill through my marrow. I noticed that Will was much more sure-footed in the maze of grass and roots than any white man I had ever seen before. It was odd. "How did you get out so far in the jungle?"

"Floated a corial—got here—floating a corial——"

I stopped in my tracks. It was fantastic. How could he have managed a corial alone?

Will Droste was continuing: "The jungle is my home now. Float a corial . . . anything . . . I am no longer myself. . . ."

"Never mind, Will. You are safe with me," I said.

SAFE?" And he laughed like a madman.

That laugh covered the jungle. The two negroes, who were walking a little ahead of us, turned about. "Safe?" he shouted again. "Safe for Barooda! I am no longer myself. . . . Barooda has possessed me. . . . I feel like a fiend. . . ."

I put my hand on his arm and patted him gently. There was a tug at my holster! it was Will! He had drawn out my revolver!

There was a shot. In its flash I saw the distorted faces of the bushnegroes. Will

lay before me, a crumpled broken thing.

I reached for his heart. He was dead! I groped for my flashlight and turned the beam full on his face.

Oh, my God, may no human being ever behold such a thing again! The face was *not* Will Droste's. It was almost black, there were purplish welts on the forehead, the nose was spatulate and the expression of the face, fiendish. My guides dared one glance and then fled as if from death. Down they went to the river bank!

And even then I did not understand. The corpse wore Will Droste's clothes and resembled him in general appearance. It had spoken, only a few minutes previously, with the voice of Will, and yet—the grisly recognition forced itself on me—the corpse was Barooda!

All night I stood vigil over that body. When the first light broke, I examined it more closely. Undoubtedly it had the incomprehensible duality of being both Barooda and Will Droste, but more the former.

Barooda has possessed me! Those words of Will came back to me.

With heavy heart I buried the unsightly corpse.

My brain whirled deliriously and my heart was a fury of racing. Sweat was

pouring from every inch of me; my throat was as dry as tinder.

Barooda the Magnificent had taken his revenge. He had called Will Droste into the jungle to his diabolical end. Barooda had transferred his soul and body and mind into the body of Will Droste. But not without struggle! Even when poor Will had been talking to me the night before, he had been conscious of his own identity being submerged under the ghoulish being of Barooda. So conscious, in fact, that he had chosen to kill his own body while he still retained a shred of control over it, rather than have it become the instrument of Barooda.

IT is eighteen months since that tragedy.

I have been living in Paramaribo, waiting for the fate I know now that I cannot dodge. It was through my agency that Barooda was defeated when he sought possession of Will Droste's body—and Barooda never forgives and never forgets. . . . He has need of a strong body to do his bidding and I have had intimations in the last months that mean he is calling me.

There is no escaping that call. Each day I hear it more distinctly. The fate that met Will is waiting for me . . . in the jungle.

Protected by Demons

RECENT reports say that the years of civil strife and the cruelties practiced by the Oriental Reds have caused thousands of Chinese men and women to join a new cult whose leaders promise that the spirits of their ancestors and demons will protect the worshipers against their earthly enemies. Curiously enough, the chief demon worshiped is Satan, and not one of the Chinese devils.

Contrary to the belief of European devil worshipers, the Chinese do not exchange their souls for all eternity for favors granted them on earth. They believe that they give their souls to Satan only for a time, after which their spirits will be permitted to enter the Seven Heavens—but only after ages of hardship and struggle to

find their way up from Hell. The sacrifice of human beings to the chief devil is part of their ceremonies, three initiates cutting off the victims' hands and heads before a hideous statue supposed to typify the great ruler of all evil. Incidentally those sacrificed consider it a great honor and one which will send them to Paradise immediately.

One of the leaders of the cult is a youthful Chinese girl, Lo Huao, who is said to possess unusual mediumistic powers. She lives in a tiny temple in the mountains, known only to the faithful, where she spends much of her time praying before the idol of Tcheun Young (meaning Satan), in which that devil is supposed to find lodgment for a portion of each day.

The Prisoner

By
LESTER SHIELDS

As told to
VICTOR ROUSSEAU

BY an odd series of accidents I and Pamela, the girl I loved, found our lives entangled with those of Friar Bungay and Prince Uffizzi. Bungay, a queer old monk—perhaps a madman—claimed that he had lived since the time of Roger Bacon and that he and the great scientist had discovered the two secrets of the ages: the philosopher's stone, which transmutes base metals into gold, and the elixir of life, which confers immortality.

He also claimed that the Prince Uffizzi was none other than the black fiend known in legend as Faust, and that he had come back to life through the aid of a mulatto medium, the half-wit son of Aunt Susy, Pam's maid. Faust's object was to get possession of the philosopher's stone, a marvelous and very valuable carbuncle.

At any rate, I soon found out that Prince Uffizzi was a devil incarnate and that he had a hypnotic attraction for Pam. There was nothing for me to do but join forces with the monk.

But in spite of our desperate efforts the Prince seemed about to triumph. He seized the stone, kidnaped Pam and started in an airplane for Paris.

We pursued in another plane, but just as we were about to overtake our quarry, a storm overwhelmed us! Caught in the vortex of the air currents, we dropped into a tail-spin. We dropped down, down, until I was enveloped in the abysses of black unconsciousness.

"LESTER! Lester! Oh, thank God, he's recovering consciousness! Lester, speak to me and tell me that you know me!"

Opening my eyes, I saw Pam leaning over me. Her tears were falling on my face. Her hand was softly caressing my hair. I knew her, and weakly I raised her hand to my lips and kissed it. And with hardly any recollection of the past, but feeling as if I had emerged into reality out of some terrific nightmare, I slept with Pam's hand in mine.

When I awoke again, feeling stronger, I discovered that I was lying on a bed in the cabin of a ship, and that the sun was streaming in through a porthole. I must have uttered some sound, for the door opened and Bungay entered.

Had I not seen him standing there in the flesh, I should have been convinced that the past was nothing but a nightmare. Now, groping for my memories, I could only look at him.

"Pam!" I muttered. "I thought that she was here beside me."

"She is here on shipboard, Shields," the old monk answered, "and just at present is



of LIFE

*Lester, condemned to death
for murder, receives the
weirdest proposition imagi-
nable from the insane monk*

resting after spending a whole night and a day beside you. The two planes fell together, almost beside this tanker, which is bound for France. We were saved—all of us except Faust, who has vanished apparently. At the last moment you seemed to put forth some superhuman effort that nullified all the fiend's attempt to destroy us and rendered him powerless. I could feel



that strange power going forth from you.

"Pamela Rycroft is herself, and the enemy is temporarily baffled. She remembers practically nothing about her flight, but supposes that she was accompanied by some aviator who perished in the accident, and that her memory has become affected as a result of it.

"We've saved her, Shields! We've snatched victory out of defeat, though we shall still have to undergo the final test when this ship reaches port."

He went on to tell me about his plans, more frankly than he had spoken for some time, and the more frankly, I think, because he seemed to sense the new antipathy I felt toward him.

The truth was that with Pam on board I was trying, by an effort of will, to banish the past from my memory. An ostrich hiding its head in the sand? Perhaps; but I had made myself believe that by ignoring the past I could prevent it from extending itself into the future.

"**H**ERE is the present situation, Shields,"

Bungay went on. "Faust cannot materialize in the absence of the mulatto, though he can create a phantom with the appearance of reality and has power enough to steer a plane or perform mechanical feats. But, with the mulatto on the other side of the Atlantic, that gives us sufficient advantage to insure victory.

"Once we reach France, I intend to make my way to St. Sulpice and destroy the flask containing the elixir, so that it shall never inflict its curse upon the world again. Faust will be there. The struggle for the stone will be fought out to its bitter end, and I have no doubt but that right will triumph. We must bring Miss Rycroft there."

I interrupted him decisively. "Bungay," I said, "I'm out of the game."

"How's that, Shields?" queried the old man, giving me a level glance.

"All through our work together I have felt that Miss Rycroft was subordinated to that accursed stone. But she is the only important thing in the world to me. Now she is restored to her normal self, and I am ready to quit this ghastly fight. I care nothing about Faust."

Bungay pointed to a bruise on my wrist, which I must have sustained in the disaster.

"You have noticed that, Shields?" he asked quietly.

"That bruise?" I asked. "What about it?"

"It means that the elixir of life has no longer any power to protect your organism against danger and death. Its power has become dissipated."

I understood his meaning. "So be it," I answered. "I'll take my chances. But henceforward I mean to make Pam my sole consideration. I hope you won't think me ungrateful," I added, "and I hope that we part good friends."

BUNGAY surveyed me wistfully; then he put out his hand and took mine. He held it for a moment, and turned away, leaving me with a vague feeling of undefinable regret.

Bungay must have kept very much to himself during the remainder of the slow, tedious voyage eastward, for I saw him only two or three times. And he was the last person in my thoughts, as I was devoting myself heart and soul to Pam. It was the first time we two had ever been free to seek each other's company, and I quickly discovered that Pam had looked forward night and day to my safe return.

We loved more deeply than I had believed it possible to love. We were wrapped up in each other. We were to be married as soon as the ship reached France, and then I was to take her home to America and we were to begin our life together.

As to the past, Pam's mind was altogether hazy. She knew she had been ill, and I could see that there was a certain terror lurking in the depths of her mind and that she did not want to remember anything that had occurred since my departure.

I did not question her, but I gathered that she supposed she had been ill for a long time after her father's death, that she had suffered privations and had at length received a sum of money from the estate which had enabled her to live in New York. I could see that she had only the dimmest recollection of Charles Stanfield, her guardian, and thought he had been her business executor.

About the airplane flight she asked many questions.

"I cannot recall taking up aviation at all, Lester," she said to me once, "nor do I remember anything about the aviator who accompanied me on that mad trip."

As for our own aviator, he assured me

emphatically that he was through with "elopement chasing." He was going to "beat it back" to America through Canada, because he was afraid the police would be looking for him on the charge of stealing the plane. But he was satisfied with Bungay's money.

The days wore on, wonderful days, while Pam and I paced the deck together or sat under the lee of the deckhouse, wholly absorbed in our dreams of the future. I had my discharge money, enough to take us home and keep us comfortable while I sought employment. Pam told me that she did not want to claim any money that was hers.

"I can't remember the past, Lester," she said, "but I know that there were horrible things in it that I want never to recall. Sometimes I see them in dreams and wake up crying, but mercifully I always forget them a few moments after I wake. I want you to take me to some part of America where I shall see no one whom I have ever known. And—and—" She hesitated.

"And what, dear?" I asked.

"I want you to promise me something, Lester. I feel that I must tell you this, although it will hurt you."

"Tell me," I urged her.

"In my dreams, when I remember these things, I—I don't love you, Lester. There seems to be another man—of course it's only a part of the nightmare, dearest—but a man whom I seem to have known centuries ago, and it's him I love, not you. He seems to be calling me, so that I wake up with a feeling that you are unreal, and that we—we don't belong to each other."

I SAW the tears start to her eyes. She put out her hands and clung to me convulsively.

"It's only a dream, Pam," I said.

"I know, Lester. But if I should lose my memory again, and go back into that other state of consciousness, and should—hate you, promise me that you won't ever leave me, no matter what I say or do. Promise me to make me change back to what I am today."

I could see that Pam's fears were even deeper than she was willing to let me know. And I knew that Faust had not given up the hope of gaining possession of her, despite his temporary check.

"And there's another thing, Lester," Pam continued.

"I found this sewed up in my clothes this morning. I must have been carrying it about for a long time. It belonged to my poor father, though I don't suppose you will remember it."

She held out her hand, and in it, to my stupefaction, I saw the great carbuncle!

My first impulse was to seek Bungay and tell him of it; my second was to refrain. I had witnessed the failure of Stanfield's effort to transmute lead into gold, and was convinced the carbuncle was just an ordinary stone. And I did not want to involve Pam in any more of the horrible experiences of the past.

"WHY, yes, that's the relic your father got from France, Pam," I answered. "I remember it."

"But how did I come to have sewed it up in my clothes?" she persisted.

"If I were you, Pam," I suggested, "I'd just throw that stone into the sea. It's—it's something binding us to the past, and we want to forget the past," I added hastily.

Pam was looking at me in a queer way. I seemed to feel the invisible prompter at her shoulder.

"Why, Lester, it would be senseless to throw away anything just because it reminded us of the past," she answered. "It must be worth something. And poor Dad thought very highly of it. No, I'll keep it for the present."

I could have sworn that I heard low, chuckling laughter coming from behind Pam. But there was no one visible there, only the deckhouse, and the sapphire edge of the sea behind it.

I said no more. It seemed to me that the best thing to do was to let Pam keep the stone. After we were married I would get her to throw the cursed thing away. But I did not tell Bungay. If I had told him . . . but such speculations are purposeless.

And I think it was two days later that we saw the coast of France detach itself from the horizon.

"Those flags?"—The captain of the tanker grinned. "Maybe they celebrate somet'ing, Monsieur. Those peoples? Maybe they come here to see somebodies, *hein?*"

The quay was aflutter with flags, and a dense crowd was jostling there, stretching back as far as the eye could see into the busy streets. I did not understand. It did not even enter my mind that this reception was for Pam. The captain had told us

nothing of the preparations, though he had learned something of them by radio. I think he wished to give us a surprise.

Pam clung to my arm as the gangway was thrown down, and the reception committee and the crowd came swarming on board. But in a moment she was cut off from me by a solid phalanx.

It was for her that the reception had been planned, not for me. Even as I stood there, dumfounded, Pam was whisked away down the gangplank, and the reporters were hurling questions at me in very bad English.

I did not heed them. I was following Pam with my eyes, planning to push my way after her, yet held back by the natural desire not to appear to wish to project myself into the limelight. But suddenly I saw a sight that made my blood run cold.

Some sort of ceremony was beginning on the quay. There was a strip of carpet, and many French and American flags. Here, lined up with the committee, I perceived Aunt Susy, the old colored witch, and her son, the horrible mulatto!

They must have taken a fast ship for France immediately after my flight with Bungay!

But if that had been all I should not have gone stark, raving mad. That was not what made my heart stop beating for an instant, and then drove the blood in thudding drumbeats through my arteries.

For there, among the committee, in silk hat and morning coat, was Faust!

I lost all sense of everything else in my insane desire to get at him. I pushed like a madman through the crowds. Faust saw me, and his face lighted up with a smile of malicious mockery.

Aunt Susy, beside him, displayed her toothless gums, too. At her side the hideous half-witted mulatto was shuffling his feet and sniffing.

AND Pam—Pam was looking straight at me with a sort of puzzled wonder in her eyes.

My clothes were stained from the salt water. I must have looked like a disreputable tramp, though I had never thought of this while I was aboard the vessel with Pam. The people about me had no idea who I was. They only saw a ragged maniac rushing wildly upon the Prince Uffizzi, mouthing incoherent threats and brandishing his fists.

There was a panic in the crowd as I sent

the people reeling right and left. I was almost upon Faust when the officials recovered presence of mind enough to seize me.

Fighting like a demon, I flung them off. I was upon that devil now. I had raised my arm to strike when they got me down. A half-dozen of them piled up on top of me. Helpless in their grasp, I could only writhe and rave.

I CALLED to Pam, but I don't know what I said. All the while I could see that same look of bewilderment on her face, but I think I impressed the officials who were holding me. At any rate, they turned to Pam with some interrogation.

"No, I don't know him," I heard her answer. "I don't think I have ever seen him before."

"Just a crank." Faust shrugged his shoulders. "Let the poor devil go, Messieurs, if he will promise to behave himself."

Then everything went black. I don't know just what happened next. I was conscious of suffering physical indignities, of being buffeted, kicked and hustled off the quay. I came back to reality to find myself standing in a doorway, bruised and aching, forgotten by the excited throng that filled the streets, eager to catch a glimpse of Pam.

Bungay! I must find him! Bitterly I regretted the folly that had let me reject his aid and companionship. I knew that the old monk was the soul of goodness. I believed he would forgive my ingratitude. And I started off toward the quay once more, in the hope of locating him somewhere among the crowd.

I might as well have searched for a needle in a haystack, for the streets were blocked with a yelling crowd, now surging in the opposite direction as the motor-car containing Pam and Faust drove at a snail's pace through the multitude. Behind their car came three or four others, containing the members of the reception committee. But my eyes were fixed on Pam, and again I strove in vain to force a way toward her.

Yet, as if drawn by some current of psychic attraction, Pam turned her head, and her eyes roved over the crowd until they met mine. I must have been too far off for her to recognize me, and yet I knew that the devil at her side was fully cognizant of my presence, for I saw him draw Pam's arm through his, and for a moment she rested her head upon his shoulder.

Then and there a thought was born in me. If I could not save her from this fiend, I would kill her—*kill her body to save her soul!*

I suppose the thought of murder, when it comes to a man for the first time, comes like a stunning revelation. I know it did to me. Everything had suddenly grown clear.

"Kill her!" a thousand mocking voices seemed to hiss in my ears. "Kill her, and win her in the end! Kill her! Kill her!"

The car rolled on, leaving me standing there, while the cheering mob rushed past me. Soon I was standing in the almost deserted street. My heart was still on fire, but my brain had grown cool as ice. The revelation filled my whole being with a sense of inevitability.

Slowly I made my way up from the quay, but I must have walked for an hour before I found myself in the central part of the town. A newsboy was running along the street, carrying a bundle of papers, a special edition still damp from the press, evidently struck off to announce Pam's arrival, for I saw her name, misspelled, on the front page.

I bought a copy. I could read French well enough to understand that last paragraph that seemed to leap out at me.

Pam and Prince Uffizzi were to be married the following morning in the church at St. Sulpice, where, it was said, they had first met during the War!

A foolish lie, but I saw in it Faust's supreme challenge to Bungay and myself.

Well, I would take up that challenge, in a way he little dreamed of!

THE dawn was still two hours away when I reached St. Sulpice. I had a vague hope that I should find Bungay in the crypt, that something would occur that would make it unnecessary for me to carry out the plan I had conceived, and yet, barring some such accident, I was firmly resolved to kill Pam with the revolver that I had hidden inside my shirt.

I made my way up from the station toward the clustered houses around the market-place. Nothing seemed to have changed since the War. A gendarme, patrolling his beat, looked at me suspiciously, and I slunk close to the wall, fully prepared to shoot if he attempted to molest me. But he went on, and I quickly made my way to the abbey church.

The church was closed, but it had not

yet been completely restored since the War, and great gaps still yawned in the foundations. After searching, I found a hole that seemed to communicate with the crypt, and squeezed my way through between two massive piles of debris.

I had not been mistaken. Evidently there had formerly been a sheer drop down into the vault beneath, but the crumbled stone had now partly filled it. The light from outside was a sufficient guide until I was within a few feet of the bottom. There I placed my hands upon the broken masonry and leaped, landing on my feet below.

AT first the darkness seemed complete, but after a while I was able to make out the serried lines of tombs.

I knew where I was now, and began groping my way toward the oaken door that guarded the recess in which Bungay kept the elixir.

The door was open, but, on passing into the recess, I remembered that the precious flask was hidden in a secret cabinet, guarded by a turning stone. In the dark it was impossible to find it.

I tried the wall everywhere with my hands, but in vain. Perhaps an hour went by before I realized the impossibility of discovering the spot unaided. But Bungay—where was Bungay? I had been confident of finding him in the crypt. What was he doing? Was he still working to get back the carbuncle—or to save Pam?

Another half hour went by. It was dawn now, and down in the crypt a suffused light crept among the tombs, throwing a pale, ghostly illumination over everything. And still I beat the wall with my hands and searched in vain.

Suddenly it seemed to me that I was not alone; I raised my head and peered into the gloom. I thought I had heard a suppressed chuckle near by. It came again. And now I saw a figure slinking along the wall not many feet away, and watching me!

Then I made out the hideous form and features of the mulatto!

The mulatto, the cause of all Pam's woes! With him out of the way, it would be impossible for Faust to remain incarnate. I shouted and leaped at him.

He dodged me with incredible agility, and darted along the tombs toward the other end of the crypt. I raced after him, drawing my revolver as I ran. One shot—and Pam would be free!

But suddenly my foot caught upon the

edge of a piece of masonry. I stumbled and fell, striking my head on the sharp side of a marble slab. Stars flashed before my eyes, and I knew no more.

I must have lain there unconscious for hours, for when I regained my senses the sun was high in the sky, as I could infer from two or three tiny threads of light that sifted through the cracked foundations of the church. I put my hand to my head and brought it away damp with half-congealed blood.

For a few moments my brain remained clouded; then I remembered. But there was no use seeking the mulatto now, and if Bungay were anywhere within the crypt he would have found me.

Nauseated and weak from my wound, I struggled to my feet, uncertain what to do. As I stood up I heard a muffled melody above me. It was the organ in the church of St. Sulpice, playing one of Gounod's hymns.

It is odd that the melody entranced me, but at that moment I wanted only to seek the shelter of the church and rest and listen to the music. I found the entrance to the crypt again, and after some difficulty managed to scramble up until at length I stood in the stone-strewn street above.

I made my way around to the church entrance. A man at the door eyed me askance, and seemed about to bar the way; but he stood back as I advanced, and permitted me to pass.

The church was crowded, the organ was still pealing, and a service was in progress. I sank into a vacant seat and directed my gaze toward the altar.

Merciful heaven! There stood Pam and Faust side by side; she wore a wedding dress, and the marriage ceremony had already begun!

TWO priests were at the altar. One of them was Bungay!

Bungay, marrying Pam to that devil Faust! Often enough during our association I had reproached him with caring more about the carbuncle than about Pam. But that he would deliberately sacrifice her, doubtless as the result of a compact between him and that fiend, had never before entered my mind as a possibility!

The sight of him, in priest's robes, officiating at that awful, sacrilegious marriage, made my blood run cold. Then a sort of fire began to burn within me. I was no longer conscious of my surroundings. The

interior of the church and the assembled spectators vanished from before my eyes. Only three persons stood out, clearly, but very far away, as when one looks through the wrong end of a pair of field-glasses.

The three were Pam, in her bridal dress, Faust, in morning coat, with a gardenia in his buttonhole, and Bungay.

I started up in a spasm of fierce rage; then this emotion was replaced by an infinite cunning.

PAM had implored me, if ever she reverted into what she thought was an alternating phase of her personality, never to leave her—to change her back again!

And this was what I meant to do—even through the irrevocable change of death!

Quietly I began to walk along the aisle, attracting no particular attention. The side aisle was thronged with numerous worshippers, moving along the Stations of the Cross, as is common in Roman Catholic churches. I was not far from the altar when Faust raised his head and caught my eyes.

He read my purpose in a moment. Instantly I felt that he was putting forth the same magnetism that he had used in the Stanfield laboratory, when he had held me motionless by his infernal powers.

This time he was powerless. I darted forward. I heard the outraged cries of the worshippers behind me as I leaped into the midst of the bridal party. I saw the look of haughty indignation in Pam's eyes, the mild and pitying look in Bungay's. But he made no effort to deter me.

I knew—or I believed—that to shoot Faust would not help Pam in the slightest. I believed him indestructible. I raised the weapon, aiming it at Pam's heart. For an instant she stood there, confronting me proudly. She did not recognize me, but she faced death without a tremor.

Then suddenly her glance faltered. A look of uncertainty came upon her face.

"Lester!" she gasped.

But I had already pulled the trigger.

I sent three bullets into her body. I saw her stagger and collapse in a heap upon the ground, the blood from her heart staining her bridal dress.

For a moment stupefaction reigned. Then they were all about me, beating at me with their fists and howling execrations in my ears.

I was mad, raving mad. I did not know why I was raising Pam's body in my arms, except that I had some vague idea of carry-

ing her down to the crypt, so that we might die together there. Once among the tombs, I would put a bullet into my own brain.

I fought my way through the throng and gained the side door of the church, staggering on under a hail of blows. With Pam's body in my arms, I went on and on, buffeted, stoned, until I was at the spot where I had descended to the vault that morning.

But I could go no farther. It was impossible to squeeze through the opening, carrying Pam. I set her limp form down upon a pile of stones, and turned to face my attackers.

They were upon me like howling wolves. I fought with my fists like a madman, keeping them at bay, until two gendarmes, armed with swords, rushed at me. I closed with one and knocked him senseless. The other struck me on the head.

The crowds, the buildings, revolved around me. My last act was to gather Pam into my arms, and so, crouching, I received the second blow that rendered me unconscious.

"The priest is here. It is not the regular one, but another."

I started up from my bed as the guard opened my cell door. "Tell him I will not see him," I answered.

I HAD rejected the consolations of religion that are so freely offered those awaiting death in a French prison. Consolations! The word was a mockery. What consolation could be mine?

My trial had been like a dream. In a profound apathy I had passed through it, more like a spectator than the chief figure in the proceedings. I had been identified as a former lover of Pam's, who had followed her to France after her romantic flight there with Prince Uffizzi, her fiancé. And Faust himself had been bland, suave and melancholy in the witness-box.

A crime of passion? Yes, but it was abominable to shoot down the woman one loved at the wedding altar. The jury had thought so, as well as the judge, and there had been no recommendation of mercy.

And in a few short days I was to suffer death by the guillotine—for justice moves swiftly in France.

Yet I knew that efforts were being made for the commutation of my sentence to life-imprisonment on Devil's Island. That was supposed to be the lesser punishment. And I—I cared not at all, whichever it might be. The state of apathy that had robbed

the trial of all significance for me still persisted.

But those priests, how they bothered me! And here was the guard, returning with one of the cassocked figures, in spite of my refusal.

"I told the guard I would not see you!" I cried angrily.

But then I started back, aghast. It was Bungay, regarding me with grave commiseration in his eyes.

And, as I stood looking at him uncertainly, the door of the cell closed, and we two were alone.

"YOU trickster! Have you come here to gloat over me?" I cried.

The old man only looked at me mournfully, while I upbraided him with savage venom.

"You were marrying Pam to that devil!" I cried. "You were deliberately sacrificing her to him because you had made some bargain with him, giving him the woman I loved in return for some advantage of your own. You have betrayed me, as I always said you would. And now you dare to come here and see me, to gloat over me and torture me!"

"You are wrong, Shields," replied the monk. "You were blinded by your passion for her; you never understood that it was only through the stone that we could strike at Faust. If I seemed to care more about keeping it from his grasp than about protecting Pamela Rycroft, it was because I held all the tangled threads in my hands and could see further than you."

"Bah, I've heard all that before!" I answered.

But I spoke with less conviction, for something in Bungay's bearing impressed me in spite of myself.

"Were you not marrying her to that devil?" I cried. "How can you meet that charge?"

"It is true, but I knew that the marriage would never be completed. Do you think I did not know that she was destined to meet a violent death at your hands? Why, I had cast your horoscope time and again! And I knew I could not have prevented it."

"But why did you attempt to marry her?" I insisted.

"That I cannot tell you now, Shields," he answered. "I have come to ask you to trust me still. All is not lost."

His words infuriated me still more. "All not lost?" I cried. "Pam is lost, lying in

her grave. What more have I to live for?"

"Nothing," replied Bungay gravely. "And therefore I am setting influences in motion which will prevent the possibility of your being reprieved."

I burst into loud laughter. "So I am to die as well as Pam!" I cried. "Quite so! You have a way of sacrificing your friends, Bungay. But that is not new. You betrayed your master, Roger Bacon, in the same way, centuries ago."

Bungay's face flushed with shame. He stepped toward me and grasped me by the shoulder.

"Think, Shields," he said. "When did your misfortunes begin? When we were working side by side, or after you dismissed me?"

"Well," I sneered, "suppose I did dismiss you? What then?"

"You brought your tragedy on yourself. You are the victim of your own acts. But I am here to say: there is still hope."

"Not for me!"

"For you. Even if you will never see Pam again in this life, do you not want to be revenged upon Faust and his band of devils?"

