

THE GHOST OF GUINEY MANOR

A New Year's Story by Arthur J. Stringer.

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ORD and I had been the best of friends for years. Although an artist by profession, he was as fine a fellow as you would care to know.

What was even more remarkable, he always paid his bills. For some weeks before New Year's he had been boring me about a dilapidated old Connecticut manor he wanted to lease.

As his legal adviser I told him to go ahead and take the place. He was working hard on some book illustrations, and the country air, I thought, would do him good.



BEYOND WAS AN ORCHARD RUN WILD.

of days off at New Year's and run out with him and have a look over the place. In fact, Ford told me that unless he secured possession by the first of the year the property would revert to its original owner, a broken down old army officer by the name of Guiney.

Law was not Ford's strong point, as I very clearly saw when he tried to explain just why it was he had to occupy the premises before midnight of the 31st of December. He could only tell me that unless possession was openly disputed before New Year's day the property would pass out of the administration of the Hampton Trust and Realty company, from which he was leasing it, and revert to the original claimant, the old army officer, Old Guiney, he said, was now an invalid, and had long since expended the last of his shattered fortune in a passionate effort to retain possession of the home of his childhood.

Most of this Ford tried to explain to me in the smoking car as the New York local drew close to Edgeville. When the train pulled up at the little snowbound station, we were the only passengers to alight. As Ford lingered for a minute or two to watch the last car rattle away through the falling snow I dolefully confessed to myself that I was facing the prospects of a remarkably dull New Year's. My companion explained that Guiney manor was some two miles away, and that we would have to cover that distance on foot. The road was an exceptionally dreary one, and as we trudged on past lonely, snow covered hills and bleak looking stretches of farm land I inwardly remarked that I had never dreamed such desolation could exist within sixty miles of the great crowded city which we had left behind us.

Suddenly Ford turned to me and spoke. "Have you any idea why you're here?" he asked. I replied that since he knew more about mixing paints than making bargains, and squeezing tubes rather than squeezing landlords, I assumed I was there to settle on some final figure and draw up the necessary papers.

"That's not it at all!" declared my companion, shaking the snow from his hat rim. I mildly inquired just why it was then. "It's to see a ghost!" said Ford, quite solemnly. There always were times when Ford was hard to put up with. This was one of them. I let him know in neither a hesitating nor half hearted way that a man at my time of life does not care to indulge in ghost chasing through tumble down old manors as an avocation and that the quest of spirits as a holiday amusement was not altogether the wisest way of beginning a new year. But Ford was quite sober about it.

"I tell you, Wetherell, this isn't nonsense. I'm as sane as you are. There's a ghost in Guiney manor, and I've seen

it with my own eyes as plainly as I see you now. I've seen it, and I intend to lay it. I couldn't sleep at night for it, and it got on my nerves. None of the people about here will go near the place. That's why it has never been sold or rented. They say that over eighty years ago a woman was murdered there and buried in the cellar and that she still haunts the place. That's all nonsense, of course, but for all that there's something mysterious and uncanny about it, and I mean to follow it out to the bitter end. You're cool and level headed and analytical, and so I want you to see me through with it!"

We turned in through a broken wall topped by a thick tangle of brushwood. Beyond this was an orchard run wild. Beyond this again, in the midst of a dark little clump of spectral looking trees, stood a rambling, old, many gabled structure, looming up gloomy, desolate and forbidding through the gray afternoon.

It was certainly not an inviting looking place. Even the village expressman had declined to go more than leave Ford's boxes and trunks outside in the snow on the tumbledown veranda. We went up the dilapidated steps, and my companion unlocked the massive front door. Then for two hours we worked like beavers, hauling in and unpacking the boxes, building a fire in the massive old fireplace and doing what we could to make ourselves comfortable for the night in the big dark paneled room which Ford spoke of as the "bug room." The old colonel, I learned, occupied two little rooms in the extreme south wing and did not so much as make an appearance as we pounded our furniture defiantly about the place.

I suggested that we both look thoroughly over the building, while there was still a little daylight. We went from room to room, peering into twilight closets and probing about gloomy passages till it grew dark, and Ford went back for a lamp. The hours slipped past, but still we searched about the strange old house. It grew late, and we found nothing but dust and cobwebs, though I believe Ford would have kept up the search till New Year's morning had I not somewhat disgustedly protested that a hot dinner would suit me better than a ghost.