"Upon him, yes. I care nothing about his devils," I returned. "They have never done me any harm. But I would die the more gladly if I knew that I could repay Faust measure for measure, blow for blow."

"If you will trust me, you shall do that," said the old monk. "Suppose that all your beliefs about my treachery are true, are you not still willing to co-operate with me in one last attempt to destroy Faust and his crew?"

From this cell?" I inquired ironically.

"FROM the guillotine, Shields," he answered. "I ask you whether you prefer to obtain a reprieve—and I can pledge my word that I have the means of obtaining one for you—whether you prefer to drag out the rest of your life upon Devil's Island, or whether you are prepared to taste the pains of physical death in order to strike a last blow at Faust."

I stared at him, stupefied by the alternative he was offering me. I had seen Bungay emerge as a calcined shape from a blazing furnace and then resume his bodily form and powers; I myself had survived injuries that should inevitably have proved mortal. I could not but believe that this was due to the elixir. And so I believed that Bungay's words were no idle ones, that

he veritably possessed the power to bring me back from the grave, even from the guillotine, if he desired.

And the thought fired me with new resolution. "If you can guarantee me life and consciousness beyond the grave, I would rather die a thousand deaths than forego my vengeance upon that devil!" I shouted.

"Accepted," answered Bungay quietly. "Then I shall tell you of my plan."

HE dominated me in spite of my anger and my situation. So I, the condemned prisoner, awaiting death, listened to perhaps the strangest proposition that was ever made to a man in such a position.

He told me that Faust had the carbuncle in his possession, and was working night and day to discover the formula that would turn base metals into gold. And the place where he and his band of devils were at work was in an extension of the crypt of St. Sulpice church, formerly the very laboratory where Bungay and Roger Bacon had worked, more than six hundred years before.

In those days the laboratory had been in the basement of the monastery, but in the course of centuries it had subsided further and further underground, until now it was a dark, subterranean crypt whose existence was unsuspected by the church authorities.

There, in the very furnace that Bungay and Bacon had used, and with the same tools, the devils were working out the problem, and coming nearer to the solution with the passing of each day.

"They have temporarily abandoned the search for the elixir," Bungay said, "meaning to try to bargain with me, I think, as soon as they have discovered the secret of making gold. For, after all, the elixir is with them a secondary consideration. Faust sees a long life before him, for he has finally succeeded in becoming completely incarnate, by transfiguring the mulatto's body, and he believes that he will always be able to achieve a new incarnation through some other medium when the mulatto's time comes to die.

"I need your aid, Shields. And this is for no selfish purpose. I cannot explain to you the details of my plan now, but—I have brought the elixir with me!"

And unbuttoning the top of his cassock, he displayed the ruby goblet that I had last seen in the crypt of St. Sulpice church—how long ago was it? Centuries, it seemed.

"What do you want me to do?" I asked.

"I told you," answered Bungay, "that we discovered there was an impurity in the liquid, due to the addition of some unknown substance. On account of this impurity it does not entirely convey immortality. I have had to drink of it several times, in order to maintain the indestructibility of my body, and more than once I have come within an ace of perishing, on account of the dissipation of the elixir within my frame.

"You yourself, Shields, have twice survived what would have been inevitable death, because I gave you a draught of the elixir years ago. Now, as you know, the power has ceased to operate in you. The goblet"—here he held the flask up to the light that came through the barred window of my cell—"is almost empty. There is one small drink of the pure substance remaining. The rest is clouded and muddy with the unknown element. But this small drink should be enough to enable you to survive the shock of the guillotine.

"I ask that you submit to your fate, reject the opportunity of a reprieve and trust to me to bring you back to life again, so that we can continue to work together."

"But—but how—" I gasped, appalled by the audacity of the suggestion.

"I shall claim your body as your executor and friend. I shall remove it to the crypt of the St. Sulpice church for interment. There you will come back to life, and together we will engage in our final battle against that band of devils."

Suddenly the absurdity of the suggestion came over me. This amazing man was calmly plotting my death, confident that he possessed the power to bring me back from the grave. And I did not believe a word of it.

CERTAINLY the elixir might have enabled him to withstand the heat of the furnace, but to restore a severed head to its shoulders, to reunite blood-vessels, nerves, and vertebrae—it was too preposterous!

"Agreed, agreed, Bungay!" I cried in ghastly mirth. "Give me the last drink of the elixir!"

From a pocket of his cassock he produced a little glass, and, holding up the flask again, with great care he began pouring out the draught, drop by drop. As the electric light in the jail corridor illumined the interior of the flask, I could see that there was only a thin film of clear fluid above the turbid sediment at the bottom, and it was evident that Bungay was using all pos-

sible care to prevent any of the sediment from entering the glass.

The whole draught did not amount to more than a small spoonful, when he handed it to me. But it glowed red as the carbuncle, and the strong aromatic perfume filled the cell.

"Come, my friend, let us drink to success and happiness," said Bungay.

THE words struck me as very bitterly out of place. What happiness could there be for me, even if the incredible happened, and I survived the knife of the guillotine? But Bungay seemed to sense my mood, for he laid his hand in a fatherly manner upon my shoulder.

"It is just at the darkest hour, my son," he said, "when every hope is gone, that the brave man begins to live."

I glanced at him sharply. For an instant I thought there was more behind his words than he meant me to understand. And then—for the last time—I had a reaction of incredulity. I no longer believed in Bungay or the elixir. Even the fact that I had seen him restored to life after passing through the furnace ceased to have any meaning for me. Mechanically I raised the glass to my lips and drank the syrupy contents.

"Leave me now," I said. "I'm ready to play the farce out to the end, but I want to play it alone."

Bungay's hand rested on my shoulder an instant longer. Then he was gone, and I was alone.

Alone—and yet, as the potent drug began to invade my physical being, I was conscious of being transported to strange scenes peopled with figures that I dimly recognized as those of familiar friends. In the long period of delirium that followed, I seemed to live through uncounted epochs of time. I was a warrior in some Eastern land, hurling my spear from my swiftly moving chariot; I paced the forum in Rome, I stood with Charlemagne among his councillors, I raged through battles in which armed knights contended with one another with sword and battle-axe. And ever through these scenes moved the figure of Pam.

I loved her, won her, lost her. I lived each life for her. I knew that our souls had been associated together since the dawn of life. I learned that, even if I had lost her in this transitory life, she was none the less mine. Lastly, as in a picture, I saw all the events of our association that had led up to my murder of her in the church.

"Why did you kill me, Lester?" that phantom figure seemed to moan.

"To save you from that devil, and keep you wholly mine," I answered. "Pam, can you forgive me?"

She put her hands in mine. Somehow I seemed to know that I had not lost her, that all would yet be well. And grasping after that evanescent figure, I came back to myself, and found myself standing in my cell with arms outstretched. The dawn was coming in through the bars.

The guard's steps sounded outside. The key turned in the door, and the man entered. He wore a scowl upon his face, but he was shaking, as if with ague.

"So you've stopped faking insanity, have you?" he sneered. "Just as well for you. Come on, I've got to get you ready."

"Ready? For what?" I demanded.

He drew his hand significantly across his throat. Behind him two men were advancing toward my cell door. One was a stranger whom I had never seen before; the other the priest whom I had refused to see. In his hand he carried a crucifix.

I knew—merciful God, I knew! I had remained in a trance for two weeks, only to come back to myself now, upon the morning set for my execution!

Bungay had deserted me at the end—that was the thought that ran through my brain as I submitted myself to the ministrations of the executioner. My arms were pinioned to my sides, my legs strapped together in such a way that I could separate my feet only a few inches. I looked about me at my cell for the last time, and a spasm of uncontrollable anger and chagrin shook me at the thought of this dog's death that was to be mine.

I WAS prepared to die. I had counted on death when I killed Pam, but to die strapped like a beast on the vivisection table, with my head thrust through a hole in a plank, to furnish entertainment for gaping thousands—this was too horrible for contemplation.

And Bungay, playing his fool's game to the last, had deserted me. Perhaps he had charitably meant to poison me, under the guise of his fantastic talk about the elixir. Certainly I had no faith that any elixir could replace a severed head upon the shoulders of a dead man.

Rage, chagrin and humiliation shook me, so that had there been the least chance in the world of meeting death in any other

fashion, I think I would have been strong enough to have broken my bonds and hurled myself upon the guard and the executioner.

But there was no such chance, and so I took up my slow, shuffling walk out of the cell, and along the corridor, thinking, as thousands of other legal victims must have thought, "This is the end," and reckoning the minutes of life that remained to me.

EXECUTIONS in France are public. I had known that, and so I was not surprised when I stepped out through a gate in the jail wall into the market square, blazing with sunlight and lined with dense crowds. There were faces at every window of the buildings surrounding the square, and upon the steps of the church which formed one side of it, I saw a group of priests, just as eager as the rest of the citizens to look upon the spectacle of a poor wretch paying the last penalty.

And in the center of the square I saw a tall structure of boards.

The guillotine! I shuffled toward it, my arms gripped by two guards. The executioner had preceded us. He was standing upon the scaffold, testing the apparatus. I looked about me, remembering how I had walked through that very square in the days of the War. It was difficult to realize that it was not all a dream.

And now I found myself at the foot of the guillotine. The governor of the jail was reading something to me with a grave face. I saw his hand shake as it held the paper. Then I was mounting six short

wooden steps. And the priest was holding up his crucifix and chanting a prayer.

Then suddenly, so swiftly that I was caught totally unprepared, the executioner and a guard had seized me and thrust my head through a semicircular notch at the upper edge of a board. Before I could withdraw it another board had been clamped down, imprisoning my neck as in a vise.

For a moment I struggled, not through fear, but sheer animal vitality. To be imprisoned thus, my face upturned to the sun, my body strapped and helpless, aroused a sort of physical panic in me that had no relationship to fear. Inwardly I was calm.

And again I said to myself, "This is the end."

Then, by an immense effort of will, I forced my protesting body and limbs into obedience, and waited.

Overhead I saw the tall structure of the guillotine, the grooved slot extending all the way down, and, at the top, the knife, which, upon the pressure of the lever, would descend and slice my head cleanly from my shoulders.

What were they waiting for?

For the last touch of grotesque horror, for I saw a guard come running up with something in his hand. Before he passed out of sight beneath me I knew what it was—the basket!

"This is the end!"

Someone was shouting some command.

I closed my eyes, expecting not to open them again. Scornfully I gathered all my soul into one last defiance.

Lester is about to pay the supreme penalty for the murder of Pam. Is it conceivable that the last muddy draught of the elixir could replace the head of a dead man upon his shoulders and bring him back to life? And what about Pam, whose heart was pierced with bullets from Lester's gun? And Faust and Bungay? Don't miss the thrilling ending of this weird story in the January issue of GHOST STORIES. On all news stands November 23rd.





IS The White House Haunted?

*Washington gossip says positively that it is! And servants
and watchmen verify the uncanny story!*

By UTHAI VINCENT WILCOX

THE next President of the United States will take up his residence in a house where current gossip and old traditions agree in stating that restless spirits dwell. There are many persons who claim to have seen the ghostly forms of dead men walking the stairs and lurking in the recesses of its attics and the vaults of its cellars.

Stories of specters in the United States Capitol are even more common and have been actually recorded in formal affidavits, reports of watchmen and policemen, and musty documents. These records unfold a startling, breath-taking story of weird encounters with the Unknown.

Certainly the White House and the Capitol are steeped in fragrant old memories and tragic associations, and if any earthly

house can draw its departed tenants back to its sheltering walls, it seems reasonable to suppose that these two buildings would be rendezvous for moody spirits.

At any rate, many residents of Washington are positive on this point—the ghosts of American presidents and statesmen do come back from the spirit realms to visit the old places where they once exercised high authority over a great people. These shadowy figures, vouched for by many witnesses, are apparently still living over the events of the past. At times they fleetingly take cognizance of the events of the present—as at inaugurations, at times of national calamity or when ominous events portend public suffering. On such occasions they are seen more often.

In spite of the frequent remodeling of

the White House its walls somehow admit these visitants from other worlds. In the great attic, now occupied by servants' quarters, where once the gifts, the souvenirs and the mementos that reached the President were stored, there is yearly heard the turning about of trunks, their creaking opening and the scraping of their moving as though someone were examining them and seeking for a lost article.

NOT long ago a curious servant, seeking to discover for herself the reason for the noise, opened a door into an older store-room beneath the roof—and saw in the dim light the great form of President William Henry Harrison! He turned slowly and looked at her, and smiled. It was as if he were trying to explain that he had come to look for some of his old belongings or perhaps the gifts bestowed upon him when he lived there.

President Harrison died in the White House, and it is believed he was unable to care for many personal articles. Now he returns at intervals to search for some missing paper, document or gift that he has never recovered. It is thus evident why his phantasmal activities should be confined to the attic, since it was there that such material was stored in his day.

At rare intervals the ghostly form of a woman, wearing a cap of antique pattern, a garment resembling a lace shawl, and widely distended hoopskirts is glimpsed just before daybreak gliding slowly along the wide lower hallway, which extends lengthwise through the center of the White House. Always she walks from the west end of the mansion, moving toward the entrance to the great East Room.

The rare watcher who is about at such an hour may see her pause for a moment; then, without waiting to open the doors to the grandly furnished East Room, she passes on as if there were no obstacle in her path. Whether she waits within, gazes about or merely walks its velvety rugs is not known, for no one has ever been able to trace her misty form beyond the door.

This restless figure of other days is Abigail Adams, the first mistress of the White House, who, moving into the "President's Palace," as it was then called, had to endure many discomforts and hardships before the young and poor republic completed the dwelling. The great East Room was then unfinished and the President's wife had her colored servants hang the family laun-

dry in its spaciousness. It seemed the only fitting use that could be made of its barn-like bareness.

It is believed that to this day she goes now and then to the room to see if her servants have followed her instructions. Thus she walks silently through the door. Then finding all changed and the room that was once designed for a great banquet hall now a large reception room with gold piano and luxurious furniture, she is overcome and vanishes.

The most familiar and best authenticated of all the White House apparitions is that of Abraham Lincoln, the great martyred President. He has appeared often but, strangely enough, has been seen only on the stairs, the double flight, that formerly led up to the executive offices on the second floor. He always walks slowly and with hesitant step, as if weary and worn, moving sadly toward the rooms that were then his offices but are now bedrooms. It is impossible for those who have seen this specter to mistake the tall, awkward figure and shambling gait.

Watching spellbound, one witness noted that upon reaching the head of the stairs, he looked around, smiled faintly and disappeared. Perhaps he turned to acknowledge the well-remembered call of his little son, Tad, whose boyish activities had to be kept away from the offices where the President wrestled with affairs of state.

There are other ghostly visitants to the White House, all once residents there. Each of the martyred Presidents, who had their careers cut short by assassins, has been seen at various times.

THE stirring scenes of history, the struggles and passions of men who fought and planned and worked in order that the republic might grow and expand, have also left their indelible imprint in other public places in Washington. Beneath the great Capitol dome there are spirit meetings. In Statuary Hall, once the chamber of the House of Representatives, there are unexplained phenomena. There are also authenticated instances where the phantoms of dead statesmen have been seen.

In this Hall, now filled with the marble and bronze forms of the great men and women from the various States of the Union, is a spot marked with a brass star to designate the place where John Quincy Adams sat when he was taken mortally ill. Once President of the United States,

he later returned as a member of Congress and for nineteen years he regularly occupied his seat in the House.

So long did he remain in the public service that even now he returns at times on some errand of pressing moment. Perhaps he makes suggestions to committee members, or he observes the throngs that pass in and out. His is a reverent spirit, quiet and subdued.

NOT long ago a member of the Capitol Police made formal affidavit that one night at a late hour, after all had gone to their homes and the great white flood-lights outside had been turned off, he entered Statuary Hall and beheld the entire House of Representatives of 1848 assembled as if for law-making purposes!

Hesitant to disturb this phantom gathering, awed by the sight of these stately gen-

uncanny audibility to the whispered word, as if spirit forms carried the scarcely breathed thought to others across the great space.

Ghostly sounds and uncanny footsteps are also heard in other parts of the Capitol. Once, a member of the watch on duty at night during the War period, when every effort was being made to guard the great building adequately, became convinced that a living person was hiding there, perhaps for some dangerous purpose. In order to catch the prowler he put on his rubber overshoes, and in the darkness the watchman stalked the steady footsteps through the long, twisting halls. They reached a blind passage—and he knew he had the unseen prowler cornered!

He leaped forward, snapping his flashlight on, and—there was nothing but a blank wall before him! Suddenly, far behind him, he heard the phantom footsteps again!

"In the darkness the watchman stalked the steady footsteps through the long, twisting halls. They reached a blind passage—and he knew he had the unseen prowler cornered!"

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lemen dressed in the costumes of long ago, he stopped speechless and quaking on the threshold. He was able to recognize former President Adams and some others familiar to history but long known as dead.

As his foot scraped in his nervousness, every member of the ghostly gathering turned to a man and looked at him. A spectral light illuminated the scene. They looked, said not a word but vanished in a moment. Other watchmen say that they, too, have seen the spectral meetings of committees, and gatherings of the politicians of long ago.

This old assembly room of the House of Representatives, used by the lawmakers until it was outgrown by the expanding republic, possesses strange qualities. There are odd noises and unexplainable acoustic phenomena connected with its walls. There is an

Try as he would the whole night through, he could never overtake the mysterious visitor.

It is believed that the footsteps were those of spirit watchers who were making the rounds of the great building, leading the human watcher about in order to make certain that no planted bombs or other fiendish device should wreck the Capitol.

IT may be that the reverent footsteps were those of the tall, military-looking gentleman, dressed in frock coat, with long mustache and goatee, who has now and then been seen walking about the corridors at night. Many a watchman has seen the specter far ahead of him as he made his rounds. The gentleman walked with military step, with hands clasped behind him as though sad and forlorn. Beneath his arm was a

long roll of parchment, which at times he was seen to unroll and study.

Always pacing up and down as if waiting for something or somebody, and vanishing like an extinguished light when approached by the curious watchman, the form appeared to be that of Major Pierre L'Enfant, the great engineer and patriot who at Washington's request laid out the capital city, its streets, avenues and highways that are today the pride of the nation, but thanks to an unappreciative Congress was never paid the promised sum. He waited in the halls of Congress until old and worn, ultimately dying in extreme poverty—a rebuke to the nation. And still the brilliant Frenchman comes to the Capitol to seek some word of the promised payment for his life's labor.

The industrious colored cleaners that reach the Capitol in the early morning, which is before daybreak in the winter months, have a horror of meeting this spectral Major and will promptly turn on all the great lights before starting their work.

One of their own members, a white-haired old worker, once a slave, haunts the scenes of his work to this day. The others have all heard the swish and the swash of spectral water, the sound of his scrubbing brush and the slap of his mop as he cleans the hallways. It is as distinct as the sound made by any living human being who now works to keep the Capitol spick and span. This old negro, thankful for his freedom, anxious to serve fully and expertly, still reports for the work in which he delighted.

THE Capitol is also the haunt of a strange cat—a Demon Cat. Just why this goblin feline should elect to forever haunt the cellars and the subcellars of the Capitol is unexplained. There are cats aplenty, alive and purring, wild and disturbing, to battle with the small army of rodents that infest the ancient walls.

Yet, perhaps in some distant day, the cat was punished, kicked or maltreated by some hater of the species. For the evidence is complete that the Demon Cat possesses the first game rights to the mice preserves of the buildings. But strangely enough, the cat, which some say is either the spirit of some human being or an imp or troll, is the harbinger of disaster, for it appears only at times of war.

At the time of the World War it was followed by a watchman who noted the scrawny animal sneaking down the corridor. Finally cornering what he supposed to be a

stray cat and seeking to catch it or chase it from the halls, he was amazed when it suddenly swelled to three times its normal size! Then, with yellow eyes blazing, and hissing horribly, it jumped at the startled and badly frightened watchman like a great tiger!

Fully expecting to receive the weight of its furry form against him and its needle-like claws on his skin, he was surprised to discover that the furious animal had jumped completely over him and had disappeared like vapor in a disturbing wind.

JUST why this strange apparition should be found in the Capitol at such times is not clearly known. Perhaps at some future time a key to its visitations will be obtained and the meaning will be made clear.

Not all the apparitions encountered in this great public structure are of early days. The spirit of Champ Clark, recently Speaker of the House of Representatives during the administration of President Wilson, has been recognized hovering over the Speaker's desk. His phantom gavel has sent its peremptory call to order, ringing through the dark quiet of the great hall, while his spectral hands rustled the papers of his office.

For fully thirty years the ghost of an old man has been noted prowling about the one section of the subcellar, searching vainly for some lost article. Surprised at times by the watchmen, he seems to beg mutely for help in his quest, with an attitude questioning and pathetic. This is the refined gentleman who for thirty-five years was employed in the Library of Congress when it was crammed into the Capitol Building. His quarters, where most of his cataloging was done, consisted of a tiny vault or den in this subterranean passage. How he lived so long in such a dismal place, with its piles of musty papers and dusty books, was a mystery, but like the gnomes of long ago he seemed to subsist on the work that he did, apparently needing little of the food that ordinary mortals eat.

Suddenly the old gentleman, while industriously cataloging the books, became paralyzed and, though unable to speak, made it clear that he had some important information to impart. But he died before he could write it down or make himself understood. Not long afterward it was learned that he had hidden six thousand dollars' worth of Government bonds, purchased from his meager salary, among the books and papers of his cubby-hole. A search was made for

these bonds when the books were removed to the new Library Building, but they were not found. Undoubtedly the faithful clerk sought to dispose of his savings by making a will but just what his wish was has never been discovered. And so he still hunts for his money.

THE phantom of Henry Wilson has also been seen in the Capitol. He was born Jeremiah Jones Colbath of New Hampshire, and began life as a shoemaker. He petitioned his state legislature to change his name to Henry Wilson, which was done for him at the age of seventeen. By indomitable perseverance he acquired an education, entered politics and after a strenuous career was elected to the Senate and later made Vice-president with U. S. Grant on his second term.

Vice-president Wilson died unexpectedly in his room in the Capitol, undoubtedly leaving some unfinished business, since his spirit still is found there in the early morning hours. Now and then he is seen roaming about the building. At one time he badly frightened a watchman guarding the coffin of a Southern Senator, whose body lay in state in the Senate chamber.

When in very recent years the body of the Unknown Soldier lay in state in the great rotunda in all its superb setting of ferns, flowers and palms, and drew to it the homage of the Nation, it was fitting that the spirit world, too, should be recognized—as indeed it was. A constant guard was

placed over the casket, and men were on duty day and night, with measured tread walking back and forth.

During the lonely vigil of the morning hours one of the guards was suddenly startled to behold clearly and distinctly the shadowy outlines of a slim, youthful, flaxen-haired "doughboy" emerge from the mass of blossoms, to stand at attention at the casket's head!

The soldier on guard saluted, and his salute was promptly returned. The apparition then quietly circled the chamber as though noting the surroundings and the beautiful floral pieces arranged about the bier.

It seemed certain to the awe-struck watcher that he was beholding the spirit of the Unknown Soldier. Here was the angel form of a hero who had "gone west" and who had stepped from beyond the veil to witness for a moment the ceremonies and the honors that were being extended to those who had made the great sacrifice for their country.

There are other supernatural visitants to the Capitol and the White House. There are queer tales told by the vigilant watchmen and the workmen and the employees of these great public buildings—tales that practical folk may discount, yet cannot adequately explain. Let the skeptics say what they will—there are many persons of reputable character and veracity who insist that the dead do return and that the Capitol and the White House are proof enough.

The Spectral Dog of Dublin

THE congregation of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, Ireland, received a shock recently when they were informed by the precentor, the Reverend H. J. Lawler, D.D., that the church was haunted by the ghost of a dog. In the cathedral is the tomb of Captain J. McNeill Boyd, R. N., who was drowned off Kingston in an attempt to rescue the crew of the wrecked brig, *Neptune*, in 1861. Captain Boyd's dog, said the precentor, followed his master's coffin and remained upon his grave until he died of starvation.

"Now," said Doctor Lawler, making a

statement concerning the unwelcome visitor in the church, "if anyone is in the Cathedral between midnight and one in the morning, he can hear the patter of a dog's footsteps on the floor." He went on to say that a former organist who was sitting at the organ late one night heard the noise and, upon making an investigation, was terrorized by seeing two glaring eyes in the darkness. He insisted he also saw the form of a dog and was so affected that he sought a place of safety in the Cathedral and remained there throughout the remainder of the night. His story caused much debate.

The Ghost of

By
LYON MEARSON

THE booth of the Gipsy fortune-teller at Coney Island was the scene of a weird séance. The participants were Celeste the Gipsy, Sadie the snake charmer, Long Tom the midget, John Custor, owner of the show, and his son, Frank. Celeste's mother was tranquilly asleep in a little bedroom at the rear.

The table tapped out a startling warning for Custor:

Your days are numbered! Beware of intolerance.

The hard-boiled showman received the message with open skepticism, but he was somewhat impressed by Celeste's story of

how she acquired the mysterious table. She had bought it under strange conditions in a little sec-

ond-hand shop in New York City—and had never been able to locate the shop again.

While the others were saying good night, Custor was left alone in the booth. Frank and Celeste were out of the room for only a few moments—but when they returned, the old man was lying stark dead on the floor—with the table on top of him!

The sound of Celeste's scream brought the others running back.

FRANK was on his knees beside the dead body of his father. His face was a mask of horror.

Slowly he rose, walked to the door and looked up and down the street, his eyes searching frenziedly for the figure of a lurking assassin.

The others followed him. In the first shock of terror, they seemed almost incapable of logical thought or decisive action. Their minds were numbed by the catastrophe.

As Frank turned back, Celeste spoke.

"Oh, my God! It was the table that killed him! It was no human murderer!" she screamed.

All turned to gaze at the still body on the floor—and it was then that they saw the most amazing thing of all!

The table was gone! The body of Custor lay there just as before—but the table had vanished into thin air!

Their brains reeled and they stared at



the Sideshow

Could a TABLE be guilty of murder? If not, what killed Custor? And what was the secret of the invisible screaming Thing in that room of death?

each other like crazed persons. Celeste's breath was exhaled in a long gasp but there was no other sound.

Then a cry broke upon their ears. "Celeste! Celeste!"

It was the Gipsy's crippled mother, calling querulously and plaintively from her bed in the back room.

THE thin, uncertain voice struck through the charged air as though one spoke among tombs long emptied of their dead.

No one answered her for the moment, as the same thought flashed into the minds of all. Could it be possible that the old woman had been able to sleep through all that had occurred? Could she have remained unconscious, while in the next room, with only a thin partition between, a man had been clubbed to death?

It seemed almost incredible, yet they followed Celeste's lead and accepted it as a fact. Turning quickly to her companion and with a finger on her lips, the Gipsy cautioned them against alarming her mother. It was evident that the invalid knew nothing of what had occurred, and the sudden shock would be dangerous.

"They're just leaving, Mama," Celeste said, raising her voice slightly and trying to eliminate from it all the hysteria that had surged over her during the past few minutes of tragedy and mystery.

"Well, land's sakes alive, I should say it was about time that honest folks was goin' home to sleep, where they belong at this hour of the night. Why, when I was young, we would no more think of stayin' up to all hours than——"

Celeste went into the bedroom, and in a moment or two she came out with a sheet, with which she deftly covered the figure of him who had been John Custor and who

was now nothing at all. She had quieted the half-awakened woman as best she could, and hoped fervidly that the invalid would drop back into a deep sleep again.

The whole party looked around them in a sort of stunned bewilderment. The weird murder—and their own dangerous situation—had thrown their minds into a whirling turmoil. Two questions were written in fire on the brain of each person:

Who—or what—killed John Custor? And what happened to the table?

These things were apparently beyond human explanation, and the gruesomeness of the atmosphere, as they stood looking down at the white-sheeted thing on the floor, added to the blind hysteria of the moment. The light still burned dimly, for no one had thought to turn it up, and the center of the room, with its principal object missing, looked significantly bare. Otherwise, the room was just as usual. Not a piece of furniture had been moved, the rug was just as smooth and unwrinkled as it had been when they began their séance, and nowhere in all the room was there the least sign that a struggle had taken place.

THE act of murder must have been consummated with amazing suddenness. There could have been no warning of any kind whatever—and, indeed, the face of the dead man had expressed no emotion except an overwhelming surprise. Something had happened to this man that was absolutely not on the cards—something that he could not possibly have foreseen or guarded against. So sudden had it been, so unlooked-for, that he had not even an expression of horror or pain on his face . . . just surprise.

Thus do most of us meet death, as a matter of fact . . . we are surprised, and a little shocked, that this, which happens to

everyone eventually, should happen to us.

Wild thoughts were racing through the mind of Long Tom, the midget, as he crouched in one corner and regarded the sheet that hid the body of the man who had been his employer. How had this man come to his death, and what mysterious force had been at work to bring the end so suddenly and so accurately? In one minute Custor had been alive and a scoffer, and in another he had been dead and, as for his scoffing . . . one did not know what became of it.

THE word "scoffer" stuck in Long Tom's mind. Yes, the man had scoffed all his life, and almost with his last words he had scoffed at the supposed supernatural power of an inanimate piece of wood—a table. At least, he had supposed it to be inanimate. Could it really be possible that the table was not inanimate? Could it really be animated by a spirit—by a vindictive spirit? By a spirit that had no hesitation at putting the final punishment on a human being?

These things did not seem credible, and yet, almost before their very eyes, something had occurred that made it impossible to ignore their possibility.

The thing was susceptible of two explanations, the physical and the spiritual, and as the physical had to be barred on account of apparent impossibility, that left only a spiritual explanation—and this was an explanation that almost every human being would have struggled against accepting, and that Long Tom was sure would not be accepted by the police. The dwarf himself, however, was of rather a mystic turn of mind, as are many people who are physically different from their fellows.

His thoughts went back to the queer story Celeste had told about her acquisition of the table, and he was compelled to believe the story, for he had never known Celeste to lie.

Taking the spiritual as a hypothesis, was there some connection between the murder and the sinister and meaningful message that had come to John Custor over the mysterious table earlier in the night . . . a message he had been injudicious enough to scoff at? Who had sent that message, and was it really from someone who was dead? Did anyone who was present have a reason for frightening John Custor by sending him such a message?

That turned his mind to a new trend, and Long Tom went hurriedly over the séance, remembering every incident and every detail, and trying to find something significant

in it, something that might give him the clue his mind was seeking. He could think of nothing. Certainly none of those present had any reason to play tricks on John Custor, who was the employer of all of them, and greatly liked by everyone. There was no sense to it. His death probably meant that for the coming season they would have to go to the trouble of finding new connections, new places to show.

No, it was the table, Long Tom convinced himself. What a curious story Celeste had told about it! He wondered about the location of the antique shop kept by the queer old man who had sold her the table. If she would tell him, he might make a little investigation on his own account.

But he discarded this idea, for he realized quickly, that, owing to his size, he could never make a successful investigator. He was a curiosity, and he attracted so much attention, wherever he went, that the privacy and secrecy that an investigation requires were quite impossible for him.

"You can't make a private investigation with a crowd that blocks traffic all around you," he said to himself, with a grim smile, for he was very sensitive about his size, though he never showed it in conversation.

And yet, the thing piqued his imagination, of course, and he resolved to—in a way—file the thing in his head for reference when the right moment should come.

All these things passed through his mind in a very few moments.

Sadie had sunk into a chair but she sat bolt upright, her face deathly pale and her body rigid, as though she were at that moment seeing a ghost.

What her thoughts were would have been difficult to describe—she herself would scarcely have been able to tell, in all probability. She sat there, afraid to move, and almost afraid to speak.

FRANK was sitting quietly in another chair, the color gone from his handsome face, and his mind stretching back to the time when he was a little boy and the man who was now dead was his living god—for between them there had been an intimacy that is possible between father and son when the mother is dead and there are no female relations in the house.

Celeste, always capable and quick-witted, seemed more nearly master of herself than any of the others.

After listening for any sound of her

mother stirring, she addressed the company in a low tone.

"I guess there is no use in sitting around paralyzed. We'll have to do something. Call in the police——"

THE shrill treble of Long Tom broke in on her; the sound of Celeste's voice seemed to have brought the others back to partial sanity and to their accustomed modes of thought.

"What are you going to tell them—that a man has been murdered here by a table—and that the table has disappeared?" he asked. A short, mirthless laugh came from his lips. "Swell chance you'll have! Have you ever talked to one of these Irish detectives?" he demanded.

"I have!" said Sadie, suddenly coming to life with a shudder. "And I can imagine

her with the kind of love that only a daughter can give to her mother. It was going to be hard enough, she knew, even to break the news to her mother of the death that had occurred within ten feet of where she now slept so soundly and so peacefully.

"Oh, you don't think——" she began, and then lapsed into frightened silence as she realized that Sadie had told the truth. When she spoke again, her voice had a hysterical ring. "Oh, but you know mother is crippled—that she can't move off her chair—everybody knows that! She couldn't have——" she cried.

Sadie tried hastily to calm her.

"I didn't mean that she had done it herself. I'm only telling you what they'll say."

Frank sat silent, immersed in his own deep thoughts and seeming scarcely to listen to the comments on the death of his

"Who has knocked on this door?" asked Frank, addressing the darkness in front of him.

"As if in answer, a cold wind swept past him from the inside of the room—a cold wind that seemed to have the vibrant power of a live thing! The next instant——"

one of them believing that a table got up by itself and hit a man on the head, killing him! And that your mother——" She looked at Celeste and was silent.

"What do you mean?" asked Celeste. "You know as well as I do that my mother——"

"I don't mean anything. But when we call a policeman in and tell him about all this—and we say that your mother was in the next room, behind a partition that doesn't even go up to the ceiling, and that she did not hear a thing—well, the first thing they'll think about is that your mother must know more about it than she lets on," said Sadie.

A look of consternation came into the face of Celeste. It was something she had not thought about. She and her mother bickered and quarreled often, but she loved

father. He was too stunned to talk about it.

"You know," said Long Tom, "it isn't a very likely story, after all. Of course, we were here and we believe it, but——"

"If it wasn't so terrible, and if I weren't mixed up in it," said Sadie, "it would be really funny to try to tell a cop just what we think happened." She sighed shudderingly. "Well, I see nothing else for it. We'll have to tell them the truth, and try to make them believe it. Can you see what the papers will say about it?"

"I SHOULD say so," said Celeste. "They'll think that someone killed the boss while we were all present, and that we cooked up this story to cover them up."

"Well, if I was cooking up a story, it would certainly be a better one than that—you can paste that in your hat!" said Sadie.

"That might have some weight," put in the treble of Long Tom. "Any sensible person will be able to see that we would have thought up a better story——"

"Sensible person!" scoffed Sadie. "We're talking about a policeman!"

"But what do you think they'll do with us?" asked Celeste, very troubled.

LONG TOM tried to consider the matter deliberately. When he spoke, his words were like an echo of what was in the minds of all of them.

"What they're likely to do is to hold all of us as material witnesses to this crime," he said.

There was a momentary silence.

"Does that mean that we would—that we would——?" began Celeste.

"That we would go to jail?" finished Sadie.

"It probably would," said Long Tom. "The police would work on the theory that one of us—if not all—committed the murder of poor Custor and that the rest of us are trying to cover it up, which makes us all accessories, at least. A dangerous business."

"But that is nonsense," broke in Frank, who up to now had appeared not to be listening to the conversation.

"Why nonsense?" asked Long Tom.

"Why, we all know that no one of us committed it," said Frank. "I'm his son—and they'll surely not suspect me—and I'll tell them exactly what happened. They're bound to believe me."

"They're liable to suspect anyone, you know, Frank," came gently from Long Tom.

"Don't they have to prove a motive?" came from Celeste, her sympathetic eyes resting for a moment on the pale face of the son of the dead man.

"It isn't always hard to prove a motive, even if there is none," said Long Tom. "For instance——" he turned to Frank—"for instance, if you had something to gain by your father's death, that would be considered plenty of motive. Or if you had quarreled with him lately—oh, they'll ask all these things, so you may as well get used to hearing them now."

Frank nodded. "I know," he said quite calmly. "Of course, I am my father's heir—at least, he always told me I would be, and I don't think he's had any cause to change his mind. But then, if they suspected a son of killing his father just because he was the heir, why——"

"Well, there might be more to it than

that," went on Long Tom implacably. "Suppose you, let us say, were at this moment in desperate need of money . . . and suppose your father had refused to give it to you, for some reason——" He paused and allowed this to be assimilated.

Frank's face became, on that instant, even paler than it had been, and all his strength seemed to have deserted him. The others saw this, of course, as it could hardly have passed unnoticed, and they noted still more pointedly the seemingly forced vehemence of his denial.

"That isn't true!" he almost shouted, half rising from his seat, almost as though he was actually being cross-examined on the stand by an angry district attorney.

"That isn't true!" he shouted again. "I do not need money, and if I did, I would not have had to kill my father to get it!"

"Don't be wrought up, Frank," broke in the voice of Celeste, gently. "Tom didn't mean that it was—he was only showing you what others might say."

Frank arose and went to the door, pushing aside the flap and looking up and down the narrow moonlit street. Near by no one was stirring, but from the extreme end of the street a single pedestrian approached, and as he got a little closer, Frank could see that he swung a policeman's nightstick.

He shivered a little, and withdrew inward. Then he seemed to have another thought and, fumbling behind the cloth flap for the handle of the wooden door, which was never closed until the very last thing at night, he pulled the door shut and turned to the rest of the company gathered there in silence in that room of death.

"There is a policeman coming down the street," he said, trying to speak calmly, "and I wasn't quite sure whether we were ready to call him in."

"I don't see much use in waiting," said Sadie. "I guess the quicker we call the police in, the better it will be for all of us. Otherwise, they're liable to think we had a good reason for waiting."

AS they stood there undecided, still unnerved by the horrible crime and the uncertainty and horror of their own situation, suddenly a peculiar thing happened! Slowly the room began to grow dark. The lamp seemed to be burning dimmer and dimmer, and around them the air became heavy and laden with some portentous meaning.

Sadie noticed it first, though they all saw it the moment after.

"Look!" she gasped. "It's getting dark!"
 "So it is," came the shrill voice of Long Tom. "Dark!"

It was as though the light was being drawn out of the room . . . as though darkness, a rushing, peculiar, thick darkness, was filling it as water fills a vessel. The darkness surged into the room, billow on billow, and the occupants sat there as though paralyzed, unable to comprehend what was occurring before their eyes.

FINALLY the impenetrable darkness—which was really an absence of light more than a darkness—filled the room, and around their heads there was a rushing sound like the beating of wings . . . as though the very dark was vibrating, as though it was actuated by some living thing within itself, sentient and purposeful.

An eerie feeling hung over them and they were unable to speak coherently, in their surprise and awe.

A short, low ejaculation that was almost a scream, came from the parched throat of Sadie, and was echoed in the souls of all who were there.

"In the name of God!" came from Long Tom a moment later, when he found his voice. "What is happening here?"

Past Celeste's face and head came a clammy something, an eerie, bodiless and formless Thing! The rushing of wind was heard again over their heads.

Celeste put up her hand to feel what had touched her, for to her it was as though something had actually touched her.

"Something just went past me!" she almost shrieked. "There is Something here!"

No one else spoke, for in that instant a weird scream rent the air and the door that led to her mother's room, behind the partition, opened, and even in the darkness they could see the old woman standing there on the threshold in her white nightdress, with one arm raised above her head as she gazed into the pitchblack darkness at those who were assembled. Their tongues clove to the roofs of their mouths, and all thought and all expression was dried up within them.

And then the figure—or apparition—spoke, and her low voice, vibrant with meaning, seemed to fill the room . . . seemed to fill her listeners' beings to the exclusion of every other thing.

"Which one among you has done this thing?" came her terrifying whisper.

There was no answer, for there could be none.

"Speak, whichever one among you has done this thing . . . for it will be useless to attempt to conceal it!"

There came a scream from Sadie, and they all found voice and motion, leaping to their feet.

"Mama!" cried Celeste, springing in her direction.

The figure turned and vanished before their very eyes, and in that instant the light slowly began to return in the same manner that it had gone! In a moment they found the lamp burning as before, and everything was as it had been, except that they were all on their feet, straining toward the door of the bedroom into which the figure had vanished.

Celeste was the first through the door, but the others crowded close up her heels and clustered behind her as she stood gazing upon the—*soundly sleeping figure of her mother!*

"She's asleep!" came in a throaty whisper from her, as she turned to the others.

"She looks as though she hasn't moved," came from Long Tom as he stood on tiptoe and stared.

And indeed, Celeste's mother slept soundly and peacefully, as she had slept all through the momentous occurrences of that night—and it was as though she had never stirred from the bed.

They stared for a moment in silence, then tiptoed out of the room, so as not to wake the old woman. Closing the door quietly, Celeste turned to face them.

"There's something very queer—very mysterious—about this," she said.

"It's simple enough," said Sadie. "The old lady must have been walking in her sleep."

"That may be," came from Long Tom. "But the thing that she said—"

"Yes," broke in Frank. "You must remember that she knows nothing of what has happened. What did she mean?"

"**A**ND who was it?" came in a calm voice from Celeste, though her heart was beating rapidly in a terror-like excitement which she tried hard not to show.

"What do you mean by that?" Sadie demanded quickly. "It was your mother—we all saw that."

"It certainly was," said Long Tom. "We could not have been mistaken in that. How about it, Frank?"

"God! My brain is going around and around," said Frank, looking about him as

though he could scarcely comprehend what was occurring. "It certainly was your mother, Celeste."

"I'm not so sure," said Celeste slowly. "It was my mother's body—I'm certain of that, but——"

"What do you mean, your mother's body?" burst out Sadie, almost hysterical.

"Just that," said Celeste.

"You mean——?" began Frank.

SHE nodded. "Yes. There are very queer things happening here tonight . . . and the queerest of them is this. That was my mother's body—or what appeared to be her body—but I am convinced she was not in that body herself . . . that she was——"

"Why, Celeste!" almost screamed Sadie, and her face went several degrees paler. "Do you mean to say——"

"Yes," said Celeste. "I mean to say that, while someone—or something—was in my mother's body as she stood here in this room, she herself was in the next room, sleeping—and utterly unconscious of what was happening."

"What makes you think anything like that?" asked Frank, a new interest and amazement coming into his eyes.

"Just this," said Celeste. "Something that everyone of you seems to have forgotten or overlooked." She paused for a moment before proceeding. "My mother has not been able to walk a step in over ten years," she said.

There was a dead silence after those words had been spoken—a silence so complete that far up the street could be heard the foot-falls of some solitary pedestrian. For the moment they could hardly grasp the significance of what she had said—the startling truth had to be allowed to sink in and become part of their consciousness—they had to feel it before they could understand it.

It was Long Tom who came to his senses first.

"That . . . is . . . so," he said finally.

"In the face of that, then," said Celeste, "you can see that we are up against something very different from what human beings are generally allowed to encounter——"

"For Gawd's sake, Celeste!" came from the white face of Sadie, "don't start that spiritualist stuff now. I don't think I can stand it."

"But that is all nonsense," said Frank.

"Perhaps it is—and perhaps it isn't," Celeste whispered. "In the face of what has happened, you can believe almost any-

thing. What made the light go out like that?"

They shook their heads, and instinctively their eyes turned to the lamp. It was burning with unabated vigor, and was more than half full of oil.

"It's got me beat," said Long Tom. "It was almost as if someone had pulled the light out of the room."

The others nodded.

"It's curious, too, that it should have happened at just the moment your mother chose to get up and walk for the first time in over ten years," commented Frank. He started to say something more but paused, startled.

At that instant the blood froze in the veins of every person there, for with the suddenness of death a terrible shriek rent the air in the little house.

Again and again that shriek! It came from the chamber in which Celeste's mother was supposed to be sleeping!

"Oh, my God!" the Gypsy cried, as her leaden limbs almost refused to drag her to the door of the room.

"What was that?" cried Frank, leaping to his feet.

Again that shriek, and this time her mother's voice.

"*There it is! There it is!*"

They rushed for the door, tumbling through it pell-mell.

"*There, on the wall!*"

Wild-eyed and white-faced, the old woman was sitting up in bed, her lean and quivering forefinger pointing at the wall in the far corner of the room.

In the dim light they could see nothing, though they strained their eyes to pierce the shadows.

Celeste was at her mother's side in an instant, with her arms around her, attempting to calm her. "There, there, Mother, it was nothing——" she was saying in a soothing voice, as though she were talking to a baby.

BUT I saw it!" the old woman kept interrupting over and over again.

"Saw what?" asked Sadie.

"A terrible thing—oh, I would never have believed that I should see such a thing! I always thought . . . that ghosts . . . that they were just things that didn't really exist. You know——" and the old woman babbled on, her face white and strained.

Finally they got her a little quieted down, and managed to worm her story out of her.

It appeared that she had been awakened by something—she could not say what—but it had been something cold and clammy, some dismal shape dripping with the moisture of the grave, or so it seemed to her, and it had drawn its lengthy form over her face and arms as she lay there!

She woke with a start, but was almost afraid to open her eyes. Then her eyes were wrenched open, not by her own will, but by some exterior will.

Near her she saw nothing, but her startled gaze was directed at the corner of the wall, and there appeared to her shocked and terrified sensibilities an apparition—a weird figure that was flattened out on the wall, and was luminous.

She could make it out quite clearly, and it was, so she said, a villainous-looking old man. His hand and arm were outstretched, and he seemed to be pointing at something for her guidance. He wanted her to get up and do something, she thought, and she actually felt herself moving, but in an instant she was able to throw off the power and scream. The rest they knew. The figure had disappeared with her first scream.

She sobbed hysterically now, and little by little her daughter was able to quiet her, as one quiets a hysterical child. They saw that it would be no use trying to question her now, and it would be better if she were allowed to sleep. In a few moments she was breathing gently again, her head pillowed in restful slumber. They tiptoed out of the room and closed the door.

As they huddled confusedly together in the room of death, there were three loud, insistent knocks on the door, as though someone were beating on wood with wood. They turned to look at each other.

"Who can that be?" breathed Celeste, and they turned blank faces at her.

Frank shrugged his shoulders.

He walked to the door and, with hardly a pause, pulled it open. He looked out into the black night. No one was there, and the street was silent and empty, so far as he could see.

"There's no one here!" He turned to those around him.

"Someone knocked," said Long Tom. "We all heard it. If there is no one there, it must be . . ." He trailed off into silence, but he had voiced the thought of all of them. If it was no living thing that had knocked, then it must have been some Thing out of the Unknown . . . some Thing they could not take into any definite reckoning, and yet which they had to reckon with, this night.

"Who has knocked on this door?" asked Frank, addressing the blackness in front of him.

As if in answer, a cold wind swept past him from the inside of the room—a cold wind that seemed to have the vibrant power of a live thing!

The next instant the door was wrenched from his hand and banged shut—banged so hard that the whole place shook. They turned and stared at each other in a blank amazement.

And then came a knocking again on the outer portal!

Knock . . . knock . . . knock . . .

And as they looked, static in their surprise and not quite knowing what to do, the door opened. It opened peculiarly, as though propelled by no hand . . . as though some evil and noisome wind was slowly pushing it open.

What dread form was coming into the room through that door? They stared in dreadful suspense and for the moment seemed no more alive than the figure under the white sheet on the floor.

The door continued to open!

The Gipsy and her friends have endured as much as living mortals can stand. But they must face a new terror! The unknown monster has already killed once. Where will he strike next? Terror—mystery—death—loom before these show people whose foolish séance unwittingly evoked a murderous creature beyond the puny control of man! The next instalment of this strange story will make the blood freeze in your veins. In the January number of GHOST STORIES—on the news stands November 23rd.



Seven

As told by
FRANK MEADOCK
to
STUART PALMER

THE doctors in New York told me that my only chance for life lay in going to the West, to some high altitude. This was a heavy blow to me, for I was a young man of thirty, with my own way to make in the world, and with a family and little else. My wife and I discussed it night after night. She could not work and care for our little daughter at the same time, and it seemed that there was no way for us to keep together and for me to seek the possible health that the West might bring me.

Then a friend who knew of my trouble wrote to me, suggesting a sheep ranch and offering to start me in the business somewhere in the mountains. After a family consultation we accepted his offer gratefully.

The sale of our house and furniture paid our way to a little town in the foothills of northern Montana, and left us enough to fit out a small cabin on the shoulder of a mountain near the Kootenai Pass. The money, lent by my friend, supplied us with a small flock of sheep.

There was not a great deal of grazing there, but stockmen had put up no fences and the land was free, if tilled. It was hard work for me, and lonely for my wife, who had never been away from the crowds be-

fore in all her life. But slowly our flock grew.

After four seasons the sheep numbered nearly a thousand fine young ewes, and I had high hopes of repaying my debt to my friend that spring. My health had greatly improved with the out-of-door life, and all three of us had learned to love our corner among the peaks. I said "all three," but we were really four. Since the beginning of my work I had been constantly accompanied by Duke, a fine pedigreed collie. He was almost as much a member of the family as our little daughter, whom he worshiped.

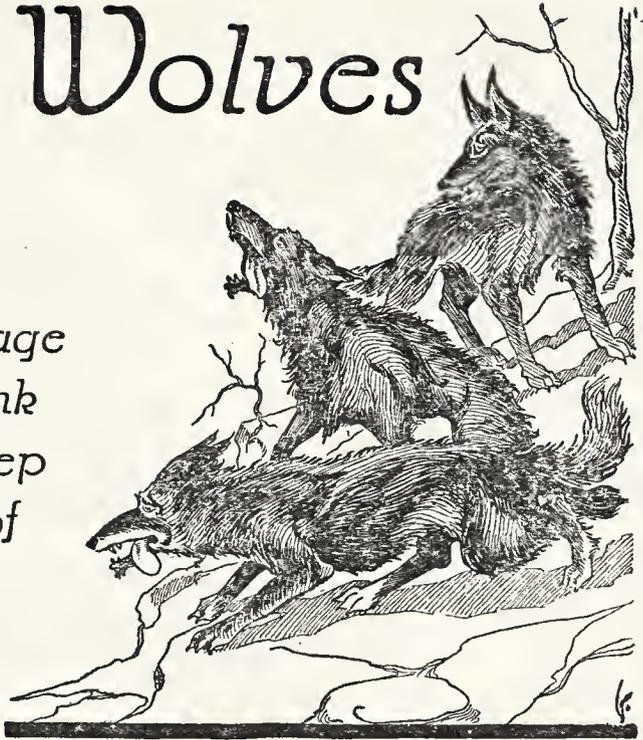
It was due more to Duke's loyal efforts than my own that the flock increased as it did, and that no sheep were lost and none destroyed by wild animals. The collie was a sleepless guardian of the flock. His clear, ringing bark would awaken me in the night if anything disturbed the sheep or if his keen scent gave warning of a taint of beast in the air.

Many times I rushed out, Winchester in hand, to find Duke in battle with a cougar or mountain lion. Valiant as he was, he could not match them in strength. This he knew. So he would fence with them, leaping in and slashing with his razor teeth, all the while barking furiously to summon me.

Then Duke died. He was old, very old,

Gray Wolves

—and
how their savage
attack on Frank
Meadock's sheep
furnished proof
that the dead
return



when I purchased him, and though we did everything for him that we could, he breathed his last one bitter December day, before the open fire. Dogs, as a rule, wish to die alone, and they will creep far away in seclusion when they know that the time has come. But Duke did not want to leave us.

We were all heart-broken, for he had been the great playmate of my little girl, as well as the constant companion of all of us. For that reason I could not bear to replace him with another dog, though I needed one badly.

He was buried on the hillside above the corral, where he had used to lie at night, watching over the cabin and the sheep.

The long, hard winter ended at last. The hay I had bought was nearly gone, and I was glad to see the snow melting and the new grass sprouting. The sheep had come through the winter well, and lambing time was almost upon us.

But I dreaded to let my flock out of the corral. Without Duke, I did not know how matters would fare with them when they started to wander off to have their lambs. And they represented everything I owned in the world—my chance to repay my benefactor and to regain my independence, as well as my health.

In that rough country a thousand things can happen to sheep, for they are among the most helpless creatures known. Ordinarily they have a tendency to flock together but in lambing time each ewe seeks seclusion—and with no Duke to help me I feared that I might lose many through straying or through the depredations of wild animals.

THE time came when they could be no longer confined except at night. In most places the snow was gone, and the sheep found good feed in the dry last year's grass, through which the new green shoots were sprouting.

The mountain slopes were barer of life than I had ever seen them before. The winter had taken its toll of the wild creatures, and I saw only a few distant deer in the lowlands.

One night I awakened trembling with terror. I did not know what had frightened me. Then it came again . . . the faint wail of a wolf. I knew it for what it was, though I had never heard the sound before. Coyotes were plentiful, and their yapping disturbed no one. But there is always something in the timbre of a wolf's howl that chills the blood of one who hears it.

The winter had starved the gray wolves

out of their haunts in the north, and they were running in the Kootenai! My little girl awoke and started crying. I reassured my wife, and went out to look at the sheep, finding them crowded together in one end of the long corral. The howling had been borne by the wind across miles of rocks and ravines. Yet there seemed a personal menace in it. I knew that it was unlikely that the dreaded beasts would ever come near my cabin, but during the rest of that night I lay awake, listening for a repetition of the long-drawn cry. But it did not come again.

NEXT morning the sheep had to be let out again, and I spent most of the day watching them and keeping them from straying too far. I wondered what I could do to improve my corral. It was far from impregnable, even to the sheep themselves, who used to break through occasionally. Hungry wolves would have no difficulty in leaping among the terrified sheep, and I knew that if that ever should happen, not one of my fleecy ewes would be alive by morning. For the gray wolves are renegades, in every sense of the word. They will slaughter for the sheer love of killing.

That day, when the old mail-carrier came through the Pass, I sent out for another collie, because I saw that I would need a better watchman than myself if my flock were to be safe that spring. However, I realized that the collie might not arrive for a month, or even more. I was angry at myself for having let sentiment keep me from sending for one month before. Then I might have had a dog when I needed him most, instead of being alone.

"Alone," I thought I was . . .

We heard no more howling the rest of that week, which was the last in April. The lambs were coming well . . . most of the sheep had twins, and the little fellows were a sight to behold as they toddled after their mothers. Each one looked something like a ball of yarn on stilts.

On Sunday, the first of May, I put the sheep in the corral as usual at dark. Lambing time was nearly over, and there was a great hubbub as the lambs baaed and wailed after their mothers. For a while I stood by the gate and watched them milling around in the narrow enclosure. I had grown fond of these sheep in the four years I had tended and nursed them. Apart from their value, which was more than five thousand dollars at the market, I saw them as

representing my successful struggle for health and independence. They were symbolical of the struggle that I, and my family as well, had gone through.

As I stood there, thinking these thoughts and wondering if there were real danger of wolves, my wife called out from the open door of the cabin.

"Frank! Bring Baby in to supper—it's all ready."

Her words struck chill to my heart. I turned and ran to her, for I had not seen our little daughter since that noon.

"Isn't she with you?" I cried, as I stumbled up the steps.

My wife turned from the table, her face going suddenly white.

"She wanted to watch you put the sheep in for the night. I thought she found you—I was getting supper."

Together, we ran out into the yard. It was getting dark—and there was no sign of baby anywhere! A little girl of five . . . alone somewhere on the mountain side at night!

Almost paralyzed with fear, we took lanterns and scoured the slopes. Call though we might, there was no answering childish treble.