Ford cooked the dinner himself, and I must confess it was an atrociously bad one. Over our coffee and cigars, however, my good nature returned. I laughingly inquired for a little more information about our esteemed friend, the ghost, and timidly insinuated that perhaps the pugnacious old colonel had a more or less active hand in the matter. But Ford wouldn't hear of such a thing. "The colonel is decrepit and can scarcely walk. He even lent me that long barreled old rifle leaning against the fireplace there and said he'd be greatly obliged if I'd fill this fool ghost full of lead for him. And I would like to see how an apparition takes to bullets. But, besides all this, Wetherell, our ghost, is—a woman!"

"A woman?" "Yes, a woman, and with one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. The fact is, there couldn't be a more beautiful face! She suddenly appears, from nowhere at all, apparently, and is always dressed in white. I know it sounds trite, but if you'll only wait!" He broke off, for at the back of the house a bell rang loudly. There was something ominous, disturbing, unnatural in the sound of that clanging bell as it echoed cavernously through the huge empty halls. Ford did not move. The bell rang again. A little shiver crept up my spinal column. For the third time the bell sounded.

"It's the front doorbell," whispered my companion. "It's one of the signs of—it!"

I seized the lamp and hurried to the door. No one was there. Outside an



"I'M THE FAMILY GHOST." unbroken drift of snow lay on the veranda. I could see the bell was a pull bell and that the wire ran in some one direction under the floor. Just where, I wanted to find out. Standing in the hall was a garden spade, which we had used to shovel snow from the veranda. I took this spade and worked one corner of it into a crack in the flooring. It was but a moment's task to loosen the board and remove it. The bell wire ran directly under the opening. Even as I stooped over it I could see it move. The next moment the bell rang again.

"It always rings five times," said Ford excitedly. I held the wire tightly in my hand and waited. Two minutes later I felt a sharp tug at it. The bell was silent, so the wire was pulled again, almost impatiently. It did not seem a ghost-like touch.

"Listen," whispered Ford suddenly, creeping to the door of the long room. Was it my imagination, or did I really hear the sound of groans? I followed Ford to the door and looked in. The room was dark but for the dim light from the dying coals in the fireplace. At first I thought it was some trick of the mind or the eye, some picture conjured up by tense nerves and too active imagination, for out of the gloom that hung over the far end of the long room shone a woman's face white as death. The eyes were wide with terror, and a look of unutterable horror hung about the drawn mouth. I kept my eyes riveted on that mysterious face, for it stood out of the velvet darkness surrounding it as vividly as though a calcium had been thrown over it. The head was framed in what seemed to be an old Quaker bonnet of the last century. And then I saw something. It was a little thing, but it drove the cold chill out of my legs. The ghost had moistened her lips!

I turned a sharp click at my side. I hurried quickly and saw Ford with the barrel of the colonel's rifle trained directly on the woman's heart. I threw up my arm, but too late. There were a flash, a deafening report and the sound of a stifled scream from the far end of the apartment.

I upset a table and two chairs before I got across the room, but the next

moment I held a living, breathing, wriggling figure in my arms. Her hands were already thrust in through a sliding panel in the wall, and she panted and begged me to let her go. Ford came to his senses and ran for the light, while I carried my captive, and she was no lightweight—firmly but gently to a chair and placed her in it.

"Are you hurt?" panted Ford, holding the lamp with a shaking hand before her. A little laugh was her only reply. We both looked at her sternly and could say nothing. She wiped the flour from her face and then casually remarked, "Isn't it lucky I took the trouble to draw those bullets?" Then she sedately took off her old poke bonnet, and a candle, which had been placed ingeniously under its rim, fell out. It was practically the old trick actors have adopted for the ghost in "Hamlet" when they put a light in the vizor of the ghost's helmet to illumine his spectral countenance.

"Who are you and what do you mean by this?" I demanded sternly. The girl looked from Ford to me with half guilty and half defiant eyes. "I'm the family ghost," she said demurely.

Then she grew more sober. "Colonel Guiney is my father, but he doesn't dream I'm the ghost. This is our home, but men-wicked men—have tried to cheat us out of it. Father told me the place would be ours again if we could only hold it till New Year's. There was no other way I could think of, so I—I turned ghost!"