My wife was sobbing. "She's hurt . . . I know she's hurt somewhere."

There was no moon, and the stars cast only a faint and gloomy radiance over the mountains. Everything seemed distorted. Finally, breathless and half insane with fear, we stopped to rest on a little point near the summit.

I was calling the child's name as loudly as I could. "Betsy! Betsy!"

But there was no answer. The echo mocked me dismally. "Betsy-y-y-y!"

Then I cursed myself for having failed to get another collie when Duke died, for a good dog could have tracked the little girl wherever she had wandered.

"If only Duke were here——" I started wishing aloud.

"Listen!" My wife caught my hand.

I strained my ears. I could hear nothing but the wind.

"I heard . . . something . . . Could it have been . . . a wolf?"

The word struck terror to my heart. It was bad enough to have the child wandering alone in the darkness, near the great chasms and ravines. But if wolves were running in the foot-hills . . .

Then I heard it! Far back, in the direc-

tion of the cabin, I could hear a strange, eerie howling. Again it came.

Without waiting for my wife to follow, I stumbled down the mountain side, gasping with fear. Horrible pictures of what I might find at the end of my quest ran through my mind.

I think that was the worst quarter of an hour I ever spent in all my life. I fell over rocks, breaking the lantern to bits. I bruised myself against the dwarf pine trees. Then I came out on the familiar sheep trail, and made better time. The howling was louder now, and seemed to come from the canyon directly below the cabin. It did not sound like the bloodthirsty, moaning cry of a wolf—instead, it was like the long-drawn barking of a dog, summoning aid. But there was something mournful and uncanny about the sound!

I could hear my wife running along behind me. The mother instinct, when aroused by danger, can give wings to tired feet, and she was almost abreast of me when we came out above the canyon.

We stopped, and one great loud howl rose almost at our feet, followed by two sharp, staccato barks which could have come from the throat of no wolf that ever lived! If I had not laid poor Duke away on the hillside above, I should have sworn that it was his familiar voice!

There was nothing in sight—neither wolf nor dog nor coyote!

Slowly we made our way down the canyon wall. There, firmly caught in a roll of barbed wire that I had once used on the corral wall, we found Betsy. She had sobbed herself to sleep long before, but still clutched firmly in her hand a few wilted hepaticas. She had been gathering flowers for Mother!

THE child was uninjured, and only a little shaken up by her tumble. The wire had caught her clothing fast, and held her from falling to a terrible death at the bottom of the canyon.

And the walls had thrown her tiny voice back and forth so that we above could not hear it. Yet we had heard something! A voice had come to us out of that narrow crack in the mountain side . . . a voice which had called us across two miles of rough country.

But there was no sign of any living thing in the canyon. The dust showed no footprint. I walked a little way along the wall, but it was very evident that nothing had

passed that way since the last heavy rain.

Betsy, when we questioned her, knew nothing of what had happened, except that she had fallen while trying to reach some particularly tempting blossoms.

"An' then I got all stuck in the wire, and I couldn't get loose at all . . ."

In too highly excited a state to sleep, my wife and I watched over the child for most of the night. We could not explain what had happened. Had we imagined the sound of the howling? But why had it led us to the lost girl, and why had it resembled Duke's voice so strangely? For my wife and I had both noticed that, even in our frantic anxiety to reach the child.

NEITHER of us believed it to be anything but the strangest of coincidences. I was of the opinion that our fear of wolves had made us hear sounds which did not exist.

Finally we gave up trying to explain what we could not understand, and went to sleep, thanking God that our little daughter had been so mysteriously rescued.

After that, nearly a week went by without event. The lambs grew larger and more capable of finding their way around. We both watched Betsy every moment, dreading a repetition of what had happened. The child was lonely without playmates, and of an adventurous spirit. She was apt to forget the promises she had made to both of us, and wander off to look for flowers again.

There was no more howling at night, either of dogs or of wolves, and we had almost put such thoughts and fears out of our heads. In a few weeks the sheep-shearers would come, to divest my flock of their heavy coats for the summer. The wool alone, at the current prices, would almost pay my debt to my friend—and leave me a free man once more!

But one day I noticed that the sheep were uneasy. The old ewes would throw their heads into the air every few minutes and sniff angrily. Then they would lead the way to a different grazing ground, where they would stay only a few minutes before repeating the same thing. The lambs, too, were caught by the spirit of restlessness, and I noticed that they did not play and run as usual. There was no parade among them, no stiff-legged jumping, no king-of-the-castle game as usual. Each lamb stood whimpering beside his mother.

Yet I could find nothing to worry them. I scoured the slope with a rifle in my hand,

but nothing was there. No lurking cougar waited for a lamb or small yearling to carry away.

I put them in the corral early in the afternoon, for they had stopped grazing and huddled together near a clump of dwarfed pine trees. I have seen sheep act in that manner sometimes when a storm was about to break, but the sky was clear, with a faint haze. There was nothing ominous in the weather, to me at least.

Even in the corral I noticed that they did not lie down, or nurse their lambs, but circled aimlessly about. There was something strange and unreal about the whole scene.

SUDDENLY I realized what it was. Not one of the lambs was baaing. They were silent, every one of them! The stillness seemed like a noise, so used was I to the cheerful bleating of the multitude.

I fastened them in as well as I could, and went on into the cabin. There my wife and the little girl were playing school, and in their happy laughter I forgot the strange actions of the flock. Betsy was not used to having her daddy home in the afternoon, and we improvised games and had a gay time until after supper.

Then it was dark, and Betsy's bedtime. She insisted that she was not sleepy at all, but as usual she was asleep as soon as her little head had touched the pillow.

My wife and I sat on the door-step and discussed plans for the future. At last we could dare to hope for a return to civilization. I had had no return of my sickness for a long while, and I had regained my former weight and strength. And the success of our sheep-raising meant that we could repay the money we had borrowed and go east with more money than we had started with!

"We'll be sorry to leave here," I said. "But it's lonely for you, and hard to do without the conveniences you once had. And Baby can't be brought up here, without other children, and schools, and doctors."

"I'll be glad to go," admitted my wife. "Particularly now, for I've had a feeling during the last three or four days that something terrible could happen. We are so alone, and the mountains are so big!"

I laughed, and reassured her. "Now that I'm well again, nothing terrible can happen," I said.

"Look!" She pointed toward the corral. "What's wrong with the sheep?"

I could see nothing to cause her alarm. "The wall is down, where you mended it. See the post leaning over?"

Her eyes were keener than mine. After she pointed, I could see that the fence was leaning awkwardly over.

"And why are the sheep so silent tonight?"

I was getting to my feet, with the idea of fixing the corral wall before some sheep should break through.

"They were silent all day," I answered her. "They must feel a storm coming on, or something like that."

But when I reached the corral, I found it empty!

Thousands of tiny footprints—sharp-hoofed footprints—were marked in the dust outside the broken wall. Some time that evening, while I had laughed and played with Betsy in the cabin a hundred yards away, every sheep and lamb had silently bolted!

Sheep are among the most simple-minded creatures I have ever known. If one of them does a foolish thing, every sheep in the flock will follow, without pausing to consider the wisdom of it. I have seen one sheep, dazed by fright, leap into a river—and the whole flock would be ready to leap after.

I stood there, uncertain of what to do. Somewhere, within a mile or so, the sheep that represented everything I had in the world were huddled in a frightened, shuddering mass. Perhaps they were a tangled, bloody mass at the foot of some cliff. Perhaps. . . .

Then there came to me, across the mountain side, the wild howl of a wolf. Again it awakened in me that old, inherited fear. It was imminent with danger, almost paralyzing my muscles.

MORE howls. It was the cry of a wolf-pack, hunting! The weird noise seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere. Echoes magnified and distorted the sounds until I was not sure whether the beasts were all around me in the gathering darkness, or far away across the foothills.

Motioning my wife back into the cabin, I set out at a run—for now I could hear the frightened baaing of sheep. Somewhere above me on the slopes of the mountain were my sheep, bewildered, frightened, and lost. And somewhere—I knew not where—a pack of fierce gray wolves were running, their nostrils full of the scent of warm prey.

The sheep were making more noise now. The deep voices of the old ewes chimed in with the treble of the lambs. If only Duke had been with me! His quick brain would have sent him hot-foot up the hillside, and in a few minutes he would have found the flock and started them back toward home and safety.

BUT man's senses are not so keen. I could only guess in what direction I should be going. And, strong as I was from the long months of outdoor life, I could make but slow time up the slope.

I came out on the bare side of Mount Boden. A little above me, and to one side, I could see the grayish-white of my sheep—about a quarter of a mile away. They were moving slowly and aimlessly up the mountain. Above the timber-line lies safety for the wild things, as a rule. No beast of prey can leap out and surprise them there.

But of what avail would this inherited sense be to my sheep if the wolves were on their trail? For a sheep, at its fastest, cannot outrun a strong man—and a wolf is ten times as fast!

The moon came out from behind a cloud and cast weird lights and shadows over the hills. Even exhausted and breathless as I was, I could not fail to note the beauty of the scene. It was a setting for some tragedy of epic proportions. The vast amphitheater of mountains—far above me, the white of the eternal snow—all softened and blurred by the light of the moon.

Then it happened. I stopped, and saw a pack of lean gray wolves coming down on my sheep from the higher slopes! They were running close together—a blanket might have covered them. And now they made no sound. If it had not been for the snow on which they were running, I could not have seen them. As it was, I could make out only a blurred gray mass, sliding down silently and menacingly.

Before I could hope to get to my sheep, they would be upon them! And what could I do? In my haste I had come without my rifle.

Above the timber-line there is neither rock nor stick which might serve as a weapon. The trees lie below, and the surface of the ground is everlasting granite, frozen and covered with lingering snow.

I knew what must happen. There would be a few minutes of horrible butchery. The maddened sheep would plunge about until terror would cause them to huddle helplessly

together or plunge over the cliff which lay below them. And all the time, gray demons with unsatiated hunger would slash, and slash. . . .

In that moment I saw the work of four years fall to nothing. I saw myself again struggling under a load of debt, my wife and child unprovided for.

But even more clearly than this, I saw the pain and hurt which was coming to the helpless creatures I had cared for. I had raised most of them from gawky lamb-hood into maturity. I had nursed the sick ones and fed the motherless lambs, and thought of them all as a sort of second family. Now I must watch them butchered.

Tears running down my cheeks, I started running again. If I could have reached the wolves then, I would have fought them with my bare hands—until the yellow fangs found my throat inevitably.

I was staggering up the hillside, screaming at the distant wolf-pack which steadily drew closer to the flock. I was half delirious with impotent rage.

In my hysteria I forgot about the grave where I had laid my faithful helper, and called, "Duke! Duke! Here, Duke; here, Duke!"

Once upon a time my voice would have brought him from anywhere in the hills, his swift white paws flying. Once upon a time my voice would have brought the answering bark in that familiar tone. But Duke was dead. With my own hand I had dug the shallow grave above the corral, and laid his tired old body to rest, in the very spot where he had always chosen to lie and watch the sheep.

Once again, in my madness, I called, "Duke! Save the sheep, Duke! Here, Duke; here, Duke. . . ."

And then—I shall never be able to forget that moment—I heard the familiar answering bark, in the tone I knew so well! Faint and far away it was, as if Duke had been on some distant quest of his own. Then it came again and again, drawing steadily closer!

FOR an instant the impossibility of it all did not strike me. It was so natural to have him answer! It had always been thus in the old days when we herded the sheep together. If I called when he was far away, he would give vent to a fierce, eager yelp every second or so as he came, as if to reassure me that he had heard.

And there, on that desolate mountain,

alone with my frightened sheep and the menacing wolves, I heard his swiftly approaching bark. Closer and closer it came, from the rocky slope behind me.

I was running more slowly now, and I could see that the wolves were but a few yards from the sheep. I was sure that what I heard behind me was a delusion, born of my fear and longing for aid.

BUT just as I tried to rationalize what I had heard, a well-known shape flashed past me—flashed by faster than the wind! There are few living creatures that can outrun a speeding collie—and I dare not guess how far Duke had run that night to come to me. His fur shone in the moonlight as he skimmed up the slope. His voice rang out in fierce eagerness.

I sank against a boulder and watched. I could not have moved if all the wolves in the Kootenai had surrounded me. For even then I could not believe that Duke had heard my call in the silent land, and come back to me!

Like a bullet he whizzed up toward the sheep he had guarded so faithfully while he lived. The wolves were almost upon them now.

He circled the flock in his old way, forcing the stragglers in, and went on. The sheep were silent again. The rank odor of wolf, which had made them fearful all the day, was in their nostrils. If any one of them had taken the lead, the whole flock would have leaped over the precipice or stampeded down the sheer slope of the mountain. But they were paralyzed with fear of the gray figures that moved with deadly monotony down from the snows.

For a few moments I lost sight of Duke. Then he reappeared, on the other side of the flock. He was not running now, but waiting. His bark was stilled, and I could see his plume-like tail erect and resolute. It was a banner of courage, that he had never lowered while he lived. Slowly it waved back and forth.

Suddenly I realized that if it were really Duke standing there, and not a mirage, he could do nothing to save his sheep this time! For the strongest collie is no match for a wolf, and the odds were terribly against him.

I clenched my hands until the nails cut into the palm. Watching that drama of impending struggle and death, I almost forgot to breathe.

The wolves are almost upon Duke now.

Running with their noses close to the earth, they have not yet given sign of noticing him. Is he only a wraith, a fiction that I have made of my desire and my memory? Will they run through him without seeing what I see—will he disappear like smoke while the butchery begins?

I can count the gray figures now. There are seven of them. They run so closely together that they move as one.

On tireless paws, the wolves keep up their monotonous race. I imagine that I can see their round, bloodshot eyes, their slavering jaws. . . .

Then, shattering the silence, a lamb bleats quaveringly. The faint and pitiful sound typifies the hopelessness of the whole affair.

The figure of Duke straightens and braces itself. The wolves are not more than a dozen paces away. . . . I see the whole scene as if it were being run through a slow-motion picture machine.

The silent multitude of the sheep are waiting, terrified and helpless, on the edge of the cliff. Cut off from all hope of escape, they await their stupid martyrdom. Just above them, silhouetted against the moonlit sky, stands Duke. He is braced and still, except for a slow movement of his plumed tail. Is he real? Can those gray wolves see him?

The leader of the wolves raises his head. Up to this time he has had his nose close to earth, running almost blindly as a wolf does.

Then, with a howl that set every nerve in my body trembling, with his great, fierce head thrown back—choking, but without missing a stride, the leader of the wolf pack swerved aside from the silent guardian who waited there. There was brief pandemonium as the struggling, howling mass swept over the face of the cliff . . . down . . . down . . . five hundred feet to the base of the gully, to the jagged rocks below. There was crescendo of yelps, and then a sickening crash, and silence.

I COULD hardly believe that only a second before, there had been seven murderous fiends in full chase on the hill above me. The wolves were gone as if they had never existed.

An old ewe moved aside from the flock and began to crop the new grass around a boulder. Her lambs began to nurse.

As I watched, unable to move, I saw the motionless figure of Duke begin to fade against the evening sky. I seemed to see a

star appear . . . *through* his gallant body. Like mist, he wavered and disappeared.

But just as he went, I seemed to see his face turned in my direction. And I thought that the white tail wagged once or twice in doggish salute. Then Duke was gone . . . and only the peacefully grazing sheep and I were there on that mountain slope.

AFTER a little while I climbed above the flock and headed them for home. I was in a daze. I seemed to be moving in a dream.

When I first told my wife, I think she wondered if I had been the victim of a delusion. She, herself, had seen mirages of beautiful cities and forests through the mountain pass . . . cities and trees upside down.

But she had heard that familiar barking when Betsy was lost . . . the barking which had led us straight to the child.

Next morning there was only the broken corral to show for the events of the night. The sheep were, as usual, making a great commotion as they were let out to pasture. None of them remembered, in their foolish woolly heads, the danger that had made them restless all the preceding day, and the death that had turned aside at the last minute.

I was still half inclined to doubt my senses. If I could only have been sure—absolutely sure—that it had not all been a nightmare!

Then, as my wife and I walked across the yard after the sheep, she caught my arm suddenly.

High on the mountain above us, circling mournfully through the air, were the gather-

ing turkey-buzzards. On motionless wings they poised above that gully of death. Slowly they descended in wide spirals. Even as they sank, more appeared to join in the ghoulish banquet.

And I knew that at the foot of the cliff lay the tangled heap of broken bone and fur . . . gray fur.

What had the wolves seen in the white moonlight? They would not have turned aside for any living dog or man. With the scent of blood in their fierce nostrils, a volley of rifle-fire could hardly have made them pause.

But they had dashed over the cliff in a despairing, choking suicide rather than face, even for an instant, the motionless figure that waited between them and their prey.

I KNOW that Duke came back twice from the silent land . . . once at a child's cry, and once in answer to my call, which he had never failed to answer while living. I know that the stilling of his loyal old heart did not silence him forever, but that the call of duty reached him in the little grave above the corral—or was it from some far distant land that his spirit came, across the eternities? Did he wake from some pleasant sleep in a new world to hear my voice calling him as of old?

All I know is that even death did not end his guardianship over the child and the flock of sheep that he had joyfully taken under his care when alive.

Does he still wait on the hillside above the corral, sleeping deeply with his nose on two white paws, and with an ear cocked, as of old, for my voice?

Cash for Opinions

WHEN you have read this issue of GHOST STORIES Magazine, let us know what you think of the stories it contains.

Which story is best? Which is poorest? Why? Have you any suggestions for improving the magazine?

Ten dollars will be paid to the person whose letter, in the opinion of judges in charge of this award, offers the most intelligent, constructive criticism; \$5 to the letter considered second best; \$3 to the third.

Address your opinions to the Judges of Award, c/o GHOST STORIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y. This contest closes December 25th, 1928.

Three awards will be made promptly. See that your opinion gets one of them.

The Beloved Specter

By

Dr. C. AVELASQUEZ
de HINEDESONE

A True Ghost Experience

DO the dead return? My answer is, "Yes!" You can form your own conclusions after you have read further.

Our family home is in Cuba, in the province of Matanzas, and is about five miles from the city of Matanzas, the capital of the province. Some hundreds of years back, this place was the old slave market. From here slaves were sold to planters of the Southern United States. Here, still, are the remains of the market with its stone blocks upon which black men were examined and sold at one thousand dollars apiece, if they were in good physical condition. Here, too, may be seen a carefully padded stone, flat and soft, whereon the women blacks were examined by the doctors who were employed to assure the buyer that the women could bear children and were well worth the price asked for them.

This old house was built for a duke, who never lived in the house overnight. This duke had the place built as though it were a fort or a castle, with six sentry-boxes in front, three at each end, and six facing the sea. Here still remain the old guns which were made in Toledo.

Well, what you readers are interested in is, Do the Dead Return? and I have answered that they do. Now, I do not wish you to be guided by my own answer, but I do want you to carefully read my experience, which I shall try to relate to you here.

Our family consisted of ten children; the



oldest was named Tomás, or Thomas. Tomás was a physician, and was about the youngest in Matanzas. He was a graduate of the Academy of Medicine in France. He had also attended clinics in Germany, and as this was generally understood by the people, he was a very busy man.

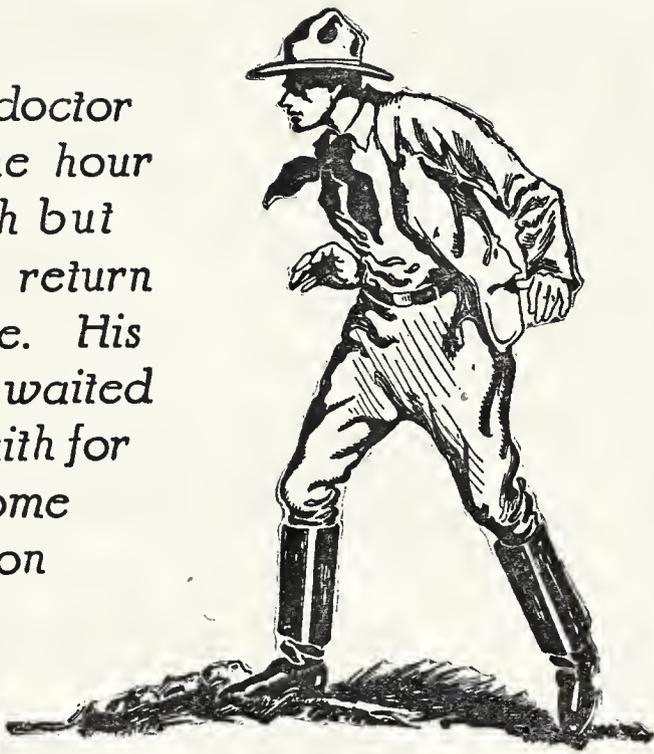
TOMAS returned home one day complaining of being very sick himself, and his doctor ordered him to bed. Within two days everyone in our family was taken down with measles except Father. Mother was or seemed worse for her experience than any of us. My brother was very much alarmed about her and would get up out of bed and attend her and me, despite the order from his doctor.

Mother began to worry about dying, and was giving out her instructions in case that should happen.

Brother would keep on telling her, "Why, Mother, there is no death! Why should one fear such a thing when it carries with it so many beautiful things? But, Mother dear, we must keep you here. I'd rather go than you."

Tomás was getting on so well that he would remain up, and his doctor gave him this permission, but told him not to try to do any work just yet.

*The Spanish doctor
prophesied the hour
of his death but
promised to return
from the grave. His
little brother waited
with eager faith for
that fearsome
resurrection*



Then, one night, there came a call at about eleven-thirty for him to go to some house away out on an adjoining farm. Mother and the nurses tried in every way to convince him that this was dangerous, and that he must not disobey his doctor. He made this visit just the same.

While he was gone, a storm arose quickly, as is usual in these parts, but this time it seemed that the whole Island of Cuba would be swamped. The thunder roared; lightning flashed; trees were ripped to pieces.

All our hearts went out to Tomás and we all prayed for his safe return. Mother worried most about the Matanzas or Cross Rivers. She knew that the bridges were insecure and was afraid that he might try to get back and be carried out to sea.

At about three-thirty Tomás came into the house as wet as though he had been in swimming with his clothes on. His eyes were as though he had seen something terrible.

Mother asked him what was the matter. Had he lost his patient?

He replied, "Thank God, I did not lose her." And he began to get ready for bed.

Now, I was about thirteen years of age and I was his pet. I loved Tomás with all my heart, and often went with him on his visits to the sick. Soon he was in bed, but appeared to be very restless. As my bed was next to his, I asked him what was the

matter. His actions made me feel alarmed.

He did not reply but said after a while, "Come here, Boy!" (This was my name at home, and for miles around—just simply "Boy" was all that anyone called me. The fact is that when I first went to school my teacher asked me what my name was and I replied, "Boy!" So she had to send a note to Mother, asking her to tell me what my real name was.)

I AT once went to him and he requested me to get in the bed with him. This I did and he frightened me almost to death when he told me to be brave and not to cry, that he had attended his last patient, and that he was going to pass out of this life at nine o'clock that morning. I was too young to really understand what he meant. He did not seem to be suffering. He talked to me just as he had always talked to me—and how could he know that he was going to pass out of this life? Anyway, wasn't he a doctor? Didn't he know enough about medicine, and didn't he have plenty of it right there in the house? I did not believe him. He was not going to leave us!

Then he added, "Boy, you must know that I am coming back to you, and I shall be with you and you must feel that I am with you. Now," he said, "you go back to your

bed and go to sleep and do not cry, for it would make Mother too sick if she really knew that I am going to leave her. We must not let her know it now; so walk to your bed easy so she cannot hear you."

I WENT to sleep as soon as I was in my bed, and did not awake until the nurse came in with some food for me.

As soon as I opened my eyes, I saw that two doctors were there, and I heard my brother say to them, "Doctor Finley, you and Doctor Agremonte have done all you could for me, but there is no use. I have understood this for many hours. I thank you both, and what I want you to do is to look after Mother and do for her just what you are trying to do for me." Then he asked them, "What time is it?"

Doctor Finley replied that it was just five minutes to nine.

"Now," said my brother, "take the pillows from under my head." This they did, and he told them, "Thank you; tell Mother good-by." Then he motioned for them to bring me over to him. They lifted me over to the side of the bed, and he said, "Well, Boy, I will not tell you good-by, for I will come to you again, but let me kiss you." Then he said, "That's all." He closed his eyes and, with a smile, was gone.

That afternoon the undertakers arrived with the casket, and all that remained visible of my brother Tomás was gently lifted and placed in it and he was out of sight—he was gone—gone—gone! At my request his casket was placed alongside my bed, for all knew that I loved him dearly and he loved me.

I remembered that he said he was not dead and was coming back to me, and would be with me. That night and the next day I looked for his return, but I did not know what way he was going to return, for he was in his casket at my side. Still I believed he would keep his word.

At about twelve o'clock that night, while all was quite still and the priest, Father Sanchez, with the other watchers, was at prayer in the next room, I heard a noise as though someone was trying to do something with the casket! It sounded as though they were trying to get it open. I opened my eyes and looked about the room, but I saw nothing.

Suddenly I saw a distinct form, like vapor, arising from the casket and almost enveloping it. Then, to my great surprise, there stood my brother just as clear as could

be, and he said, "Boy, here I am as I told you: I am not dead."

I jumped out of the bed and tried to go to him and place my arms around his neck as I had always done—but he was gone. I called out to Mother and said I had seen Tomás and that he was not dead! The priest with the nurses came running into the room, and I told them with a joy that I had never felt before, that I had seen Bubby, and that he was alive and had come back as he had promised! All that night I could not rest. The nurses told me that I had better go to sleep and that I had been dreaming. I knew this was not so, for I had seen him and he had spoken to me and he had really called me by name!

Some three weeks after he had left the house, and while I was convalescing, I was out under the shade of the trees in the yard, grieving at the great loss of my beloved brother. I had just said, "I wish God had let me die. I wish He would take me to my brother." I was crying, my heart was breaking, I was so lonely without him.

All at once I felt the presence of someone, and I thought that my youngest sister was about to place her hands over my eyes from behind me. Right then I saw my brother Tomás standing in front of me!

HE greeted me with the familiar, "Hullo, Boy!" He said, "Boy, you are not keeping your word; you are not trying to get well so that you can grow up and make Mother happy as you promised me you would. You are sad and you are broken-hearted, and you want to come to me. Now, let me tell you, Boy, you will be attracted too at the appointed time but not now. You must try and feel different—and you will feel different when you are sure that I am with you and shall go with you wherever you go."

I was too dumfounded to speak. Some power had me in its grip and I could not utter a sound.

Suddenly I was released and I sprang towards him, crying, "Bubby!" as we all called him.

He was gone again, but I remembered that he said he was going to be with me wherever I went. I have never forgotten that promise, and I have ever felt his presence.

About three years after he had been dead, all our cattle and pigs were sick with a strange disease, and dying two and three a day, and the veterinary doctor could not seem to do anything for them. My father

thought that we would lose every one of them. I had a little pig that had been injured in some way, and I had taken care of it. At all times of the day you could find it near the back door of the house. Now, this pig was sick with this strange disease, too, and refused to eat its food. I was worrying about it and I had told Mother that I wished that my brother Tomás would come and tell us what to give the pigs. I wished that he would show me some kind of herb that would make them all well again.

THAT same day I was out in the woods, hoping that I might find something—when suddenly my brother Tomás stood in front of me again, saying, "Hullo, Boy! You are worrying about your little pig. There is one plant right over there and there are many others just down below the hill. Go there and pull them up and boil the roots and mix it with his food, and he will get well."

I tried to fall at his feet but I was held motionless by some unknown power. His clothes seemed different from those he had worn when he appeared to me in the yard of our home. The clothes he now wore were of the lightest gray. There seemed to be some sort of shining, fluid-like diamonds, though larger, sparkling through them, and in front of his head.

He said, "Boy, don't you know me?"

I do not think I answered him, but I did know that it was my beloved brother Tomás, who had passed on.

In an instant he had changed to the real clothes he had worn when he was with us at home.

He said, "Boy, do you know me now?" and was gone.

Now, my people were seriously thinking of sending me to England to study for the priesthood, but I did not like this because I did not want to go away from the tomb of my brother. I used to visit his grave every Sunday afternoon and think of him; it was my greatest joy.

Finally I was on my way to Spain and I thought I would never see my brother again because I would be so far away from him. The trip was one of the saddest trips that I have ever made.

We were in Madrid for a few days and

then I was on my way to England. We landed at Liverpool, and I was put in a school where I was to learn the first rudiments in preparation for my task of trying to become a missionary priest.

I had been there for some days and I thought I would never learn the strange language. The only friend that I seemed to want was a priest from Ireland named Father McMahon. This priest could speak Spanish, and I wanted to be with him all the time and he seemed rather pleased to have me around him. I told him about my love for my dead brother, and he said that I must be happy—that Tomás would come to me again—that there was no place where the spirit of the dead could not come. This was good cheer for me, and soon I was getting about among the rest of the boys and was beginning to get used to the place.

ONE afternoon, as all were getting ready to go for their customary walk, I played-off sick and was placed in charge of Sister Agatha. She put me to bed, and then went away when she thought that I was asleep.

As soon as she had left the room—well, it seemed that there was no roof to this seminary. Above me was a vast road of what seemed to me to be solid white cloud—and there my brother Tomás stood and greeted me again, "Hullo, Boy!"

This time he seemed to be dressed in grandeur, and the thought came over me that I was beholding the Glory of God in my dead brother. Then, just as he had done that day in the woods, he was transformed and appeared in his same old clothes that he always wore at home.

He said to me, "Boy, get all the education you can, for you will not finish this to become a priest. There will be an awful revolution at home, and Mother and the rest will need you there."

Five years later the revolution was on, and I was called home although the school authorities were willing to carry me through whether I could pay or not. But I remembered my brother's words and I went home. What a sight to behold! That beautiful country was bleeding—she was wounded to the heart—but my brother had told me that she would live! He told me this; he gave me this message from the dead.



The Thing on the ROOF

*What ghastly mission
could lure a creature
from another world into
the flower-scented
roof-garden of a
Park Avenue hotel?*

By
JANE HARDIN

As told to
MARGARET JACKSON

THERE
were two
pent-
houses

on the roof of a certain new building on Park Avenue, and my father rented one of them. The other tenant was out of town when we took possession of our roof-bungalow in the spring; and as he had not yet returned when we went into the country in June, there was never the slightest clash in the enjoyment of the roof-garden, with its potted palms, its flower beds and its large marble urns brilliant with red carnations.

In July I returned to the city to meet a friend arriving from Europe. I planned to spend a few days with her in our pent-

house, which was cool even in midsummer. My father demurred at the idea of my spending the first night alone there, but the steamer was due early the following morning, and I was a typical modern girl, so I had my way.

I reached the penthouse late in the afternoon. The cool breeze stirred the fragrance from many flowers in the roof-garden, and my nostrils quivered in response. I have always been sensitive to odors and extremely susceptible to the sweet and languorous scents of certain flowers. Carnations were one of my favorites, for I loved their delicate, alluring scent. They were still blooming gaily, and I went from one urn to the other, standing on tiptoe and burying my face in the flowers. I observed that our neighbor was absent, for

his bungalow seemed to be closed and had an air of emptiness and lack of life.

A friend took me out to dinner, but on my return I dismissed him at the elevator door, wishing to go to bed early. I felt neither lonely nor afraid. I had a telephone and a bell to summon the night doorman, and what could be safer than a penthouse, the only access to which was the elevator?

I WAS on the point of getting into bed when I heard the elevator ascending. Then came loud voices and the tramping of feet. Evidently the other tenant had returned, with noisy friends, for I heard doors and windows open and shut. I wondered if the racket would keep up all night, but I was too sleepy to care, and I got into bed and put out my hand to turn off my bed light.

At that instant I heard voices in the garden, then approaching our apartment. The next second our bell rang loud and imperatively. I was a high-spirited girl and I felt more annoyed than alarmed at this sudden and impertinent interruption of my privacy.

I decided not to answer the bell; but it rang again, even more insistently. Still unafraid but decidedly angry, I jumped up, threw on a kimono and went to the front door, after switching on the hall lights. Then I called to ask who was there.

A loud and confident voice answered me. "It's the police. You'll have to open the door. We want to talk to you."

The police . . . wanted to talk to *me!* Youthful curiosity alone would have sufficed to make me open that door.

Drawing the kimono close about me, I opened the door and stood there challengingly, with my hand gripping the door-knob. I think that I looked as fearless and haughty as I felt.

In the semi-obscurity I saw five men, but only one of the five faces made any impression upon me. Standing in front of the other four men was a dark-haired young man whose almost-black eyes looked directly into mine.

For the next few minutes there was confused exchange of questions and answers. The officer of the law whose voice had ordered me to open the door, asked if his men might enter my apartment; I stood back and wanted to know why they had rung my bell. . . . Was I alone? Yes, I was alone. . . . Did I know what had oc-

curred in the penthouse across the roof-garden? I knew nothing—what did they mean?

At that point the dark-eyed young man spoke quickly, nervously.

"I'm very sorry to disturb you like this. The fact is, something terrible has happened. Your neighbor—across the garden—disappeared suddenly and mysteriously two days ago. I am his nephew. He was to sail for South America while I was out of town. I returned and learned that he had not sailed. I came here yesterday and found his place deserted, and very obvious signs of violence—blood on the floor and rugs. I reported to the police, and we have come to investigate."

"To investigate?" I repeated, staring from one man to the other, and I could feel my eyes fairly bulging in their sockets. "I don't understand. Why should you come to *our* home to investigate?"

"Because, Miss," the officer replied quickly, "we can't afford to leave a stone unturned. We've got to follow every clue, and we'll have to look over your place."

I felt the blood rush to my head, and my body trembled in helpless rage. I glared at the man and said coldly:

"It is impossible that any clues should lead you here. I never even *saw* the man you say has disappeared. We left town in June and neither my parents nor myself have been back until I arrived this afternoon. We know nothing of what has happened to the other tenant, and you will have to look elsewhere for *clues*."

"We'll have to take a look around, anyway," the officer declared. "It's a case of homicide, and we can't consider anybody's feelings."

THE young man looked at me apologetically, with such an expression of acute distress, that my own expression softened momentarily.

I drew back angrily and the men strode into the hall. The four policemen proceeded to poke into every cranny in the apartment, during which performance the young man and I stood perfectly silent, not looking at each other.

When the men returned to where we stood, the young man asked me if any servant had been left in charge of our bungalow—anyone who might have seen or heard something that might help them to solve the mystery of his uncle's disappearance.

I replied that no one had been in our

apartment since the first week in June.

Then I added in an icy tone of voice, "It will be quite easy for me to prove the truth of my statement."

By that time the policemen were shuffling on their uneasy feet, and their glances shifted from one face to another.

THE officer in charge said bluntly, "You claim you were out of town, do you? Well, I guess you're all right. But you'll have to answer any questions the homicide bureau will want to ask you tomorrow."

I opened my lips to express my indignation and to say that I had no intention of staying in town, but I changed my mind quickly. It would look like running away, and, for some obscure reason, I wanted to see the young man with the dark eyes again. So I told them that I would willingly talk with any person investigating the disappearance of our neighbor, but that I hoped the matter would not detain me in New York more than a day or two.

After that the young man bowed and murmured another apology, and the five men departed. My previous courage—the courage of ignorance—had deserted me. I trembled and with nervous fingers locked every window opening upon the roof. I left lights burning in the hall and in my bedroom, and I lay wide awake until almost dawn, when I slept fitfully and then awoke trembling and cold with fright although it was a hot July day.

I met my friend's steamer and brought her to the apartment. I had to tell her what had happened, and she was a great comfort when the men from the District Attorney's office descended upon me. With them came the nephew of the man who was supposed to have been murdered. I realized perfectly that he was deliberately standing between me and these rough men with their crude and sometimes offensive questions.

We remained in town three days, and each day the nephew came, on some pretext or other, and talked with me. His name, I learned, was Rollo. I sent no word to my father, but the papers informed him of what was going on and he rushed in from the country. He took an immediate fancy to the young man, and, to my astonishment, invited him to visit us in the country. I mention these facts to make clear the strange circumstances of our meeting—Rollo and I—and of the beginning of what developed into a serious love-affair and an engage-

ment. But all that is merely the background of my story, or rather the sweet melody through which clashed the ugly chord of crime.

The night before my father, my friend and I left town, was very hot and I could not sleep. I felt no fear because I was not alone, and my mind was divided between excited interest in Rollo and genuine concern regarding his uncle's fate. After the others had gone to bed, I sauntered out into the garden and stood by one of the marble urns, drawing the scent of the carnations into my lungs. Suddenly their intense sweetness seemed to overpower me—the perfume hung so heavy on the still night air. It was heady, a little suffocating, and for a second I felt actually faint.

I shook myself and walked away from the urn by which I had been standing. I reached the door leading into the bungalow, then turned and looked back through the shadows of the garden. In spite of being so warm, I shivered, and a sudden horrified realization swept over me, that only a few nights before, just across that little garden, a man had been murdered and his body mysteriously made away with!

As these thoughts pounded in my brain, my eyes, staring into the shadows, saw a faint, grotesque shape move from behind the urn where I had stood, and pause in front of it. A moment later it glided swiftly back into the shrubbery!

Motionless, almost paralyzed with fright, I was yet perfectly conscious that no *living* thing was sharing the solitude of that garden with me. What I had seen was only a very faint gray shape, without outline—yet I had seen it distinctly!

I do not know how long I stood without moving, scarcely breathing, my eyes fixed on the spot where the gray shape had lingered for a second in front of the huge urn. I do not recall re-entering the apartment or shutting the door and locking it. In fact, I remember nothing clearly until I stood trembling in my bedroom.

FOR hours I lay awake, the light burning, longing for my father or my friend to awaken and speak to me; but I controlled the desire to call them. I was conscious of a vague disinclination to tell them what I had seen. I shrank from ridicule, and I knew that my description of what I saw would arouse it. But never for a second, all that night, and for many subsequent days and nights, did a single doubt cross

my mind as to the reality of my experience, I had *not* imagined it—that, I knew—even though my nerves were on edge and my imagination excited by the story of Rollo's uncle.

BY the time we returned to town in early October, Rollo and I were engaged to be married. The course of true love is supposed to be rough, but ours was something worse than that, because of the harassing circumstances regarding his uncle's disappearance. I persuaded my father to return early to town because I wanted to be near Rollo, who was worried and unhappy.

The ugly and sinister chord running through our happiness was this. Although no arrests were made, Rollo was fully aware that suspicion was directed at him. His uncle had been seen by friends the day before he was to have sailed for South America; but he had never gone on board the boat and had been seen by no one who knew him after that. His Japanese servant had been out late that night, and on returning had heard nothing and had gone to bed. The next morning he had found the blood stains and no signs of his master, and in fright he had run away; he had been discovered later and had been able to give a satisfactory alibi.

As to Rollo, he also had an alibi, for he had been out of New York for several days and had returned after the steamer had sailed; he had radioed the steamer, and on finding that his uncle was not on board, had gone to the apartment and made his own ghastly discovery. But he was the sole heir to his uncle's fortune, and the situation was a hideous one. He had employed the best detectives available, and was devoting his own time and energy to solving the mystery of his uncle's disappearance. But he knew that he was under police surveillance.

I think that at first Rollo's love for me and his overwhelming joy in our having found each other had somewhat deadened the shock of the tragedy. But before September came, he began to take very seriously the increasingly menacing aspect of the case. That was why I was eager to get back to the city. By the time I arrived there, I realized that Rollo was under a terrific mental strain, and it was not long before my nerves were as taut as his.

When we returned to the penthouse, the carnations in the marble urns were quite

dead, and their withered stems stood out of the soil in which they were rooted. But during the first few days I was so preoccupied with Rollo that I did not notice a very strange thing.

One night, shortly after our arrival in town, Rollo and I were talking in the garden. It was a gorgeous night and the air was mild. We were standing close to one of the huge urns.

Suddenly Rollo said: "I like the smell of carnations." He sniffed the air. "There must be some around here somewhere."

"Carnations!" I stared at the withered stems rising from the top of the urn. "Why, that's funny, Rollo. I didn't think of it till just this minute. I've been vaguely conscious of that perfume for the last few days, and I forgot that there aren't any carnations in this garden. They're all dead."

Rollo stared from me to the top of the big urn and said in utter bewilderment, "How astounding! How can that be, Jane? Why, there must be some of them alive to give out as strong a perfume as that!"

"Well, there simply aren't, and I'll prove it to you."

We examined each of the urns, noting the withered carnation stems that looked gaunt in the moonlight; and we also inspected every flower bed. There were no carnations anywhere on that roof-garden.

"That's damn funny," Rollo said reflectively. "Perhaps the flower has such a strong scent that it clings to the roots for some time after the flowers are dead."

"Perhaps," I agreed without conviction, genuinely puzzled by that strong and definite carnation scent.

We soon forgot the matter in discussion of Rollo's tragic predicament. Things were looking blacker each day, and the private detectives were utterly baffled. The few facts by which they were guided were as follows:

ROLLO'S uncle had had a passion for precious stones, especially diamonds. He was an expert and although he had possessed independent means, he had made an additional fortune in the buying and selling of valuable stones. Rollo knew that his uncle had intended to sail for Brazil, taking with him some almost invaluable diamonds to match at the diamond mines down there. He had not sailed, and both he and the diamonds had completely disappeared. His various safe-deposit boxes had been examined and no diamonds discovered. Rollo

and the detectives were quite certain that these stones had been the object of the crime.

"Perhaps your uncle hid them," I suggested, "and the thieves went off without finding them."

"But not without destroying my poor uncle," Rollo added sadly. "I'd give ten years of my life to find his body and thereby trace his murderers."

I ASKED Rollo why he supposed that the finding of the body would help to trace the criminals. He told me of certain mysterious crimes where the killers were eventually discovered through some object used in the concealment of the body.

"Don't you remember reading, Jane, of that famous case where the ticking wrapped around the murdered girl's torso led to the apprehension of her murderer?" I nodded assent. "Well, I have a hunch that if we can only find my uncle's body, there will be some clue whereby we can trace those who killed him."

I watched Rollo's eyes grow dark and somber with the dread that was tormenting his mind. I had tried to make him forget it for an hour or two, but it was no use.

"Do you realize, dearest, that they might decide to arrest me at any minute? I'd be a ruined man even if they didn't convict me, and it would end everything between you and me."

"Never!" I said fervently. "Nothing on earth can do that. And I believe that your uncle's spirit will find a way of saving you."

"His *spirit!*" Rollo repeated in amazement. "Jane, you amaze me. I never dreamed that you took any stock in that sort of thing."

"I never dreamed it myself," I said slowly, "until one night in July—after I met you—before I went back to the country."

Then I described what I had seen—the vague, fantastic, moving blur that had no outline, yet was plainly visible to my eyes.

"I never told you, Rollo, nor the family, because I knew that you would all laugh at me, or would try to prove that I was either dreaming or nervously overwrought. But I was perfectly calm and sane, and I saw the Thing."

Then Rollo asked me—admitting for the sake of argument that I saw a phantom—whose I thought it was.

"I don't know for sure!" I said in a low tone. "But I believe that your uncle is dead and that his spirit haunts

this roof. And yet the Thing was so weird-looking—like a fiend!"

Rollo stared at me and did not answer. At that moment a breeze stirred the foliage in the garden, and the strange, permeating scent of carnation was wafted to our senses.

Again Rollo sniffed the air.

"My olfactory nerves aren't very sensitive, but there's no doubt about that smell! That's one thing, at least, that you're not imagining, sweetheart," Rollo said, seizing and kissing me.

"It's not the only thing," I added significantly.

A half hour later Rollo and I, arms entwined, sauntered to the front door of the bungalow; then we turned, facing the garden. A cloud passed over the moon, obscuring everything for a moment. The next instant I drew a sharp breath and I felt the convulsive pressure of Rollo's arm. In that second I knew that he saw what I saw.

More clearly than the first time, I saw a vague, moth-like form emerge from the shrubbery and stop in front of the urn near which we had been standing. Gradually it assumed the semblance of a human figure. Breathless, without sound or motion, we both watched.

It all happened in a few seconds, and the phantom was too vague and formless for recognition. It moved slowly back and forth once or twice, in front of the urn; then it faded away or seemed to become a part of the shadows cast by the shrubs. The moon shone out again, and Rollo and I stared into each other's eyes.

"We didn't imagine *that*," I said breathlessly.

Rollo hesitated, then gave himself a shake, and said uncertainly, "The garden was so dark for a moment, so full of moving shadows, we might have imagined almost anything, Jane dear."

"BUT we didn't, we didn't!" I protested eagerly. "Oh, Rollo, *don't* be so skeptical. I feel so strongly that if you would only try to believe in the existence of something that our finite minds cannot conceive, you would be given the power to find your uncle's murderers."

Rollo's only reply was to take me in his arms and kiss me good night. I went to bed but not to sleep; I lay awake, praying that help might come to us in this terrible enigma of life and death that was spreading its black shadow across our happiness and threatening our love.

On five successive nights we saw just what I have described. The weird phantom figure, gradually assuming outline, moving back and forth, then slowly fading into the darkness. It was not until we had shared this vision for those five nights, that Rollo threw off his armor of disbelief. Then he calmly faced the fact that an unearthly Thing had come—not once but repeatedly—to reveal to us something that no human agency would have the power to discover.

"Oh, my dear," I cried eagerly, "now that you feel as I do about it, we shall surely see something more definite, more helpful."

AND we did! That very next night, as we stood waiting and watching the spot where the vision had appeared on each occasion, the Thing came at last, more clearly defined than ever before. Then we saw something infinitely strange and startling.

The moth-like form took on stature and substance, and we saw the face—and this time it had lost its fiendish look! It was the face of a pitiful old man!

Then the wraith turned away from us and lifted its arms to the urn. It reached down into the urn and made motions as if lifting something out . . . lifting, straining, pulling, with those ghostly arms and long, spectral hands on which our gaze was fixed.

"My God!" The ejaculation came from Rollo. He had recognized his uncle's face!

At the sound of his voice, the shadowy hands and arms dropped slowly from the urn. Once more, for a second, the face was turned to us and looked straight at Rollo. Only for a second, then the vision faded back into the darkness.

"My God!" Rollo said again, breathing hard. "*The body is in the urn!* That's what he wants me to understand."

"Yes, yes," I said, seizing Rollo's arm in my trembling hands. "Of course, that is what he wants us to understand! Oh, Rollo, I knew, I knew that he would save you if only you would try to *believe!*"

My parents had gone to bed, and Rollo and I sat talking until dawn. There was so much to talk about, so much to decide. We knew that it would be unwise, in fact dangerous, for *us* to search the interior of the urn. We would have to ask the police to investigate, and there was a great likelihood that our request would make them more suspicious of Rollo than they were already. We were convinced that if we told the facts about the ghostly visitor, the po-

lice and the District Attorney's men would regard it as a camouflage—and not a very clever one—to conceal the fact that Rollo knew the body was in the urn, having put it there himself. We were in a terrible quandary.

"I'll have to tell you, Jane," Rollo said at last, "that things are already looking very bad for me. The private detectives told me today that they were straining every nerve to trace the diamond thieves, but that it can't be done without a clue of some sort. The thieves—murderers—might go to another country and hold the stones for a long time; or they might, and probably would, re-cut them, so that they couldn't be identified."

He went on to say that his attorney had assured him that even if the worst happened and he should be arraigned, they could never convict him. But we both knew how often innocent men had been sentenced to death or imprisonment for other men's crimes.

"And as to being arraigned," Rollo said bitterly, "I'd as soon be convicted."

I shuddered. "We'll find a way out—we're bound to. Only *how* can we go about getting the police to examine that urn?"

Then a sudden and startling thought flashed into my mind.

"That strange odor of carnation! It's uncanny. I believe it has something to do with the mystery—with your uncle's spirit."

Rollo stared at me. "You're not trying to tell me that you think the dead carnations are haunting us, too?"

"I don't know, Rollo," I was floundering, but I clung to my intuitive suspicion. "That ghostly perfume is as strange as all the rest, and I believe that there's a direct connection between it and what your uncle came to tell us."

"If there is, it's not a ghostly connection, but a *natural* one. By Jove, I wonder—"

ROLLO broke off and his eyes glowed with excitement. Then he told me what had suddenly occurred to him as the probable explanation. The carnation odor was a definite chemical fact. The criminals, in disposing of the body they had murdered, must have put it in the urn, together with a bag containing a synthetic perfume, which would seep continually through the bag and up through the porous container in which the carnation flowers had been planted.

I stared at him, dumfounded. I had never dreamed of such a thing! It was easier for me to accept a psychic explanation of

the weird odor than his more probable one.

"But how," I questioned, "could they possibly have obtained or manufactured the scent of carnations without arousing suspicion?"

"Any good chemist," Rollo explained, "could fix up *any* synthetic perfume. That's well known, and no mystery about it. And now I've got something to communicate to the police. I'll tell them how puzzled we've been about that unaccountable perfume, and that finally I arrived at the conclusion that there must be some natural reason for it, and that I want to prove my deduction. Of course, they may still wonder how I happened to draw this conclusion, but I'll have to take my chance of that. I'm morally certain that clues will be discovered in that urn which will lead to the tracing of the criminals."

The police arrived the following afternoon. I had arranged to have my parents out of the apartment. Rollo's request to have the urn examined, had been met with stolid agreement. He could not be sure if the police were suspicious of his strange demand, or merely scornful of his amateur detective operations.

I must explain that the urns were of varying sizes and stood on pedestals. The largest ones were quite big enough to hold the body of a man.

The police, as they approached the urn, indicated by their manner more than by their impassive faces, their amused scorn of the whole proceeding. They began with perfunctory indifference. We stood near by while they tugged at the heavy flower container, full of dirt.

SUDDENLY a wave of dread and horror swept over me. I seized Rollo by the arm and dragged him toward the front door of the bungalow.

"Come, come!" I gasped breathlessly. "I know what they're going to find and I want them to find it, but I can't bear to see it."

Perhaps Rollo shared my horror, and he led me inside the apartment. That five minutes while we waited for the police report was a terrible ordeal. God knows that both of us were spent and haggard from weeks of intense anxiety, when neither of us had slept or eaten normally—but those last few minutes of our suspense were awful.

The police did find just what we knew they would find—the murdered body of Rollo's uncle! The arms and legs had been bound with window cord against the torso,

in order to dispose of the body in the urn without difficulty.

This is not a detective or crime story, so I shall not follow in detail the course taken by subsequent events relating to the crime. There are but two points which I will make clear.

Rollo's surmise about the synthetic perfume had been partly right, but not entirely so. His imagination had gone only part way and the thing that had not occurred to him was startling enough.

There was no bag containing the synthetic perfume. The body had been very cleverly embalmed with a fluid to which the synthetic perfume of carnations had been added. That much was determined without delay.

FOR a few weeks we lived in constant fear that Rollo would be arrested, and that all his efforts to solve the mystery of his uncle's murder would be used against him and twisted into evidence to show his guilt.

It was the window cord that led to the discovery of the criminals. A very clever chemist was a member of the gang that killed Rollo's uncle and stole the diamonds. It was this chemist who had come one day (as his own confession later revealed) in the guise of a painter, and had found that carnations bloomed in our roof-garden. The matter of the embalming with fluid perfumed with a synthetic odor of carnation had been child's play for him. Needless to say, the criminals knew all about the valuable stones and the prospective sailing for Brazil, and their diabolical plan had been carried out without a hitch. It had been the clever chemist who had insisted that such a tremendous theft could not be executed unless the owner of the stones should be put to death. And it was this man who had suggested and carried out on the very night of the crime, the embalming of the body in the huge urn.

The penthouse stands empty at present and probably will remain so, for the rumor has spread that it is haunted. I doubt the truth of this persistent report, for I see no reason why the spirit of the dead man should continue to manifest itself after the ghostly secret of the urn had been disclosed. But there are many sane, unimaginative New Yorkers who claim to have seen a strange, fantastic creature crouching beside an urn on the roof or hovering over the parapet of that Park Avenue skyscraper.

A Medium's Memoirs

Ghosts of LIVING PERSONS



By HORACE LEAF, F.R.G.S.

IT will surprise most people to learn that ghosts are sometimes the spirits of living persons who have temporarily left their bodies and make their appearance a distance away.

The nature of the human mind is very complex and if ghosts are directly related to the human species we must expect to find them complex also. Indeed, the ghost-layer must be prepared for anything to turn up and ought not to be too rigid in his theories. That all apparitions are not denizens of another world has been clearly demonstrated. Some years ago the Society for Psychical Research undertook to prepare a census of veridical apparitions. A wide appeal was made to the public for information, and so numerous were cases involving living people that the two volumes containing a record of the most reliable instances were entitled *Phantasms of the Living*.

A house may therefore be haunted by the ghost of a living person in the same way as by any other ghost, and the individual whose apparition or presence is responsible for the disturbance may be quite unaware of his misadventures.

I know a wealthy gentleman living in the southwest of England whose reputation has suffered greatly owing to the unfortunate

belief among his friends and acquaintances that he leaves his body during sleep and haunts the house in which he is staying. This has happened so often and under such varied circumstances as to be undeniable. He is reluctantly compelled to admit the facts are against him. The evidence is often extremely tangible and very inconvenient. He has been seen and heard by people quite ignorant of his unenviable reputation, and in the morning the disturbed state of the furniture bears testimony to his strange excursion.

Why he should pitch tables and chairs about, and turn the contents of the room which he haunts topsy-turvy, no one has the slightest notion, least of all himself. Nothing seems more clear than that during the occurrence of these extraordinary phenomena he is physically fast asleep in his bed.

THERE appears to be no limit to the area over which his uncanny practices range: they have happened abroad as well as at home. To avoid making these unwelcome visitations he now sleeps alone in a small garret as far from other members of the household as possible.

Extravagant as this story seems, there are

many people who could bear testimony to similar experiences, and my sympathies are entirely with the man. I too have several times been accused of appearing to people at a distance and on each occasion I have had no idea of what has been taking place. The most searching questioning has never shaken the conviction of my accusers; they have been perfectly confident that they have seen and heard my "double." On at least one occasion I seem to have actually spoken to the person.

THIS lady was a comparative stranger to me. In my presence one day she spoke about her indifferent health. At the time I was conducting experiments in the therapeutic power of suggestion and I thought she might make a good subject. Circumstances made it impossible for me to experiment with her, and apart from my dropping a hint that she would no doubt soon feel better, nothing more was said.

Several times during the day I thought about her, and retired that evening to what I supposed was normal sleep. No dream disturbed my restful mind and I awoke with no thought of anything unusual having happened.

A few days later this lady visited me with a curious story. Did I recollect visiting her on the night of our previous meeting? I explained that I had not the faintest idea where she lived.

"Well," said she, "you did visit me and you cured me of my malady. I was lying in bed dozing, feeling better than I had felt for a long time, when I heard somebody moving about the next room. All of a sudden you came through the door and walked right past my bed. I called out to you, and you replied by telling me to go to sleep and intimated that I should be quite cured. You then walked out of the room through another door. When I awoke I was perfectly well."

There could be no doubt about the cure, and in the patient's mind there was none about my supposed visitation. My wife and I were perfectly sure that I had slept peacefully in bed throughout the night.