Artists are strange folks. I firmly believe Ford is going to marry that reckless young woman who did her best to frighten him into acute neurasthenia!

WHEN THE YEAR IS NEW.

All ancient and modern peoples, however differing as to the day from which to reckon the beginning of the new year, have honored the occasion with joyous festivals. The Romans had a superstition that every individual word and action of the first day was an earnest for the whole year ahead.

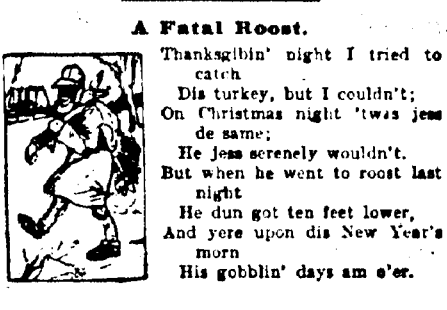
According to the orthodox Jewish chronology, the year 5662 began at sunset Sept. 13, 1901, of the Christian calendar, the 1st of the month Tishri. The Jewish New Year festival is called Rosh Hashana. This is the Jewish civil year, the ecclesiastical year beginning with the vernal equinox in March.

The neighboring peoples of the Jews in their original habitat—namely, the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, Syrians, Phoenicians and Carthaginians—each began the year at the autumnal equinox, or about the 21st or 22d of September. The Greeks began their year at the winter solstice until the fifth century B. C., when a new cycle was introduced, beginning at the summer solstice. The original Roman style was to begin the year with the winter solstice, which is about Dec. 21 or 22, but Caesar changed it to Jan. 1 so that the year would begin with the new moon.

Before the adoption of the Gregorian calendar the Christian nations had different dates for the beginning of the year. By the Florentine calculation, which was in use from the tenth century until 1745, the year began March 25. In France the year began under the Merovingians, Carolingians and Capetans at different dates—first, March 1, then Dec. 25 and finally at Easter. Charles IX. in 1564 ordered the year to begin on Jan. 1. In England from the fourteenth century to the change in 1752 the legal and ecclesiastical year began March 25. During the French revolution a calendar was instituted which began the year on Sept. 22. This was in use from 1792 to Jan. 1, 1806. The Chinese New

Year is a movable event, regulated by the phases of the moon. Ancient nations of northern Europe began their year from the winter solstice. In the East Indies the year is lunar, beginning with the first quarter of the moon nearest the beginning of December. Among the ancient Peruvians the year began at the winter solstice and with the Mexicans at the vernal equinox.

Not only the Romans and the peoples affected by their civilization, but the Druids and Saxons celebrated the new year with feasting and giving gifts. At one time in Rome and later in England the custom of giving was debased into a tribute, the nobility and even the common people feeling obliged by custom to send gold to their sovereign.



A Fatal Roost.

Thankful night I tried to catch. Die turkey, but I couldn't; On Christmas night 'twas just the same; He was serenely wouldn't. But when he went to roost last night He dug ten feet lower, And here upon his New Year's morn' His gobbling days are o'er.

SLOW WORK FOR THEM.

Why New Life Insurance Companies Do Not Make Rapid Headway.

"It is difficult for me to see on what grounds the stockholders and managers of the newer life insurance companies base their hopes of success and prosperity," said a man familiar with the subject one day recently, says the Detroit Free Press. "There is, of course, plenty of life insuring yet to do," he continued, "and there will always be more men in sight who ought to be policyholders, but are not than can ever be overtaken. But the old companies are so well known, and the natural disposition of every possible insurer is so strongly in favor of turning to one of these whenever he wishes insurance, that it is hard to see where the newer organizations have much show in the competition. Besides, the older institutions have their thoroughly systematized force of workers in the field, and whatever the policy is to be sold one of their agents is more apt to be on hand than not."

"Supposing you wished some insurance," he added, "wouldn't you be vastly more apt to look to a company that you know has been in operation scores of years and has a national or perhaps world-wide reputation, with its tens and maybe hundreds of millions of accumulated assets? As a matter of fact they are the ones that really do get all of the new business worth mentioning. People naturally like to go with the crowd, and where to the element of numbers is added age, experience, the garnered wealth in huge sums of other policyholders and the shown fact that millions upon millions of money have already been distributed in death and other losses, it is little wonder that the old life companies get practically all of the new business, while the recently organized concerns are finding the hill of progress is both high and steep."