It seems, therefore, that we ought to be careful not to take it for granted that a man's spirit is necessarily where his body is. Many philosophers have pointed out that the difference between mental and physical qualities is so great that the difficulty is not so much how they exist apart as how they come together. At any rate

the mystery of sleep is not yet solved, and we must not be surprised if it is found that the mind during that period of recuperation sometimes "goes off on its own."

The mystery of personality becomes much deeper and the problem more complex when we consider those rare instances where the ghosts of living people operate while the individual is awake.

I recently investigated an instance connected with a large firm of photographers in the south of England. On and off for some time, the premises had been haunted by the ghost of one of their employees, who was on each occasion in good health and presumably wide-awake, although far from her place of business. The haunting mainly took the form of "calling" and proved a nuisance to her fellow employees. They would often, in response to her voice, go from one floor to another—only to find the lady was not in the building!

On two occasions she seems to have been seen as well as heard, the sound of her voice synchronizing with the appearance of her figure. Two persons were involved each time, one hearing her voice, the other both hearing and seeing. Careful questioning of the witnesses assured me that imagination could not account for these experiences.

I arranged to remain in the room into which the form had disappeared, with the result that I saw clairvoyantly the image of the lady, my description agreeing in detail with the living person. I had not the faintest idea of the woman's appearance until I saw the figure. At that time she was away from the firm and in all probability awake, as my experience occurred a few minutes past midday.

Shortly afterward I investigated another case which for sheer mystery would be hard to beat.

ONE day an American lady, in a very perturbed state of mind, came to me with a strange request: could I do anything to "bring her husband together—make him whole?"

At first I thought the woman insane, but after hearing her story I realized that she was perfectly sincere and in an extraordinary situation.

She had been happily married for several years and, up until a few months before, had regarded her husband as a normal individual. Now, however, he had taken to haunting her in a most uncanny way. At

times when he could not possibly be near her in body he appeared to be present in spirit! This disturbing phenomenon occurred on and off with terrible persistence; she never knew when his "double" would turn up.

"Only yesterday," she assured me, "his ghost appeared to me in my bedroom at the hotel, although he was away from town on business."

THIS phantom resembled her husband in almost every detail, except that it often dressed slightly differently and had a strange, penetrating look in its eyes. I therefore suggested that it might not be connected with him at all, but was perhaps an hallucination or specter resembling him.

"I have tried to think that," she replied, "but unfortunately the evidence to the contrary is too strong. I have what seems to be the clearest proof that the apparition is in some unaccountable way my husband."

She went on to explain that only a few days before, one of the indications had occurred. She had been sitting in their private apartment when her husband came in without hat or coat and walked over to a desk behind a Japanese screen—and the next moment his "double" appeared to walk round the screen wearing a hat and coat, smiling amusedly at her!

Realizing her husband could not possibly have made this transformation in so short a time and recognizing the peculiarities of the "double," she ran round and found him lying prone upon the settee, fast asleep.

Impressive as her manner was, I found it difficult to credit her extraordinary story and asked whether anyone else had seen the apparition.

Yes; her daughter had. They had seen it simultaneously, and even her husband had proof of its existence.

He, never aware of anything unusual or bizarre happening to himself, had treated the affair as a figment of his wife's imagination and had warned her to be careful lest her repeated statements in regard to the ghost should make her daughter as deluded as herself.

The climax came, however, when he witnessed the levitation of his wife's watch.

One morning, on awakening from a doze, the woman was startled to see the apparition standing lifelike beside her bed. With its usual cynical smile it bowed to her and then sat on the side of her bed; next, without a word, it reached under her pillow and

seized her watch, which was attached to a long, thin gold chain.

Frantic with fear the lady screamed loudly for her husband, thus waking her daughter, who was sleeping beside her and who also saw the figure. Her husband, hearing her cries, rushed into the room, and there before the astonished women stood the real man and his duplicate, each looking as natural as the other.

The startled man evidently saw no stranger in the room, and when his wife cried, "Look, look, the ghost!" pointing excitedly to the side of the bed, he promptly upbraided her for being a fool and feared she had lost her reason.

"There is no man here," he cried.

"But, my watch—look at my watch!"

The man's expression changed instantly; he turned white with fear and astonishment as he saw the watch suspended in the air apparently without any means of support, the chain curving away from it. The specter replaced the watch with great deliberation, stood up, and stepping back a pace or two, bowed mockingly and vanished in the direction of the husband.

The task the poor woman had asked me to undertake was obviously complicated. It was most difficult to decide on the probable nature of this strange ghost: whether it was entirely independent of the husband's personality or in some way a part of it. There were, I knew, a number of cases of "doubles" on record; and more than one language contains a special name for them—a very significant fact.

It is my method when attempting to lay ghosts to form a tentative theory as to their nature to enable me to adopt some set method of procedure. In this case I decided to rely on the conviction of the lady and her daughter that the apparition was directly connected with the gentleman. I determined therefore to deal, if possible, with the man himself.

HE received me cheerfully and I found him a pleasant, well-built, healthy, rather foreign-looking American. He expressed his belief in the haunting, disclaimed all knowledge of its origin, and trusted something could be done to get rid of the ghost. At first, he confessed, he had attributed the whole affair to his wife's imagination and thought that his daughter's corroboration of her mother's statements was due to contagious hallucination. But seeing the watch suspended in the air without tangible means

of support had wholly changed his opinion. "Who the devil it is that plays these tricks I do not know," he said irritably. "I am game for anything you think will stop the nuisance. If it goes on much longer, my wife will go mad."

I suggested that we try some experiments in hypnotism. Experience had taught me that a person in the hypnotic state can exert remarkable power and control not only over the body, but over the mind also. If this happened to be a case of disintegration of personality, there was a chance that I could invoke the phase of consciousness which gave rise to the "double."

The gentleman made an excellent hypnotic subject and with perseverance I succeeded in reducing him to a state of artificial somnambulism. In this condition a remarkable change came over his disposition, and for a while I suspected it to be a case of obsession. In hypnosis he always referred to his normal self in the second person and appeared to treat it with contempt as if it were inferior!

It was only after careful experiment that I concluded the hypnotic and normal con-

sciousness were parts of the same self. Thus, on asking the hypnotized man his name, age, where he was born, the names of his parents, the date of his birth, and so on, his answers coincided with the facts known to his normal personality.

I found that the hypnotic consciousness was quite familiar with the hauntings and knew a great deal more about the apparition than the normal self knew; but no amount of questioning or commanding could persuade it to say definitely who it was. In the end I concluded that the "double" was probably the hypnotic self or some other phase of the man's individuality, and I treated it as such.

The method proved effective. A few powerful hypnotic suggestions, commanding that the disintegrations should stop and the ghost no more appear, succeeded in restoring peace, and during the several months that I was able to keep in touch with the family, the ghost did not return. The family eventually left for America, and as I have heard nothing from them since, it may be concluded that the lady's husband was successfully made "whole" again.

Is there such a thing as a ghost "without a conscience"? Mr. Leaf faced one once in an old British farmhouse—a terrible, malignant spirit pouring out curses in broken English, threatening "to ruin that woman," the tenant of the haunted house. You'll shiver over this weird experience of a courageous ghost-layer who met his match. In the January GHOST STORIES—on the news stands November 23rd.

FOUR SKEPTICS—*and the* PROWLER

The four students mocked at the legend of Bloody Basil, and they spent a night in the haunted castle, drinking and scoffing. Nothing happened—then. But no human mind could conceive the devilish cleverness of the blow that fell—AFTERWARD. Bloody Basil—alive—had been the master of the perfect crime. Dead, he was infinitely more sly and terrible! Don't miss this strange, powerful narrative in the January GHOST STORIES.

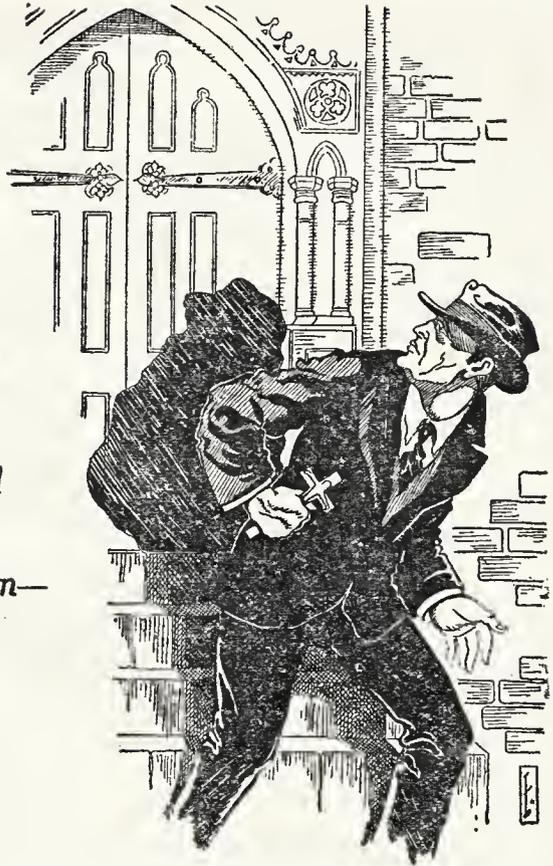
THE LEOPARD WOMAN is another story that should not be read after ten o'clock at night. It's a tale of a haunted honeymoon—and of high-powered modern witchcraft. It will give you an absolutely new thrill!

Watch for the January GHOST STORIES, a sensational collection of SHIVERY tales. On the news stands November 23rd.

The Stolen Crucifix

*The art student robbed
the grave of an
Austrian princess, and then—
the fantastic tragedy
began*

By
ERIC P. WARNDORF



IN the very heart of Vienna, Austria's beautiful capital, the tall steeple of St. Stephen's Cathedral reaches toward the eternal sky; a church famous for its tall Gothic beauty—as it was famous once upon a time for the towering heights of its spires, before skyscrapers began to overshadow the steeple's warning finger.

The interior of St. Stephen's is the most awe-inspiring place I know. You enter, and darkness reaches for you with giant fists—everything around you is dark; a singing, mysterious darkness where the flickering candles glimmer faintly as if afraid, and walking shadows silently glide up and down.

After the first few timid steps, you stand still, terrified by a hollow voice which seems to come from the very earth itself. A haggard old beggar woman asks you for alms. You drop a coin in her gnarled hand and pass on. Then, all of a sudden, something stirs in a secret nook which unexpectedly comes into view as you carefully make your way among the somber benches—a priest saying prayers for a lost soul, before one of the innumerable little altars hidden away

behind pillars that seem to reach up into dark eternity. Praying for whom? And unwillingly your imagination pictures some silent woman who knows of an unspeakable crime committed by a loved one whom she tries to save by having prayers said and masses read for his immortal soul. . . .

St. Stephen's is full of age-old, mystic things. Black paintings, traced by experts and washed; and underneath the dust of the years a madonna smiles her heavenly smile. But strangest of all and more revered by the people than anything else, a picture of the Savior with a beard of real hair—and they say the beard grows forever, and is clipped from time to time by one of the reverend fathers whose life is devoted to St. Stephen.

Under the immense expanse of the church, there is a labyrinth of catacombs, which, up until a few years ago, one could visit, for a small fee, under the guidance of one of the lay-brothers. Later, even this was forbidden because of the dangers of falling ceilings and tumbling-down walls.

Once, I and Bob Beckridge, the painter, who had left his Brooklyn home to dis-

cover the beauties of Vienna, joined a group of curious ones and were led down the stone steps into the somber vaults of the church. We were the last of a group of about twenty who followed the priest. A smoking torch showed us the way, and the light cast ghostly shadows on the walls and niches. So slow and careful were those in front of us that we thought we had descended endless flights of stairs before we reached the level of the labyrinth. Then we walked along narrow, low-ceiled alleys, past walls with nooks harboring many, many coffins and stone sarcophagi.

We felt like moles digging their dark passages far below the earth's surface. Bob shuddered as I did; only he refused to show his nervousness and started to play pranks. He fell back, we lost contact with the rest of the crowd, and all of a sudden we were shrouded in complete darkness when the priest with the torch turned a corner. We had to grope our way along the musty walls.

Finally, after a few moments full of strange forebodings, we reached the priest and his visitors again in a comparatively large room filled on all sides with coffins to the very ceiling—coffins older than those we had passed on our way, many of them falling to pieces and partially revealing the hideous objects within.

Bob came close to me and whispered in my ear, "Go ahead with the rest of them; I'll follow you in a minute."

In vain I tried to dissuade him from whatever he planned; meanwhile, the priest had walked on and as I did not wish to find myself in the dark again there was nothing to do but follow him. Slowly the visitors went on, stopping occasionally to listen to the monotonous explanations of the guide.

TIME and again I turned around to look for Bob—and saw nothing behind me but blackness. Cold sweat stood in little beads on my forehead; icy fear choked me. I wanted to ask the priest to wait for Bob but I was afraid to call the attention of the others to him. The guide followed a weird, crisscross path through the labyrinth—or so it seemed to me at least—and it appeared impossible that Bob should find us. I simply could not go on like this and leave him behind! But when I was about to open my mouth and shout, the priest stopped and explained in his droning voice that we had reached the end of our journey, as it was too dangerous to go any further,

and so the party would have to return.

This announcement made me breathe more freely again, as I supposed we would find Bob on our way back. We turned on our heels. The priest with the torch took the lead again and we retraced our steps. Minute after minute passed and yet there was no sign of Bob. Again fear began to rise in me, when, quite unexpectedly, I heard steps directly behind me. I looked around and saw Bob. Apparently he had hidden in one of the many niches and had permitted the procession to pass him.

"Go on," he said, in strained voice. "Everything's all right!"

WHEN we had reached the surface once more, sextons and vergers helped us to clean our clothes, dirtied particularly at the elbows, through contact with the dusty walls.

I noticed that Bob's trousers were covered with dust; so I stepped in front of him to hide this from the others. And I was more than glad when we finally stood in the broad sunlight of the Place of St. Stephen, in front of the church.

"What on earth did you do, down there all by yourself?" I asked him.

"Oh—nothing, nothing," he answered gruffly.

His hands were dirty, and his finger-nails seemed to indicate that he had been digging in the soil.

"Nothing at all," he half murmured. "S'long!" And, with his long, curiously swinging strides, he disappeared around the corner of the *Graben*.

For a week I saw nothing of him. He neither called on me, nor was he at home or in our favorite café when I tried to find him there.

Then, one dreary, foggy afternoon, the door to my room opened and Bob came in. He had his black hat pulled down on his forehead, the collar of his heavy overcoat all but hid his face, and his hands were deep in his pockets. He threw himself down on my couch without saying a word.

"Are you drunk?" I asked him cordially.

Vehemently he shook his head.

Then I leaned over to him, tore his hat off and half shouted, "For God's sake, what has happened to you?"

For, instead of looking into the youthful face of my friend, I saw before me the terribly distorted features of an old man—deathly pale, discolored and musty like the

walls of the catacombs. It frightened me.

I gave him a glass of whisky. He took it with his left hand, without removing the right one from his pocket.

Then the whisky had its effect.

He jumped up and shouted, "What's done is done!"

With his right hand he pulled at something in his pocket, which he wanted to remove but which, apparently, was too big to slide out easily. Finally he got it out; it was a large ebony crucifix with a marvelously carved Christ of pure gold.

"Where did you get that?" I asked in surprise.

"FROM the catacombs," he replied.

For a few moments it was deathly still in the room, which grew darker and darker as the night came nearer with listless steps. Bob had put the crucifix on the table. Occasionally a ray of light stole through the window and made it glisten with an eerie sheen.

And then, without waiting for my questions, he began to speak.

"You remember," he said, "when we were in the catacombs? Well, I noticed a coffin which was slightly cracked, and through the crack I saw something that looked like gold. I wanted to find out what it was, and asked you to go on with the others. In the dark I groped my way over to the coffin but was unable to find the crack through which the light of the torch had fallen on the unknown object. I knelt down and systematically felt around. Eventually I discovered the crack, and tried to tear the wood apart with my fingers.

"But it didn't work. With all that, more time had passed than I thought, and I heard the party coming back. I stood up again and pressed one arm upon the coffin, feeling that it would be fairly easy to break through the rotten wood. At that moment, however, the priest with the torch came around a corner near by; so I stepped over the coffin, threw myself down upon the floor and lay there until everyone had passed.

"From then on I couldn't think of anything else but that coffin; the thought tormented me, followed me in my dreams, never left me for a single moment, night or day. Early the next day I was at St. Stephen's again; but the next visit to the catacombs didn't take place until a week later. Those days were like a nightmare. I counted the minutes until I could go below again. Finally the day arrived—and today I visited

the catacombs." His expression was ghastly.

"There were more visitors than the first time, and it seemed an eternity until I finally came to the spot where the coffin stood. But there it was. I let the people go and rushed upon it. Again I searched for the crack with my hands but not until I switched on my pocket flashlight, which I had taken along, did I find it. The coffin seemed harder and more durable than the first time. Minutes passed. Then I remembered that at a certain part of the cover the wood had felt slightly softer. I found the spot and, in a fit of temper, stamped on it with my foot. With a crash I broke through—do you understand, man? —broke through to my knees. When I tried to extricate myself, it seemed as though I were caught in a vise. Whether this lasted seconds or hours, I don't know. When I eventually gained my senses I recognized, half unconsciously, that a princess of the Imperial house had been buried in this coffin; I saw the rich, rotting fabrics of her burial dress and the diadem upon her head. And on the bony breast I saw a cross—this one!"

And with a shaking hand he pointed to the crucifix on the table.

"You are a damn fool!" I shouted while I switched on the light, and was about to keep on bawling him out.

But his grief-torn, terrified face made me stop.

"I was a fool," he groaned. "But now I am a madman. For the princess looked at me! When I had taken the crucifix, she turned her head around and stared into my face. The skull had big, dark, threatening eyes—piercing me with an expression of horrible hatred. I wanted to throw the crucifix back into the coffin. But the priest came and his visitors, and then—I don't know what I did then."

WE resolved to return the cross. But we were afraid that someone might discover the pillaged coffin the next time visitors were led into the catacombs, and that they might trap us when we attempted to restore it to its dead owner. We definitely made up our minds, however, to visit the catacombs again at the next opportunity.

But when the day came, we lacked the courage to do it. A week passed. The forgetfulness of youth caused us to take the matter less seriously. Bob hid the crucifix in the bottom of a chest in his studio. And, as if by agreement, neither of us mentioned it again.

For a few days I didn't see Bob, and then suddenly I felt uneasy about him. Apparently he had forgotten the whole affair, nevertheless I wanted to see him, and went to his studio. He wasn't in. So I waited. A picture which I had seen a few weeks before was still in exactly the same state, without a stroke of the brush added to it. He had obviously not been working. I noted that a corner of the studio, where a little table had formerly stood, was empty.

I entered his bedroom, which I found in a state of complete disorder. The table from the studio stood in front of the bed, covered with papers and brushes. The chairs, the chests, the bed itself, all were covered with drawing paper. I stepped over to the table and looked at one of the papers, then a second, a third, and a fourth: always the same sketch, a princess in gorgeous array, rising in her coffin. I looked at the drawings on the chest of drawers; always the same thing, but weirder still, more powerful, ghastly and terrifying.

The studio door opened.

I left the bedroom, and saw Bob coming in. Was this Bob! There before me stood a madman—there was no doubt about it! I tried to say something, and couldn't think of anything but to ask him why he no longer worked in his studio.

"Because the crucifix is here, and *she* always comes to the place where it is. If I kept it in the bedroom, she would come to the bedroom. For this reason I keep the cross in the studio and work in the bedroom."

It seemed wisest to follow his train of thought, so I said, "Why don't you return the crucifix to her?"

HE shrieked like a soul in pain. "I offered it to her, I begged her on my knees to take it—but she does not want to do that. She wants me to take it down to the catacombs, to put it on her breast and to close the coffin. And I can't do that, because I smashed the cover! And, besides, the priest would see me before I could finish my work. She doesn't want the cross—she wants me; she wants to avenge herself!"

I said a few irrelevant words to quiet him, and asked him out for dinner. He accepted gladly enough. We took a carriage and drove to one of Vienna's famous restaurants where we had spent many happy hours together. The wine, the music and the laughter of the other guests had their effect on Bob, and he became much calmer.

But when a flower-girl came to our table and offered us her wares, he stared at her for a long time and then asked sullenly: "Why should we buy flowers for the dead?"

And then he began to talk of the princess. Where the table had stood in the studio, she appeared every night, rising from the floor. Sometimes she remained in her corner, sometimes she walked around in the room, always near the place where the cross was hidden. Sometimes she was indistinct, a mere shadow; other times as clear and distinct as a living person. And time and again he assured me that she did not want the crucifix, that she wanted him, that she wanted to revenge herself.

I REPLIED quietly that he probably was mistaken, as a princess would never dream of revenge, particularly not after her death; that he probably had been made nervous by this imbecile theft, and that he apparently dreamed with open eyes. I felt sure, I said, that no princess had ever entered his studio at all.

"If you want to see her," he said slowly, "come with me to my studio tonight."

I went along.

When we got there, he rushed through his studio to his bedroom, sat down at the table and began to draw. It was hot in the room and oppressive.

I opened the window and looked out.

After a while Bob said, "If you look out of the window, you can't see the princess. You'd better go into the studio."

With set teeth I went into the other room, and sat down so that I could keep one eye on the open door, without being blinded by the light shining from the bedroom into the studio.

I kept my eyes open; I wanted to penetrate the darkness. Not the slightest disturbance should pass unnoticed. I saw nothing, absolutely nothing. A whole hour passed, and I felt a little more at ease. Obviously Bob had hallucinations, and these could be cured. I heard him occasionally—heard the rustle of paper and the sound of the pencil—but didn't speak to him.

Finally I got up, walked through the studio and, standing in the door to his bedroom, said, "Bob, I am terribly disappointed. Your princess did not honor me with a call. And the reason seems rather obvious: there is no princess, there never was one and you have probably been continuously drunk."

Bob stared at me, his breath coming from his chest in hollow sounds. Both his fists

were pressed against the table as if he were trying to push it away from him. Despair and rage distorted his face.

With a terrible last effort to control himself, he said, "Come here." I went to him. "Sit down beside me."

I sat down on the bed and half involuntarily turned my head in the direction in which he looked, towards the open studio door.

My heart stopped beating. My blood froze. I choked with terror. There in the very middle of the studio was the dead princess! Clear and distinct, as if appearing in broad daylight, she stood out against the pitch darkness of the room. Of her dress the headpiece was the best preserved part. The skull grinned and had eyes that came and went. Her bony fingers were folded on her breast, in a position to hold something—the stolen crucifix. Empty, they looked like the claws of a beast of prey.

For the first time in my life I knew what deathly terror meant. I would have done anything—flung myself to certain death—in order to escape from that monstrous Thing. But I could not move!

The apparition had stood still for quite

a while—as still as only a dead body can be. But the next instant brought what I had secretly feared as the utmost awfulness: slowly she moved forward—toward us!

Bob shrieked as I have never before heard a human being shriek.

"The cross is not in here—it's in the studio, there! You cannot come in here, you——"

The princess seemed to be attracted by his voice. She floated more quickly towards the door of our room.

Bob jumped up, turned the table and, never taking his bulging eyes from the face of the girl, he rushed the few steps from his bed to the window, as if he had run through a long alley. He crashed against the window-sill, fell over and disappeared!

A horrible, hollow sound from the street, five stories below—and the place where the princess had stood was blackness.

The next morning I took the crucifix to the prior of St. Stephen's and told him everything.

When I had finished my story, he took the crucifix from my hand and said, "Thank you, my son."

And that ended it.

Mussolini's Biographer and the Poltergeist

M. **HOMEM CHRISTO**, famous as the biographer of Mussolini, is said to be the victim of a most annoying and persistent ghost. The unusual manifestations began fifteen years ago when M. Christo was in Portugal, where he occupied a villa at Comeada, after resigning his post at the University of Lisbon. There the ghost not only invaded the sleeping quarters of the head of the household and of two maids, but also the guest chambers. Footsteps were often heard in the rooms after midnight, but ceased when lamps were lighted. The ghost would keep the people awake by knocking upon the window panes or slamming the shutters.

Once when M. Christo went outside, armed with a revolver, to hunt for the disturbing specter, the light he carried was knocked from his hand and he was struck a stinging blow upon the cheek. On another occasion a child was removed from its bed and carried to a room in the lower portion of the villa. After that, Sir A. Conan Doyle and the late Camille Flammarion investigated, but gave up the case without

reaching any satisfactory conclusion and without offering any explanation for the mysterious happenings.

Then, for several years, the ghost disappeared. M. Christo served with the Italian forces in the World War, and later wrote Mussolini's biography. This work completed, he removed to France, and took possession of an old house near Paris. There the annoyances of the past were renewed and have continued at intervals since, though the authorities were called in and made an unsuccessful investigation.

A somewhat humorous incident in connection with the affair followed the arrest of two Parisian burglars, who had been robbing houses in the neighborhood of the Christo home. They admitted they entered the Italian's residence with the intention of stealing, but were frightened away by an invisible "something," which opened a second floor window, laughed at them, then chased them from the house. Both swore they saw the window raised without the aid of human hands and heard the ghost's footsteps as it followed them downstairs.



The MEETING PLACE



She Spent \$15,000,000 on Ghosts!

An Editorial by ROBERT NAPIER

THE great problem of psychic research is to separate genuine supernatural phenomena from conscious or unconscious frauds. If we could successfully draw the line between honest and dishonest mediumship—and between living discarnate entities and mere hallucinations—then the whole world could be convinced of the reality of spirit phenomena. Unfortunately, however, the mind of man has never confronted a more difficult problem—or one that is more gloriously worth solving.

For instance, take the case of Mrs. Sarah Winchester, widow of the millionaire rifle manufacturer, who believed beyond all possibility of contradiction that she spent her last years in the company of a countless legion of spirits. It is impossible to question her sincerity, for she spent at least \$15,000,000 in her attempts to pacify those restless ghosts.

The spirits, she said, had promised that nothing disagreeable would happen to her if the sound of building never ceased in her house. On this basis she made a truce with them and over a long period of time the work of construction was kept up—on a grand scale and without regard for price.

When she died recently in her lonely bedroom, with the noise of carpenters' hammers still ringing in her ears, her home in California was like a rambling village of connected structures. Every window pane was of French beveled plate glass set in German silver leading. The floors in many of the rooms were of inlaid hardwood, without nails. The doors were mostly of mahogany, door knobs of copper and silver, hinges of bronze, silver and gold. As the house stands today, there is \$5,000,000 in work and materials (not

including furnishings) in sight, but it is impossible to estimate the amount of expensive work that was torn out because it displeased the spirits.

The question is: Did Mrs. Winchester suffer from a strange delusion, or is her experience one of the most remarkable cases in the history of the supernatural?

In all sincerity she claimed to hold daily converse with the other world. Can her statement be definitely proved or disproved? Here is an amazing opportunity for serious students of the occult.

Certainly the wise reader will reserve judgment until he has read all the known facts. These will be presented at length in the January number of GHOST STORIES. The weird, breath-taking details of Mrs. Winchester's story cannot even be suggested here. No matter what decision you reach in regard to the spirit manifestations, it is one of the most remarkable documents ever printed.



MY niece, Carolyn, is a girl of twenty-one and is at present living in Tampa, Florida. She, like most girls, took unto herself a roommate while there.

One day while she and her roommate were in their room, the door opened and three girls walked in. Two were dressed in up-to-the-minute clothes but the third and last girl was just a wee bit out of date.

Carolyn did not know any of them—but they were friends of the roommate. After saying hello, Carolyn excused herself and went to the bathroom to do some washing. After being out of the room about fifteen minutes, she returned and saw only two of the strange girls there and of course she asked where the third one had gone to.

They looked at her in amazement and said that only two had come into the room. Carolyn then went on to describe the third girl, and one of the remaining two let out a cry and fell to the floor. After a while Carolyn was told that she had been describing the girl's sister who had been dead a year.

All of this happened in broad daylight. The truth of it can be relied on.

P. S.

Providence, Rhode Island.

After reading Mr. Napier's editorial on Automatic Writing in the September issue of GHOST STORIES, I decided to try it since

it sounded so simple. I followed his directions to the letter. After sitting in the same position for about six minutes, I seemed to feel a fainting spell coming on and gradually, without any effort on my part, my arm started moving!

Of course I just scribbled all over the paper and nothing could be made of it—but it gave me such a thrill that I couldn't resist writing you about it.

B. Kila.

McKeesport, Pa.

A most strange thing happened to me in May of this year. We owned a bulldog named Prince—a large brindle dog with three white feet and a white streak on his face. He got hurt and we had to have him killed. We felt as bad as if he were a human being.

On several occasions while going to the store on a busy street five blocks from our home, where I pass two bad traffic corners, I have noticed the shape of the dog walking ahead of me. We never took Prince out on the street the three years we owned him.

The first time I saw this form, I was much startled; then, looking at the dog closely, I noticed he was very much larger than Prince had been. I spoke to him but he just seemed to move along ahead of me. Whenever I went to the store alone, he

was always just in front of me until I got past those dangerous corners coming and going.

This time in May that I mention, he saved my life. I cross streets very carefully, looking both ways like an owl, and this time I followed my usual procedure and all seemed safe. I stepped off the curb onto the street. Just then the dog appeared in front of me. I stepped back on the sidewalk to avoid walking into him. At that instant a large taxi, going about forty-five miles an hour, swept around the corner on the wrong side of the street and "cutting the corner." If I had not stepped back, I most certainly would have been killed.

The taxi disappeared and several people ran over to me.

One man said, "How did you come to step back on the sidewalk?"

I told him, "I didn't want to step on the dog."

Everyone looked around—not a dog in sight.

One man said I was "nutty" and another said I went "nutty" and saw a dog at the right time.

Anyway, Prince saved my life, and without explaining to the crowd, I went on to the store. I realized Prince was protecting me.

Mrs. Agnes Kjos.

634 Capitol Boulevard,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

In the September issue Mrs. H. H. M. N. asked if one cannot privately develop one's psychic powers. For her information I may state that there are several phases of mediumship that can be better developed in private than in a circle. For instance, slate-writing, which is a very interesting phase and presents convincing proof that there are discarnate intelligences.

Here are the rules: Select two ordinary school slates—let us say, five by seven inches. Cut five or six sheets of white Bristol cardboard to fit the inside of the frames and lay them between the slates. Put in a piece of a slate pencil, about the size of a grain of wheat. Lay the slates on any ordinary wooden-top table and hold your finger tips lightly on top of the slates for not over twenty minutes each sitting. It is to advantage to put a rubber mat under the table and chair as this will preserve the magnetism so necessary for all psychic phenomena. Sit at any regular hour you may select, day or night, for three or four days each week. Sit with as little concern as

possible and keep your thoughts *away* from your work (sitting) as much as you can, having a strong wish that some one of your spirit friends may write for you.

Although I am not a medium or a spiritualist in the common sense, I have received the following proof that it is possible to obtain writing this way: I sat for about one month's time. At my third sitting I received the following: "V. M." and under it in neat figures, "1927." And again at the end of the fourth week, I received a printed "H. F."

It is evident that if you are not gifted with this particular phase of mediumship, it cannot be developed. It would be interesting if a number of GHOST STORY readers would sit for this kind of mediumship and write to The Meeting Place, telling of their results after six months.

O. A.

Jamestown, New York.

I wish someone would explain the meaning of these dreams. When I was but a child and in the country for my health, I dreamed of my grandmother, who had raised me from a baby of three years.

In my dream I saw her going down a long stairway. I asked her where she was going and she answered without looking that she was going away. She was crippled and had not walked downstairs in five years.

A few days after that, I was dressing and thought she called me. I asked everyone near if they had called me, and they said no. I let it go at that—but then I received a letter from my father telling me Grandmother had died and that she had asked for me just before her death. That started me thinking.

Around Christmas or New Year's last year I dreamed three times of things pertaining to death. First, I was buying black clothes; then I had two large candles that I wanted to put by someone's casket; and the last time I was looking into a casket but I couldn't recognize who it was.

I wrote to an aunt about my dream and she said there had been three deaths in the family—one on January 1st, another on February 20th and the third on April 2nd. The last was a cousin living not far from me. She dropped dead at seven o'clock on the morning I had my dream.

I am the only one in the family who has dreams of death. Can it be explained?

F. S.

Brooklyn, New York.



SKELETONS *in the* Closets of Famous Families

This amazing ghost played tricks on the Reverend Samuel Wesley—and his seven daughters—and threw a whole community into hysterics

By GORDON HILLMAN

A GOOD many people have seen ghosts, but few have lived, day in, day out, with a supernatural visitor. Yet for two months the Reverend Samuel Wesley and his family spent their days and nights in company with a sinister phantom.

The Reverend Samuel was a "fighting parson," and his sons were the famous John Wesley, founder of Methodism, and the hardly less noted Charles Wesley. In all England there could be found no man less likely to fall into the dread grip of the uncanny than he. Yet the haunting of his family is one of the most sensational cases in the history of psychic phenomena.

In the Eighteenth Century Samuel Wesley was placed in charge of an old church at Epworth, Lincolnshire, mainly because he had dedicated a poem to the Queen of England.

Epworth was a dreary place, located in the Isle of Axholme in the midst of dank fen country, and its inhabitants were singularly boisterous souls. When Wesley tried to reform them, they rose in revolt. They burned his barn, they burned his house,

slaughtered his cattle, and at last clapped him into jail.

But Wesley was by then a considerable power in the church, and he got out of prison very swiftly. After that, he was either easier on his parishioners or else they were more afraid of him. At any rate, he was left in peace to prepare his sermons.

At the time of the ghost's first appearance the Wesley boys were away at school. The household consisted of the Reverend Samuel, his wife, his seven daughters, a man servant named Robert Brown and a maid known as Nanny Marshall.

On the night of December 2nd there first appeared to them the phantom that was to spread terror through the countryside, rout a vicar and frighten a whole committee of clergymen out of their wits.

Robert and Nanny were sitting in the dining room when they both heard someone knock on the outer door. Robert opened it, and saw only darkness. But in the darkness someone groaned!

The groans came nearer and seemed to enter the house—and Robert went hastily to bed.

But he could not sleep, for all through the night some invisible Thing moved up and down his room. He could hear the floor boards creak, but he could see nothing.

Next morning the frightened man servant told the seven Miss Wesleys about these weird happenings, and the seven Miss Wesleys laughed loudly. But their laughter soon gave way to fright. At nightfall Molly, who had taken up her post in the dining room to disprove Robert's story, saw the door open without any visible means, and heard the rustle of silk robes all about the room. So close the rustling came to her that she could have touched the Thing—yet there was nothing there.

MOLLY, terror stricken, went to tell her sister, Sukey, and Sukey informed her she was a frightened little fool. At that instant a knocking began under the table, the iron casement clattered, and the catch on the door moved up and down without ceasing! Sukey jumped into bed and pulled the blankets over her head.

Sister Hetty was the next victim of the sinister specter. She was bearing a candle through the hall, and suddenly the candle went out as if an unseen hand had snuffed the wick. Some uncanny Thing walked beside her, and she heard a heavy thumping on the kitchen door. No one was there, and though it was as still as death outside, the door blew inward and knocked her to the floor. When she tried desperately to lock it, someone seemed to be pushing inward with such force that she had to use main strength to slam it shut.

When she locked it, the knocking began again as if some unearthly creature were outside!

The girls told Mrs. Wesley about the ghost, and she was very unsympathetic. However, when she went into the nursery, she plainly heard a cradle rocking in the corner. There was no cradle there: there never had been since the Wesleys occupied the house.

That was enough for Mrs. Wesley, and she communicated her fears to the Reverend Samuel. He promptly burst into a storm of wrath, censured his family severely and set about having evening prayers.

As he began the prayer for the King, a frightful knocking echoed all around the room, and a series of startling double thumps emphasized the "Amen"!

Later Mr. Wesley heard nine resounding thumps beside his bed: then, while standing

by the desk in his study, he was suddenly knocked to the floor, and when he ran from the room he was knocked down again on the doorsill. Yet there was no living person in the room except the Reverend Samuel.

This was too much for even a fighting parson, and he summoned Mr. Hoole, the vicar of the next village. Mr. Hoole arrived as bold as brass, but he left as hurriedly as possible at dawn the next morning. The knockings began in the nursery, and when Mr. Hoole had duly investigated them, there were groans outside the door. Then a table fell over with a crash, and Mr. Hoole and Mr. Wesley removed themselves to another room to consider the phenomena.

There Mr. Hoole was sitting on a bed when a double thump sounded on the headboard, and before the eyes of the amazed ministers, the bed began to rise till its feet touched only air! Mr. Hoole, being part and parcel of this phenomena, felt the hair rise straight upon his head.

Mr. Wesley raised his pistol and took careful aim, the bed came down with a crash, and Mr. Hoole adjured him not to annoy the unseen Thing by shooting at it. They next adjourned to the study, and Mr. Hoole had the dubious pleasure of seeing the door latch move, the door open, and then hearing a stealthy tread all about his chair. He never visited Epworth parsonage again, but a whole committee of clergymen did, and after hearing the uncanny phenomena and seeing due evidence of the supernatural, they strongly advised Mr. Wesley to flee the house.

One of these reverend gentlemen actually saw the phantom. It was, he declared, "a horrid, deathly black, and as it darted from a corner of my room toward the door, *I could see that it had no head.*"

Mrs. Wesley also saw a similar apparition in the study shortly afterward, and the man servant, Robert Brown, meeting the Thing in a hallway, was frightened out of his senses. It had no head, he said, and its hands were like long, curved talons—but Robert may have had a very good imagination.

EMILY WESLEY also saw a "creature in a long, loose, gown"—and thirty-four years after the disturbances at Epworth parsonage had ceased, saw it again in the house of a friend, who died shortly afterward.

But it is not on record that Mr. Wesley ever saw his ghostly visitor. Indeed, it

seemed impossible for this stout divine to be afraid of anything for a very long time. He decided that the phantom's name was "Jeffrey," and used to converse with it when he heard it walking about in his study. There is nothing to show that Jeffrey ever answered back, though he did knock on tables, run up and down stairs, perform feats of levitation with furniture and otherwise behave in a terrifying fashion.

On one occasion, moreover, Nancy Wesley was actually in the grip of the mysterious phantom. One night she was playing cards with her sisters, when suddenly a cold shudder seized her, and she was lifted, apparently by her arms, into mid-air, three feet from the ground. Nancy claimed she felt the touch of icy hands, but whether this is true or not, four of the other sisters saw the inexplicable phenomenon.

The whole village became hysterical. No man would go near the Wesley house at night, and very few cared to linger in the neighborhood by day.

Curiously enough, the Wesley family, instead of being driven mad by terror, got used to the visits of the phantom. A gentle tapping at the head of the bed in the room occupied by one pair of the sisters always began between nine and ten at night, and they would calmly say to each other, "Jeffrey is coming: it is time to go to sleep."

One of the other sisters, hearing the noises in the daytime, used to run upstairs and pursue the phantom from room to room, hearing its footsteps just ahead of her all the time, and regarding it as the most fascinating game in existence.

The one member of the household who continued to be terror-stricken by the strange visitor was a large mastiff dog. Even before the noises had commenced for the night, the dog would bark and leap in the air, as if trying to tear the clothing of some invisible Thing. And always, directly after the mastiff had been so aroused, the mysterious thumpings, crashings, groanings and scratchings would begin.

"THESE sounds," says John Wesley, "very often seemed in the air in the middle of a room. For a while the Thing never came by day, but finally scarcely anyone could go from one room into another without the latch of the door being lifted before they touched it."

At times the noises in the night became so violent that none of the family could sleep, at other times the phantom knocked

first on one side, then on the other side of a bedroom door; and frequently kitchen utensils were flung about and then mysteriously returned to their places. When the Wesleys themselves tried to duplicate these noises, they were not only unable to, but "the dead, hollow note of the Thing moving about" could be heard above them all.

NOW the easiest explanation of all these mysterious phenomena is to lay them to the villagers, who desired to annoy Mr. Wesley. But how even the most agile countryman could have changed himself into thin air, knocked down the Reverend Samuel, lifted Mr. Hoole and his bed into mid-air, and then indulged in feats of levitation with Nancy Wesley, seems quite inexplicable.

Moreover, at first Mr. Wesley carried about with him a stout cudgel, and brought it down with a thwack wherever he heard any knock or groaning. All the good this did, was to splinter the woodwork, destroy the furniture and break down a bed. So the Reverend Samuel left his cudgel in the attic one night—and the next day found it broken to bits.

After that, he adopted more amiable tactics toward his uncanny visitor. When it raised too much racket upstairs, he would (he says) invite it down into his study because he wished to converse with it.

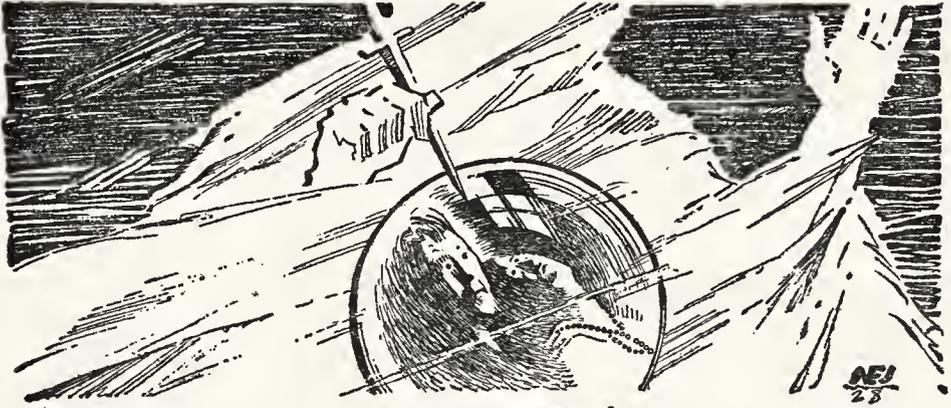
And Mrs. Wesley wrote in a letter to a friend that the phantom ceased its activities from five to six in the evening, when she politely requested it not to annoy her.

Several relatives who came to stay with the Wesleys not only heard Jeffrey, but were inexplicably pushed about, shoved into articles of furniture and even thrown off their feet in the midst of apparently empty rooms. Without exception, the relatives left in a hurry.

Precisely two months after his first appearance, Jeffrey's visitation ceased as promptly as it had begun. He never knocked again, he never groaned, he never troubled Mr. Wesley. And curiously enough, the seven Wesley girls and even the boys were heart-broken because the ghost had gone.

Where other families have fled from ghost-ridden houses, this amazing family lived contentedly with a specter for two full months. And, in the end, the specter, not the family, fled.

Incidentally, though students of psychic phenomena have delved deep into the "Wesley mystery," no adequate explanation of Jeffrey's uncanny doings has ever been made.



SPIRIT TALES

Timely Topics of Current Interest

By COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

HARRY KELLAR (1849-1922) was one of the most skilful and noted conjurers of the last generation. At the age of eighteen he was business manager for the famous Davenport Brothers, who posed as spirit mediums; was later partner with William Fay (who also had worked with the Davenports and used their trick rope-tie) in a trip through Mexico and South America; was next associated with Ling Look and Yamadeva, showing in South America, Africa, Australia and several countries of Asia; then, with Cunard, he gave entertainments for five years in Asiatic lands, finally performing mostly in America. "Dean" was a title of honor conferred upon him by the magical fraternity.

Ling Look, one of the best of contemporary fire performers, was with Dean Harry Kellar when the latter made his famous trip around the world in 1877. Look combined fire-eating and sword-swallowing in a rather startling manner. His best effect was the swallowing of a red-hot sword. Another thriller consisted of fastening a long sword to the stock of a musket and, when he had swallowed about half the length of the blade, discharging the gun, the recoil of which drove the sword suddenly down his throat to the very hilt. Although Look always appeared in a Chinese make-up, Dean Kellar told me that he thought his right name was

Dave Gueter and that he was born in Budapest.

Yamadeva, a brother of Ling Look, was also with the Kellar Company, doing cabinet manifestations and rope escapes. Both brothers died in China during this engagement and a strange incident occurred in connection with their deaths.

Just before they were to sail from Shanghai on the P. & O. steamer, *Khiva*, for Hongkong, Yamadeva and Kellar visited the bowling alley of The Hermitage, a pleasure resort on Bubbling Well Road. They were watching a husky sea-captain who was using a huge ball and making a "double spare" at every roll, when Yamadeva suddenly remarked:

"I can handle one as heavy as that big loafer can."

Suiting the action to the word, he seized one of the largest balls and drove it down the alley with all his might; but he misjudged his own strength and he paid for the foolhardy act with his life, for he had no sooner delivered the ball than he grasped his side, moaning with pain. He had hardly sufficient strength to get back to the ship, where he went immediately to bed and died shortly afterward. An examination showed that he had ruptured an artery.

Kellar and Ling Look had much difficulty in persuading the captain to take the body to Hongkong, but he finally consented. On

the way down the Yangtze Kiang River, Look was greatly depressed; but all at once he became strangely excited and said that his brother was not dead, for he had just heard the peculiar whistle with which they had always called each other. The whistle was repeated several times and was heard by all on board. Finally the captain, convinced that something was wrong, had the lid removed from the coffin; but the body of Yamadeva gave no indication of life, and all save Ling Look decided that they must have been mistaken.

Poor Ling Look, however, sobbingly said to Kellar:

"I shall never leave Hongkong alive. My brother has called me to join him."

This prediction was fulfilled, for shortly after their arrival in Hongkong he underwent an operation for a liver trouble and died under the knife. The brothers were buried in Happy Valley, Hongkong, in the year 1877.

All this was related to Doctor Walter Franklin Prince, of the Boston Society for Psychic Research, by Kellar himself at the Marlborough-Blenheim, Atlantic City, in June, 1908, and portions of it were repeated in 1917 when Dean Kellar sat beside me at the Society of American Magicians' Dinner.

Commenting on the incident, Doctor Prince says: "Since Kellar was, in general, very skeptical regarding the purported occult and was impressed by this incident because he was a participator therein, he probably did not exaggerate the facts. Of course it is open to conjecture whether the whistle may not have had some normal source, and one would suppose that Kellar was just the man to investigate that theory. At any rate, Yamadeva's premonitory feeling, based on the whistle, that he was speedily to die, was justified, nor was his death from auto-suggestion, since he died of an operation for liver trouble.

I FIRST heard the story directly through Houdini, who said that he heard it twice, in whole and in part, from Kellar's lips. Since Houdini was, in general, of the most pronounced skeptical type, it is to be doubted if he exaggerated, or if anything else than his profound respect for Kellar would have induced him to put the incident on record.

From *Who's Who in America, 1907*, the following is quoted:

Ling Look and Yamadura [another spelling of Yamadeva] *died in China, 1877.*

The following true ghost story was received from a reliable source:

I am sending this account to you for what it may be worth. My people are English, but came to America more than one hundred years ago. Some of the family papers which they brought with them have been preserved, more as curiosities than anything else, and when going over them recently, I came across a document which to me proved of extraordinary interest. It concerned an ancestress of mine, Lady Pennyman, who was in France at the time of the Reign of Terror. Someone had recorded a ghostly experience which she had had, the account of which I now found myself reading after a lapse of more than a century. This is the story:

At the commencement of the French Revolution, Lady Pennyman and her two daughters went to Lille, where for a very small sum they rented a large and handsome house. Her husband sent her a draft for a considerable amount, and as the local banker cashed a large portion of it in silver, she asked that the money be sent up to her house. The parcel was accordingly given to a porter, and when her ladyship asked the man if he was sure he understood where he was to deliver it, he answered that he knew perfectly well, adding in a low tone to the banker, that it was known as the "Haunted House." Lady Pennyman heard him, but regarded the remark simply as local superstition regarding a house long untenanted.

One day a few weeks later, the housekeeper came to Lady Pennyman's sitting room to tell her that two of the servants who had come with them from England had that morning spoken of leaving because of the mysterious noises which night after night had disturbed and terrified them. Lady Pennyman then remembered the words of the porter, but she merely said with dignity—in the words of the manuscript:

"I trust, Carter, that you have too much good sense to be alarmed on your own account by any of these superstitious and visionary fears; and pray exert yourself in endeavoring to quiet the apprehensions of others, and persuading them to continue in their places."

But the servants were not to be tranquilized by the housekeeper, it appeared, for they kept on talking about returning to their native country. Taking matters into her own hands, Lady Pennyman decided to move the servants to other quarters and herself to occupy their room.

The noises they complained of came from the apartment above. This proved to be long and spacious and seemed to have been unoccupied for a very long time. A curious feature was a large iron cage in the center of the room, and the legend which the servants had collected about it matched it for strangeness.

It was said that the late proprietor had been a young man of enormous wealth, in his minority. He was under the guardianship of his uncle, and the latter had kept him confined in that room under the pretext that he was of incorrigible disposition and needed the severest watching and discipline. One day it was pretended that he needed particularly severe punishment, and he was sentenced to two days of privation and captivity in the iron cage.

An hour before the period of punishment expired, the uncle arrived, making a great show of the lenient intention of letting him off without serving the remainder of his sentence. The obvious purpose had been accomplished, however. The lad was dead. The uncle had the satisfaction of seeing the rigid, bony and distorted form, the clenched hands, compressed mouth and glazed eye of his murdered nephew.

The sight, in fact, remained with him. The boy haunted his dreams—now with the playful and handsome looks that had delighted his parents years before—now with the pale, spiritless face and emaciated frame that the uncle knew so well—and, finally, that terrible last vision. The uncle fled, and the house remained untenanted, for no one would have anything to do with it after that frightful catastrophe.

FOR a night or two after Lady Pennyman's move, all was quiet, but before many days there came a night when her ladyship was awakened by footsteps over her head. Someone appeared to be pacing the Cage Chamber—the slow, measured steps moving backwards and forwards for rather more than an hour, it seemed to her.

The resolute lady said nothing to her daughters at breakfast, and the meal was nearly over when her son Charles appeared. Let me give their conversation as the manuscript records it:

"My dear Charles," said his mother, "I wonder you are not ashamed of your indolence and your want of gallantry, to suffer your sisters and myself to finish breakfast before you are ready to join us."

"Indeed, madam," he replied, "it is not

my fault if I am late: I have not had any sleep all night. There have been people knocking at my door and peeping into my room every half hour since I went upstairs to bed. I presume they wanted to see if my candle was extinguished. If this be the case, it is really very distressing, as I certainly never gave you any occasion to suspect I should be careless in taking so necessary a precaution—and it is not pleasant to be represented in such a light to the domestics."

"Indeed, my dear, the interruption has taken place entirely without my knowledge. I assure you it is not by any order of mine that your room has been looked into. I cannot think what could induce any servant of mine to be guilty of such a liberty. Are you certain that you have not mistaken the nature and origin of the sound by which your sleep was disturbed?"

"Oh, no; there could have been no mistake. I was perfectly awake when the interruption first took place, and afterwards it was so frequently repeated as to prevent the possibility of my sleeping."

No earthly explanation could be found for these happenings. Furthermore, the household staff continued to complain. There was not one who did not have a tale of fright to add to the fears of the rest, until Lady Pennyman herself began to feel alarmed.

At this point the manuscript relates that a Mrs. Atkins, an intelligent woman of disciplined character, without an ounce of superstition in her make-up, decided to silence all these wild stories by moving right into the Cage Chamber itself. A bed was therefore put up, and the room made as habitable as possible on such short notice. When night came, the courageous lady retired, taking her pet spaniel with her.

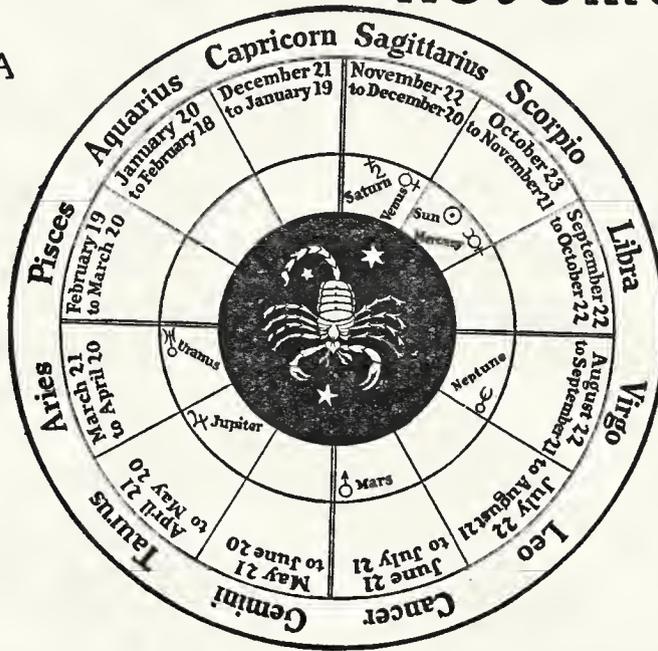
First, she examined every hole and corner in the room. She tapped the wainscoting, but found nothing suspicious. Finally, she bolted the door and got into bed.

She was quickly aroused from sleep by the spaniel jumping onto the bed, howling and terrified. She saw the door of the room open slowly, and a pale, thin, delicate-looking youth enter. He looked at her mildly and walked up to the iron cage in the center of the room, leaning against it in apparently sorrowful meditation. After a while he roused himself and went out the way he had come in.

(Continued on page 122)

Were You Born in November?

By
STELLA
KING



Let the Stars Indicate Your Fate

FROM October 24th to November 23rd, the Scorpion—with a sting at the end of its tail, to show that it is often its own worst enemy—is in power. During this period the solar rays take on the characteristics of this, the eighth sign of the celestial zodiac.

Scorpio is associated with extremes—with the positive and negative polarities which express themselves in sex; with sleep and death as opposed to life; with rest as distinct from activity; and with good and evil.

Men and women born under a vibration which comprises such possibilities must, of necessity, be complex characters. They are magnetic and powerful, proud, sensitive, reserved and passionate. Belonging, as they do, to the element of water, they are yet ruled by the fiery planet Mars and, consequently, are a mixture of emotion and energy, a combination capable of attaining the highest success or of making a complete failure of life.

The people of Scorpio are keen observers and students of nature. They are interested

in what lies below the surface and often become investigators and students of occultism. They are inclined to be very reserved, especially in regard to their own personal affairs, but in the lives of those around them there is little that escapes their notice. Symbolically they are said to have the "eagle eye," for both the scorpion and the eagle are associated with this sign.

THE faults of Scorpio are an intense and overwhelming love of possession and a desire to dominate others, extreme jealousy, and the wish for revenge, particularly in case of any personal slight. It is strange to find the child of Scorpio abnormally sensitive to criticism because he himself is extremely critical of others and does not hesitate to point out their shortcomings.

The constructive Scorpio, on the other hand, possesses tremendous will-power and personality, a keen sense of justice, resource, dignity and a desire for power which cannot fail to lead him to success. As a matter of

(Continued on page 122)

The Miracle of the Mountains

SHE didn't want to live. Life was worth nothing without Bob's love—and that was forever denied her. Why, then, did this doctor insist on bringing her back to consciousness—consciousness of her terrible loneliness? Why couldn't he let her die?

But the doctor didn't merely give her back her old life. He put her on the trail of a new and glorified life. And the trail wove its way through the hearts and souls of the simple folk of the mountain.

You will find profound wisdom and powerful inspiration in this beautiful story in the December TRUE STORY Magazine.