"This is saying nothing against the merits of these latter. When organized upon a full legal reserve basis and other correct principles, they are not subject to criticism, and if managed by able men may in time make headway. But their ultimate destiny seems to be an honorable liquidation, or their absorption by the older and better known organizations. "Of course good agents can help them. The right kind of a life agent can sell a policy to a mummy, or make a man unfamiliar with the subject believe that a company a month old is as good as one that has waxed powerful in the experience of half a century. But the new companies rarely obtain such agents, and when they do the older institutions soon get them away. A good life insurance agent is both born and made, and as soon as he realizes his powers is sure to prefer to join his fortunes to one of the older and better known organizations."

NOT IN HIS STOCK.

Norwegian Fish Peddler Who Had Neither Mercy Nor Compassion.

Among the interesting "characters" of a little "up-state" village is a Norwegian fish peddler, whose ineffectual efforts to use the English language are a perpetual source of local amusement, says the New York Tribune. Hans is a great brawny chap, who at some remote period acquired possession of the village fish store. But age and long usage have not brought Hans an increased understanding of English. To his defect of language Hans adds another serious weakness, an undue fondness for drink, and when intoxicated he is in the habit of beating his unfortunate steed. The other day one of the dignified matrons of the village discovered Hans standing on the sidewalk and lashing his nag unmercifully. In great indignation the irate woman strode up to him and said sternly: "Hans, what are you doing? Have you no mercy—have you no compassion?" Hans straightened up with difficulty, under the mistaken impression that there was a possible business transaction in sight, and answered unsteadily: "No, mem. No got mercy—no got compassion—no got nothin' but cod and haddock."

THE CANNY SCOT'S ... NEW YEAR

A Highland Sketch by Thomas Mackail.

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NEW YEAR'S is more enthusiastically observed by the canny Scot in his native land than in any other country. It is a day entirely given up to fostering domestic harmony and repeating the glorious gospel of peace on earth and good will toward men. No other period of the year is so potent as this with the Scot in healing the wounds of friendship and in warming the hearts of his countrymen toward his fellows.

In the homes of the poorer classes the best of good cheer is spread, his dearest friends are invited and, whatever else may grace his table, the plum pudding, surrounded with mountain heather, and the inevitable haggis, are there and, if possible, a small keg of real "mountain dew" is placed conspicuously in the center of the table. A bunch of mistletoe is not far off, and no guests are permitted to leave their seats until the keg has been emptied of its contents—customs strongly savoring of paganism, without doubt, and handed down from heathen ancestors, who were, nevertheless, in their own time and way good men and true.

To the American cook nothing is more mysterious than a Scotch plum pudding, which all loyal Scotchmen insist on having on New Year's day. After the ingredients have been given out, too often when made by a novice the pudding has come to table in the form of a thick soup.

It is a custom on New Year's day among a number of the country squires



SCOTTY'S PLUM PUDDING.

and wealthy farmers in the north of Scotland to organize hunting parties. On such outings the plum pudding is included in the bill of fare. Instead, however, of having the pudding made before starting out, it is customary to take the ingredients along, mix them and boil in a pot slung over a log fire at the camping ground. The writer participated in one of these hunting excursions, where a big, burly, killed Scotchman who had never made a plum pudding was delegated to act as cook. Before starting out he had carelessly put the precious fruit, flour and sugar in what was called the "strong box." This likewise contained stores of powder, shot, caps, soap and various other et ceteras. On our arrival at a suitable camping ground Scotty was left behind to get dinner ready. After opening the "strong box" and eliminat-



RETURNING HOMEWARD FROM "FIRST FOOTING."

ing all foreign bodies as carefully as possible the pudding was duly mixed, tied up in the cloth after the established manner and placed in the pot. Many a time was it taken out and its state examined by the point of the fork before it was at last, after boiling all day, pronounced thoroughly cooked. On the return of the party dinner was ready, which consisted of Scotch kail, a leg of roast beef, spuds (potatoes), haggis and green peas—and the pudding! No one who has not been restricted entirely to one species of food for a long time can form any idea of our crushing disappointment on tasting that pudding! On digging a knife into the heart of it we discovered that it consisted of caps, buckshot and lumps of suet. To spoil a plum pudding on New Year's day in Scotland is practically next door to committing a crime. On this occasion, however, the flasks were produced, and the cook was soon forgotten in song:

A' Plumb the prophet's son despise An' a' sorrow be forgot; Treason in our December puddin' And death without the pot. Auld year farewell thy days (I fear), An' merry days er dine, But let us not forget the day The puddin' o'er're brither fraized.