Other outstanding stories of the December TRUE STORY are: *First in a Woman's Life; Do As I Say, Not As I Do; Beyond the Pale; What I Can Never Forget; The Wife Who Forgot About Love; His Father's Son; Love Child*. All together, there are fourteen soul-revealing documents.

TRUE STORY offers you three hours of gripping reading for twenty-five cents. It has the largest news stand sale of any magazine in the world; because it grips you as no other magazine can; because it is intensely human and so absolutely frank; because its stories vibrate with real heart throbs, real drama, real life. For TRUE STORY readers are TRUE STORY writers . . . Into this magazine countless men and women pour their pent-up emotions and innermost secrets; tell all they felt, all they thought, all they did in some hour of tremendous drama. The real diary of two million people!

Don't miss the December issue of TRUE STORY! On sale everywhere October 5th. Twenty-five cents a copy; thirty cents in Canada.

What Have We Accomplished?

IN the November issue of THE DANCE MAGAZINE appears the first article of the series previously announced: *Dancing Before the American Public*. The first article is by Michel Fokine, famed Russian creator of ballet productions. His subject is *The American Ballet Today*. Every word he writes is the word of an authority, so don't fail to take advantage of this opportunity to read what he says.

In the same issue will be intimate, revealing interviews with famous people of the theater.

Maria Theresa, one of the six adopted daughters of the great Isadora Duncan, writes her own estimate of the art of her benefactress.

Also included are other feature articles that will capture and hold your interest.

November DANCE MAGAZINE—a Macfadden Publication—on sale October 23rd. Thirty-five cents at all news stands.

The CRY from the GRAVE

is a detective story masterpiece—of fact! Ellis H. Parker, famous as a detective on two continents, gives the inside story of the fiendish murder of beautiful little Matilda Russo in December

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES

Why Did They Bump Off Big Tim Murphy? tells you the real story of the mysterious killing of the Czar of Chicago's underworld.—In *The Crimson Trail* Kansas City's former Chief of Detectives gives his thrilling account of the spectacular career of Dale Jones, Kansas City's Boy Bandit. And don't fail to read *Spotting the 'Junkies'* (dope addicts)—*The Bunco Million!*—*Rubber Fingers—Against Fearful Odds*—*"Chink Cargo"* and other smashing true detective thrillers by America's leading detectives and police officials in this same issue.

These great detective stories of fact hold you tense from the opening line. You can get them only in TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES, a Macfadden Publication. On sale at all news stands the 15th of every month, twenty-five cents a copy; thirty cents in Canada.

Prize Winners for the Month

The awards to readers for opinions of GHOST STORIES, issue of August, went to :

1st award of \$10.00
Miss Alice Humphrey
Redwood City, Calif.

2nd award of \$5.00
Mrs. Lucile Dunajtsik
Marion, Ohio

3rd award of \$3.00
Mr. Dorsey F. Short
New York, N. Y.

Someone will collect the awards for opinions on this issue.
Why not You?



The Letter that Won First Prize

I HAVE always liked cats but I don't know whether I can ever face another one calmly or not. *The Cat With a Woman's Eyes* is the most thrilling story I have ever read except one or two French stories of the occult.

Marion Harland's true story of the *Little Gray Lady* was most interesting. It reminds me of my own family's ghost. The negro girl given to my great-grandmother at the time of her marriage became a devoted nurse for her children and a loved member of her household. She died before my mother, the first grandchild, was born, but she used to appear to my great-grandmother and then to my grandmother every time a death was imminent in the family.

There was no way to know *whose* death was foretold, for Aunt Lucy never talked. She just appeared. Grandmother, who was not at all a superstitious person, used to try to "laugh off" her appearances, but later she did not even try but grew white and grim, waiting for the death she knew would come. I can remember, as a little girl, my mother weeping over a brother who was ill and saying he would die because Aunt Lucy had come. We came to dread her visits. Four times I knew of her coming.

One believes the spirit lives on after death because one cannot logically believe anything else. But a story like *The Specter at the Feast* makes one wonder how much the spirit is tied up with the physical remains. That is an effective bit—that hair in the skeleton's fingers at the close of the story.

Haunted Bells is marked by such sincerity and such acute suffering so well portrayed that it is convincing. But as to the reincarnation in Richard of the wrongly accused ancestor, I have my doubts.

I had not read or heard, in years, of the water witches, until I read *The Ghost of Flying Hawk*. I can remember when they used to come to us, in the semi-arid plains of the Middle West, and offer to find water. Sometimes they found it and sometimes they did not. *The Ghost of Flying Hawk* is an excellent bit of mystery based on this old custom, with an Indian ghost thrown in for good measure.

Sweetheart of the Snows is a weird tale but a vitally interesting one. The descriptive parts of this are especially fine and I was interested in the author's rather unusual attitude toward love. No mawkishness in that. A much more honest attitude than most conventional minds can accept. Here, too, is an elemental sprite used as the "ghost"—which feature itself is intriguing.

To me one of the most interesting parts of GHOST STORIES each month is the group of small features at the back—*The Meeting Place*, *Spirit Tales*, *et cetera*. Here we find simple tales of what really happened to people like ourselves. They have a certain essence that even the best of fiction lacks.

The poorest story in the issue is *When the Red Gods Call*—it's too stilted, too long-drawn-out, and has too many characters.

ALICE HUMPHREY.

Redwood City, California.

The Neglected Cellar

HAS your house still one of those old-fashioned cellars, always dark and damp? It doesn't have to be, for it can be made into a really necessary and interesting part of the home. Read about this latest use for the cellar in

FITTING UP THE MODERN CELLAR

in **YOUR HOME** Magazine, a Macfadden Publication, on all news stands October 23rd; 25 cents a copy.

RED BLOODED STORIES

—another Macfadden Sensation

The first issue of this magazine appeared on the news stands on September 15th, and was sold out September 16th. It is the fastest selling adventure magazine printed, full of thrills, suspense and action. Stop at the stand on October 15th and get a copy of this entertaining magazine. Variety is the spice of reading, and here you get variety. It has a Western, air, mystery, war, adventure, fight, sea and action story in every issue.

Twenty-five cents a copy. In Canada, thirty cents.

Romance and Adventure in the Air

YOU are invited to meet another interesting and entertaining member of the Macfadden Fiction Family—**FLYING STORIES**—which will make its debut wherever magazines are sold, on October 23rd. When you have read it, you will say what everybody says on such occasions, "Pleased to meet you." And you will be pleased, for the magazine will be full of thrilling stories of romance and adventure in the air, such as you have never read.

Don't miss this first issue of **FLYING STORIES**.

Twenty-five cents a copy. In Canada, thirty cents.

Plagiarism

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

Any one submitting a plagiarized story through the mail and receiving and accepting remuneration therefor, is guilty of a Federal offense in using the mails to defraud.

The publishers of **GHOST STORIES** are anxious — as are all reputable publishers — to stamp out this form of literary theft and piracy and are advising all magazines from which such stories have been copied of such plagiarism, and are offering to cooperate with the publishers thereof to punish the guilty persons.

Notice is hereby given to all who submit stories that the same must be the original work of the author.

Keep Your Family Well

TO a person who understands the care of his body, physical ills need never appear. Yet hardly a year goes by without illness to one of your loved ones. Why?

PHYSICAL CULTURE Magazine advises you how to keep well so that all members of your family—infant, adolescent, adult and octogenarian alike—may know what to eat, what to do, what to think—for health, for vitality and for dynamic energy.

In the November issue, among other features you will find an interview with Mussolini, written by George Sylvester Viereck, expanding Il Duce's views on physical fitness for women. Mrs. Wilson Woodrow, celebrated novelist and contributor to leading magazines, writes on "*Fear—Your Worst Enemy*." Don C. Lyon, D.D.S., contributes simple and effective rules for the care and preservation of the teeth. These features, together with effective articles on beauty, food, child care, household equipment for health, a striking fiction story, "*The Sparrow of Mulberry Street*," by Sarah Addington, and a continuation of "*Bernarr Macfadden—His Life and His Work*," by Fulton Oursler, make November **PHYSICAL CULTURE**, on the news stands November first, one of the best November magazine purchases twenty-five cents will buy. To make sure you get your copy, order it in advance—now.

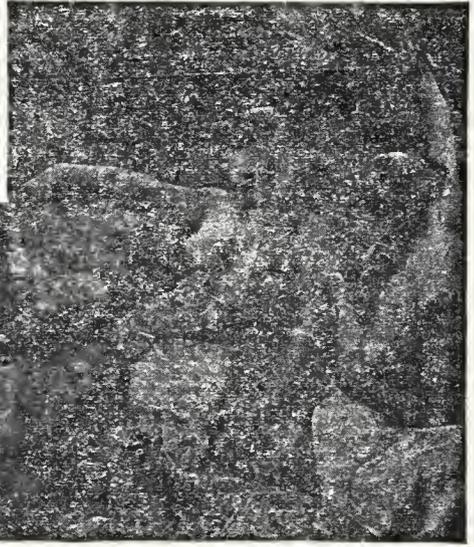
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IF YOU could sit down beside this beautiful woman and hear from her own lips the strange story of her marriage to her brothers (one of whom she disposed of by poison which she tested on slaves) and of her life with Cæsar and Mark Anthony; you would be delighted. Her story would be one of ambition and love.

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HAREMS AND SLAVES

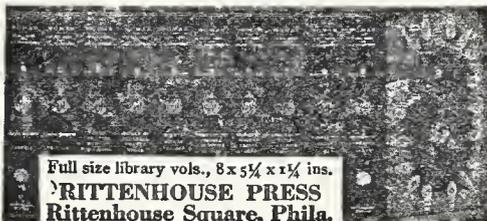
You penetrate the harem with its beautiful slaves. You meet the *hetæra* with whom the ancient Greeks found solace. You see the Inca Snn Virgins and the famous Vestal Virgins of Rome. You learn about the geisha girls of Japan.

WOMAN—TENDER AND CRUEL

On one hand you have Saint Rosalie and the miracle of roses or Lady Godiva riding naked through Coventry to help her people. On the other you have the Russian countess who, in winter, had water poured over nude girls to make frozen statues for her garden; the French women who sat unmoved as heads dropped from the guillotine; and Empress Irene who blinded her son—yet was made a saint.

MANY CURIOUS STORIES

You read the curious stories of how Princess Eleanor proved to council she was not a leper; how Empress Eudocia was expelled from the palace almost naked; how an emperor's sister was forced to appear in court tied in a bag full of cats which were pricked with pins; and how Empress Helena hurried her husband and sons with her own hands to save their bodies from the dogs.



A FEW OF THE STRANGE TALES

You will read how Emperor Theophilus chose his bride; how the Suliote women, facing dishonorable surrender, jumped to death. You will learn how two gentlemen threw dice to decide which was the father of a child of that beauty, Ninon de Lenclos; of how her son unsuspecting fell in love with her and, learning the truth, shot himself.

YOU MEET FAMOUS WOMEN

You meet Catherine the Great, Jeanne d'Arc, Madame dn Barry, Empress Josephine, Marie Antoinette, Nell Gwyn, Messalina, Lucrezia Borgia, the Queen of Sheba, Jezebel, and hundreds of others.

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Spirit Tales

(Continued from page 116)

Mrs. Atkins wished to persuade herself that this was the work of some clever impostor, and, taking up her chamber lamp, followed. She ran up against the door—closed just as she had left it when she went to bed. She got it open in time to see the back of the boy descending the staircase. She followed the figure till, upon reaching the foot of the stairs, it appeared to sink into the ground!

After that, she was unable to sleep again, and in the morning she told Lady Pennyman what had happened.

I will give the simple remainder of the tale in the words of the manuscript:

"Lady Pennyman determined to remain no longer in her present habitation. The man of whom the house had been engaged was spoken to on the subject; he became extremely violent—said it was no time for the English to indulge their imaginations—insinuated something of the guillotine—and bade her, at her peril, drop a single expression to the injury of his property. While she remained in France, not a word was uttered upon the subject; she framed an excuse for her abrupt departure and another residence was offered in the vicinity of Lille, which she engaged, on a pretext of its being better calculated to the size of her family. At once she relinquished her habitation, and with it every preternatural occasion of anxiety."

Were You Born in November?

(Continued from page 117)

fact, both the worst and the best people are found among the Scorpions. When the energies are wrongly directed, this type can be cruel, arrogant and evil, but among the good Scorpions are some of the best and finest of the human race.

One of the lessons that they must learn is that of consideration for the rights and feelings of others, and children born under this vibration should be most carefully trained in this respect.

You who were born under the influence of Scorpio are now receiving strong, vitalizing rays both from the Sun and Mars.

(Continued on page 124)

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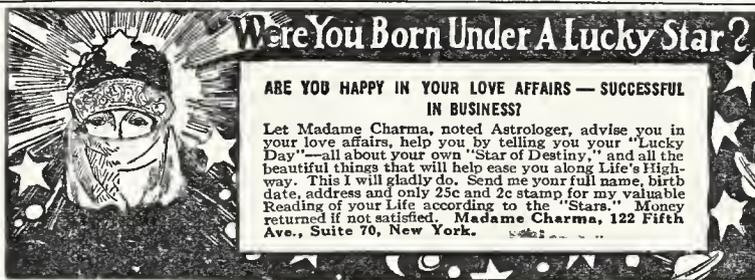
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Name.....

(Continued from page 122)

For you this is meant to be a period of productiveness and activity and you should make the most of it.

You may not receive adequate financial reward for your work but this need not prevent you from building for the future. Some of you may have to wait two years before you reap your harvest, but after all, if a thing is worth having, it is worth waiting for.

Does your birthday happen to fall on the 23rd or 24th of October? If so, be prepared for opportunity which may come to you through the influence of another. Neptune just now is sending you rays filled with possibilities, especially if you are interested in drama, music, oil or any business connected with the development or promotion of large concerns. Or, if you were born on June 21st, similar opportunity may come your way. Even if you are under other afflictions you will find mitigating circumstances and help from indirect sources.

Others who are at present in the favor of elusive Neptune are those born about April 21st or December 23rd, and these fortunate individuals may expect realization of their hopes during the next few months. The 23rd of November, the 21st of May and the 20th of February, on the other hand, are not such good birthdays as far as present planetary indications are concerned, and if you were born on any of these days, you should look with a very critical eye down any rose-colored vista to which your attention may be directed.

Those born on August 23rd or 24th may now anticipate unusual experiences, for Neptune is merging his strange rays with those of their Sun. No matter how settled in point of view or how secure they may imagine themselves to be, the strange glamorous Neptunian rays will stir their emotions. Under this influence, the artist may be inspired to do some unusual work, the business man may put over that long-thought-of deal—but those whose Sun was afflicted at birth are more likely to suffer in health or in business.

Being ruler of the astral or emotional plane, Neptune can bring us into contact with the lowest desires or with the highest channels of inspiration, depending a great deal upon our own thought. A romance—or an infatuation—begun under the influence of Neptune ends usually in misunder-

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standing or disillusionment, often because there are obstacles which prove insurmountable or because the happiness of other people is too closely involved.

The war-like Mars is passing through the sign of Cancer, the Crab, and on October 20th reaches the place of the important solar eclipse, which took place in June of 1927. Mars at the same time comes into adverse relationship with Uranus and as both these planets are associated with violence and possible accident, more than usual caution should be exercised about this time, especially by those born during the last ten days of March or June.

Working indirectly, as it apparently does, perhaps the mission of this last-discovered planet is to show us our spiritual affinity with all living things and the danger of considering only our own interests. However this may be, experiences which take place under harmonious rays from Neptune are usually associated with great happiness and emotional satisfaction.

Saturn remains in much the same position as last month, and I have already explained the probable effect of his vibrations. He is now moving forward more quickly and those who have recently felt his restrictions may now take comfort in the thought that they are no longer under his discipline.

During November there are two eclipses—a partial eclipse of the Sun on the 12th, and a total eclipse of the Moon on the 27th. At the time of the solar eclipse Mars is stationary in the heavens and therefore more powerful and forceful than usual. This position is by no means favorable for world peace but the anti-war pact signed in Paris on August 27th is a valiant effort on the part of the nations concerned to prevent the war that was predicted. This is an extremely critical time and if by heeding' the warning of the stars and making a supreme bid for peace, the powers are able to avert war, we can say that man has proved himself the ruler of his stars and the arbiter of his fate. We can only hope and pray that it may be so.

Watch for Stella's "Astrological Calendar"—in the next issue! She will tell you what to do—and what NOT to do—on each day of the month! A new and worth-while feature of this valuable department.



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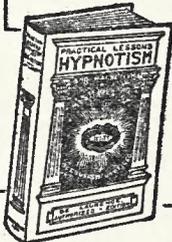
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- How to hypnotize a giant.
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The always popular octagon shape, size 10 1/4. Luster, silver nickel case, Bester flash back. Fitted with a reliable 6 jewel lever movement. Fancy silvered dial with luminous figures and hands. Shows time clearly in the dark. Selected leather finely stitiched strap, buckle to match. For men or boys, a gift that cannot fail to be appreciated.

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One of the latest and most popular shapes, size 10 1/4. Ligne, with **CURVED BACK**, shape of wrist. Case is genuine 14K Rolled Gold (choice of green gold, and can be had in 6 or 15 Jewels. The square dial is silvered and has luminous figures and hands showing time in dark. Best quality cowhide leather strap.

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Rubber Chewing Gum



It is just like a regular package of chewing gum and looks so real that it looks everybody of course no one suspects it is not genuine until they start to chew it. There is a world of fun in this rubber chewing gum—5 sticks to the package. Price, 10c Pkgs.; 3 for 25c, 12 for 75c postpaid. **JOHNSON SMITH**

INVISIBLE INK

The most confidential messages can be written with this ink, for the writing makes no mark. Cannot be seen unless you know the secret. Available for many reasons. Keep your postals and other private communications away from prying eyes. Great fun for playing practical jokes. Only \$3.00 a Bottle; 3 for 40c. **JOHNSON SMITH & CO.** Dept. 873 RACINE, WIS.

MAGICIAN'S BOX OF TRICKS

Apparatus and Directions for a Number of Mysterious Tricks. Enough for an Entire Evening's Entertainment. **\$1.00**

ANYONE CAN DO THEM
It is great fun mystifying your friends. Get this Conjuror's Cabinet, and you will be the cleverest fellow in your district. It contains the apparatus for ten first-class tricks, including THE MAGIC BALL and VASE TRICK (a wooden ball is placed inside, and upon replacing the lid has disappeared and is found in someone else's pocket); THE HINDOO TRICK CARDS (can be made to change completely so often that five times); DISAPPEARING COIN BOX (a coin, placed in the wooden box, vanishes entirely or changes into a coin of another denomination); THE GLASS GOBBLET TRICK (a coin is dropped into a glass of water and when the water is poured out the coin has vanished and is found somewhere else); THE RIBBON FACTORY FROM THE MOUTH TRICK (a seemingly endless supply of colored paper ribbons comes out of your mouth); the DISAPPEARING HANDKERCHIEF (a handkerchief held in the hand mysteriously vanishes); THE WIZARD'S RING COIN TRICK; the ENCHANTED BOTTLE (no one but yourself is able to make it lay down); the GREAT HAT AND DICE TRICK (a large dice is placed on top of a hat, disappears, and is found underneath yet no one has touched the hat); and last, but not least, the GREAT PHANTOM CARD TRICK, or two from five leaves nothing. Full instructions are sent for performing each trick. In addition to the above, a number of other cards and illusions are fully explained for which you can easily make or procure the necessary apparatus. Price complete **\$1.00** postpaid. **JOHNSON SMITH & CO.**

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It goes with real Yankee **Pep—by its own power**
Most remarkable toy ever invented. By drawing the Tank backward, either with the hand or over the floor or table and then placing it down, it will crawl along, overcoming all obstacles, in the same life-like manner as the larger tank that proved so deadly in the Great War. What makes it go is somewhat of a mystery, for there is no mechanism to find no as is usually understood with mechanical toys, yet this tank will keep plodding along ten times longer than the ordinary run for toys. It will perform dozens of the most wonderful stunts. Price only 25c postpaid. **JOHNSON SMITH & CO.**

BOYS' HAND CUFFS
65c
There is a great deal of wholesome fun and amusement to be derived from these handcuffs. They are made of simple mechanism that can be slipped on and off in a moment. No key is required either to lock or unlock them. Buy two them over the wrists and you have your pal securely handcuffed. These handcuffs stand for Law and Order and, in the hands of the boy, inspire him with respect for Civic Virtue. They are entirely non-detectable all over. Price only 65c per pair postpaid.

POCKET CIGAR LIGHTERS

You may pay more, but these two Lighters will do the work as well as the most expensive. The "SIMPLEX" (Illustrated on the left) sells for but 20c; lights merely by giving the wheel a turn with the thumb. The "AUTOMATIC" (on right) lights automatically; press the bottom, the lid flies open and lights wick at same time. Better, cheaper than matches. Light instantly available whenever you want it. Prices: Simplex Lighter 20c; Automatic Lighter \$1.00; extra hints for either 5c each. All postpaid.



Automatic Lighter \$1.00

Lover's Knot or Friendship Ring

Made of 4 strands of genuine 14K gold filled wire, woven into the True Lover's Knot, symbolic of love or friendship. Very pretty, yet not showy. Each ring made by hand by gold wire expert. It looks good and it is good. Price 50c postpaid.



Resurrection Plant

Great Fire Eater

A great trick by which you can apparently breathe fire from mouth, to the horror and consternation of all. Quite harmless. All apparatus necessary sent complete in box for only 30c. p. d. **JOHNSON SMITH**

SQUIRT ROSE

25c
A REAL STARTLER. This is the most popular of all snuff tricks. The flower in your coat looks so fresh and sweet that everyone is tempted to inhale the delightful perfume. Then in the moment to press the bulb. Gush! Illusions. Don't they jump? There is a very long rubber tube that easily reaches to the pocket of your coat or trousers, and the bulb is large enough to make a dozen shots with one loading. PRICE 25c each, or 3 for 65c postpaid.

SEEBACKSCOPE

Place this clever instrument to your eye, you see what is going on behind your back. Very interesting. Sometimes occur when no one thinks you are looking. Just like having eyes at the back of your head. PRICE 25c POSTPAID



WONDER 20th Century Toy

Female SEX Indicator

Hold the MAGIC INDICATOR over a man's hand—instantly it moves in a straight line, backward or forward. Hold it over a woman's hand and it drops down. This is a simple and continuous device and can be slipped on and off in a moment. No key is required either to lock or unlock them. Buy two them over the wrists and you have your pal securely handcuffed. These handcuffs stand for Law and Order and, in the hands of the boy, inspire him with respect for Civic Virtue. They are entirely non-detectable all over. Price only 65c per pair postpaid.

DISSOLVING VIEWS

50c
You may have a lot of fun with this little peep show. A peep show. Made entirely of metal, having a microscopic lens fitted into one end. While the victim is absorbed in admiration of the pretty picture, and turns the button in the confident expectation of seeing something interesting, a spring syringe is brought into action, and the observer experiences a very rare surprise. 50c p. d. **Johnson Smith & Co. Dept. 873, Racine, Wis.**

Comical Motto Rings

Lots of harmless fun and amusement wearing these rings. Made in platinum finish (to resemble platinum), with wording on enameloid, as illustrated. Price only 25c Postpaid.

The "Little Giant" Typewriter

A First Class Writing Machine For \$1.50
A perfect little typewriter for \$1.50. There are thousands of persons who would like to use a typewriter but whose needs and budgets do not warrant the expense attached to the purchase and use of a fifty or seventy-five dollar machine. To use a typewriter we confidently recommend our Little Giant. It is strongly made but simple in construction, so that anyone can quickly learn to operate it, and write as rapidly as they would with pen and ink. The letters of the alphabet are printed on a single sheet of paper 1 to 10, and the punctuation marks being together, with this machine you can send your best girl typewritten love letters, address envelopes, make out bills, and do almost any kind of work not requiring a large expensive machine. With each typewriter we send a tube of ink and full printed instructions for using the machine. Price complete \$1.50 by mail postpaid to any address in the world.

Send remittance (Postage Stamps accepted) for all articles listed above to **JOHNSON SMITH & CO. Dept. 873 Racine, Wis.**

See our other full-page advertisement on the inside front cover of this issue.

"I was ashamed to have company before -now I am proud of my home"



"I was ashamed to have company—for I was ashamed of my home. I was miserable whenever anyone entered our cheerless, old-fashioned living room. Jim could not understand how I felt. I noticed that he seldom wanted to stay home. And the children were the same—always wanting to go to some one else's house; never bringing their chums home with them.

Unhappy, Until
"When I went to my friend's home and saw their lovely living rooms, I came home more unhappy than ever. It got so we never had company.

"Then one day, in a magazine, I came across an advertisement of Spear & Company. It told how *anyone* could have the home of their dreams. It told about Credit-to-All. It offered me a living room suite that was just what I wanted and only \$49.95—lovelier than \$90 suites I had seen. And only \$1 down! A whole year to pay—30 days free trial.

A Real Surprise

"Jim finally said I could send for it, when he read about Spear's 30-day FREE trial offer. He said it must be all right, if they could make a guarantee like that. But he wasn't very enthusiastic. And I had my misgivings.

"I'll never forget the day our suite came. It was far more beautiful than it had been pictured.

"You should have seen Jim. He was even more pleased and excited than the youngsters. Right away he wanted us to have Mr. Hall, the foreman from the shop, and his wife, come over for a visit.

"They came. We had the nicest evening. Mr. and Mrs. Hall thought our living room was lovely. We soon became great friends. I wonder if that had anything to do with Jim's promotion?

"We've never missed the money—only a few dollars a month. Jim says we used to waste more than that, with nothing to show for it. And we have the best times nowadays. We love to have company. Because we are *proud of our home.*"

This is the story of Mrs. James Newton—just one of the true stories we receive every day—stories that touch the heart and make us proud, too—proud of the values we offer home folks everywhere. We're proudest of all, because we can now offer this marvelous bargain in a living room suite, the very suite Mrs. Newton ordered, the suite that will make thousands of homes happier, more comfortable.

This Overstuffed Velour Suite represents new beauty, new style, new luxury, new comfort in a 3-piece Overstuffed Parlor Suite. Notice the new curving lines, the new inviting side wings, the new contrast of plain blue velour arms and outside ends, against Blue and Taupe Figured Velour seats, backs and wings. A new low credit price—\$49.95—a year to pay. New all the way through—with the same quality, same workmanship, same sturdiness found in suites selling for \$85 to \$90 cash. A saving of almost one-half. How can we do it? Here's the how:

This davenport is slightly smaller in size than those in \$90 suites, but bigger in real comfort and bigger in value. It measures 63 in. wide instead of 72 in.—but you have to measure it yourself to realize the difference. It's an ideal size for the home.

Davenport, rocker and wing chair have comfortable side wings. Sturdy hardwood frames are in rich brown mahogany finish. Inner construction—9 coil springs in seat of each chair, 18 coil springs in seat of davenport, together with high quality sanitary interior upholstery materials. Thickly padded backs and seats—guarantee perfect comfort. Arm chair and rocker, width overall 33 in. Seats 21 x 19 in., height of backs from seats 24½ in. Davenport width overall 63 in., between arms 52 in. Send only \$1, use the suite as your own for 30 days FREE. If you don't believe this the greatest bargain of 1928, return it and we will refund your \$1 and transportation charges both ways.

Order No. DA 4310, 3-piece Overstuffed Velour Suite.
Sale Price \$49.95.
Terms: \$1 Down,
\$4 monthly.

Nathaniel Spear
President

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SPEAR & CO.,
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Send me at once the 3-piece Overstuffed Velour Suite as described above. Enclosed is \$1 first payment. It is understood that if at the end of 30 days trial, I am satisfied, I will send you \$4.00 monthly. Order No. DA 4310. Sale Price \$49.95. Title remains with you until paid in full.

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