Followed by the chorus: Welcome be ye that arise here, Welcome a' an' mak gude cheer, Welcome a' another year, Welcome a'.

A custom which is generally observed by the working classes is what is called "first footing." At all hours of the early morning of the first day of the new year an effort is made to be first to call on their friends at their homes. The one who is lucky enough to be first to partake of short bread cake and a nip of whisky after the usual handshake and a "braw New Year." By the time he has made all the calls he can remember making, the first day of the new year is dawning, and Scotty can be seen sailing majestically homeward, his inner man filled with New Year's hospitalities. Those living in the country will walk many miles to bid a braw New Year to their friends in the city. It is no uncommon thing to see a family of five or six leave their home about 10 o'clock at night and walk three or four miles in a snow-storm in order to "first foot" their relatives or friends living in the city. Very often they are disappointed in their surprise visits in finding the object of their journey was not at home.

On returning homeward, however, they will sometimes meet their friends whom they intended first footing and to learn that they had gone to first foot them, and vice versa.

The birth of the new year is announced in the town and cities by the striking of the local town hall clock on the hour of 12 and followed by the ringing of the church bells. It is soon after this that first footing begins. Long before the approach of 12 great crowds of people surround the city hall and eagerly watch the big hand of the clock as it approaches the last hour of the old year. Every one in the big crowd has a bottle of some description in his possession. Immediately the big hand of the clock marks the first stroke of 12 every bottle is thrown simultaneously against the walls of the hall, followed by a tremendous crash. This is an ancient custom, but is now rapidly dying out. It is still practiced, however, every New Year's eve against the old walls of the Tron church in Edinburgh, the capital.

In the highlands the new year is ushered in by the tolling of the auld kirk bell and the playing of bagpipes. In a clear, frosty night to hear this much maligned instrument played by a thoroughbred highlander among the hills and from a distance of a mile the notes are stripped of their harshness and seem to be wafted across to you by the clear atmosphere in one harmonious melody. It is really beautiful and inspiring.

New Year's day is observed as a general holiday throughout the country. The churches are open in the morning only, and in the large cities the day would seem like a Sunday were it not for that disturbing element, the saloon keeper, who always makes it a business point to keep open in Scotland on all public holidays, much to the annoyance of law abiding citizens.

NEW CONSUMPTION CURE.

Dr. Herbert Clapp, a Boston Expert, Says Cod Liver Oil is Not a Necessary Agent.

In the 57th annual report of the trustees of the Massachusetts State Sanatorium at Rutland, Mass., an institution maintained by the state for the care and cure of consumptives free of expense, or at a nominal cost where patients are able to pay, Dr. Herbert Clapp, an expert on tuberculosis, made some interesting observations regarding the use of alcohol and cod liver oil by consumptives.

His views indicate a change of views among medical men regarding these supposed aids in curing the dread disease. He says: "It is interesting to note that in the three years during which our state sanatorium has been in operation practically no alcohol whatever has been used in the treatment of patients, and yet our success has been phenomenal. "Our experience at Rutland for three years would also seem to show that cod liver oil is not, as many practically believe, an indispensable agent in the successful treatment of phthisis."

Adopt American Hospital Ideas.

Medical officers of the army are elated over the compliment which has been paid the service by the British military authorities. The Canadian government will send a contingent of 1,000 men to South Africa about the middle of January, and accompanying the body of troops will be a 100-bed field hospital with five medical officers and 75 hospital corps men. Agents of the British army were in Washington recently securing samples of water sterilizers, water filters, the medical and surgical field chests, a portable acetone field operating light, and other material, all of which have been adopted by the British army, as well as our new ambulance and the new style ventilator tents. This is the most practical sort of indoor equipment of the army medical department.