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January

Ghost STORIES

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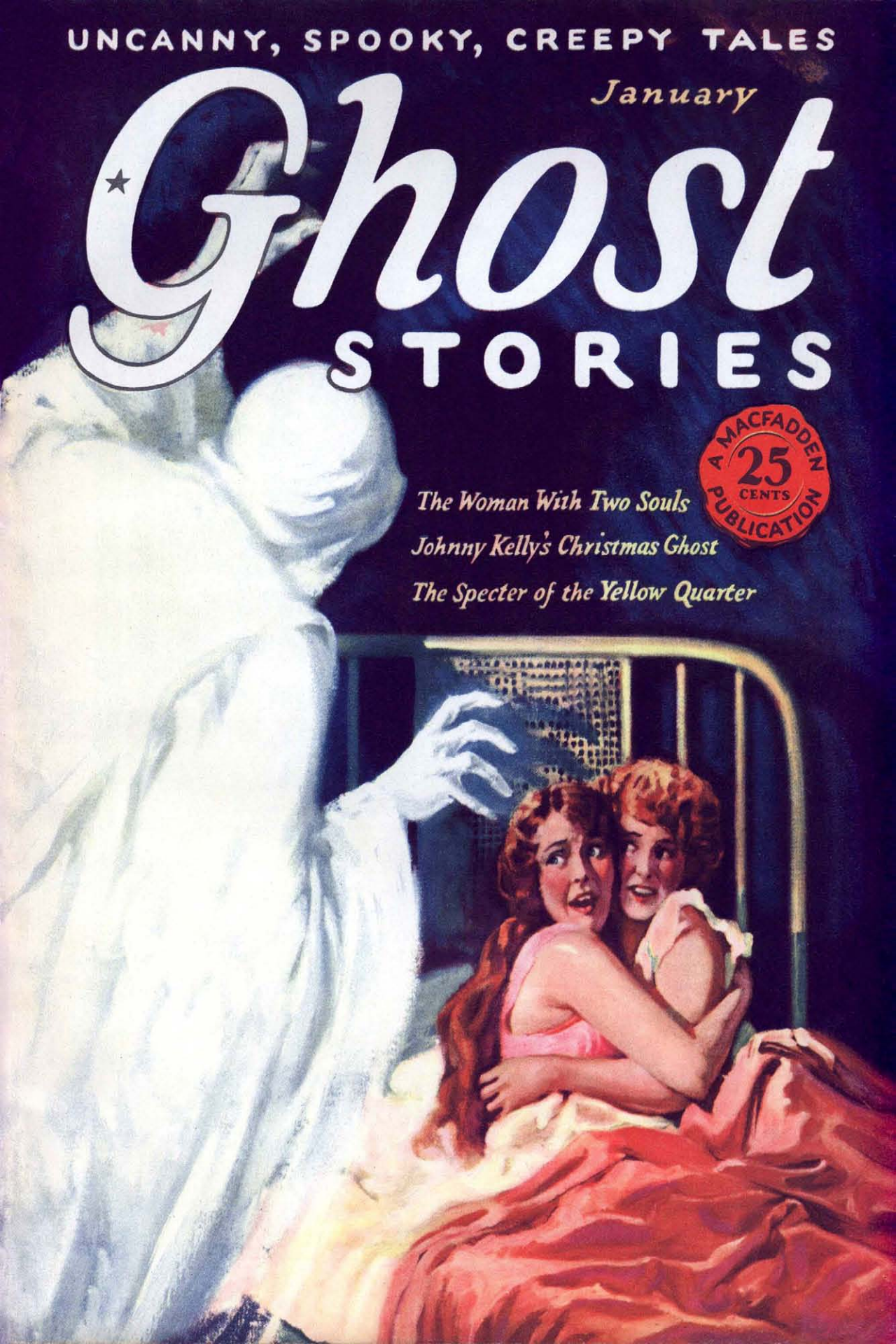
The Woman With Two Souls

Johnny Kelly's Christmas Ghost

The Specter of the Yellow Quarter



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Nerves—Nerves—NERVES!

Millions of people are today only half alive and don't know it! They suffer from obscure ills, worry about imaginary troubles, find it hard to concentrate and easily fall a prey to disease that robs them of their vital powers—all as a result of continuous neglect of their nerves. Bernarr Macfadden, in a wonderful new book shows how to recharge your undernourished nerves and how to acquire glowing health and youthful vitality by following a few easy, natural rules. No medicines, drugs, or self-denials, no exhausting exercises or disagreeable diets!

DO you worry and fuss over non-essentials? Do you get excited easily? Do you blush readily? Is your memory weak or your eyesight failing? Are your hands and feet cold? Are you troubled with constipation or other stomach troubles? Are you pale? Is your complexion blotched? Is your hair falling? Have you occasional headaches and dizzy spells? Are you troubled with insomnia and too many dreams? Are you impatient—emotional, quick to show your joy or sorrow?

These are only a few of the signs that show unhealthy nerves, and if you neglect them you will slowly but surely head for the same disastrous condition that is now bringing misery to thousands of people.

Why Ruin Your Life?

Many a promising career and many a happy home has been ruined by some impulsive word or act. Many a social position has been irretrievably lost by some trifling indiscretion or error of judgment—due entirely to unstable nerves. To think that one marriage in every eleven ends in divorce! And to think that 95% of all the misery of the unhappily married is due to nothing more than irritated nerves. When a man loses his temper and flares up in excitement; when a woman begins to nag, fret and worry; when a child becomes unruly or shy—it's simply a case of nerve exhaustion.

It is a pity that so very few people really know how to keep their nerves sound and healthful. How much misery could be avoided, how much unhappiness could be changed to joy if the countless numbers of people who now overlook the little signs of nervous exhaustion could be made to see the folly of their neglect.

It is now just as easy to have sound, healthy nerves as it is to have clean, strong teeth and vigorous muscles! Without drugs or medicines—without tedious exhausting exercises or enforced hateful diets—without doing anything that isn't pleasant and delightful, you can now recharge your undernourished nerves and live a full, vibrant life that will help you to achieve a glorious business and social success.

Based on his many years of experience as a physical culture expert, Bernarr Macfadden has picked out and set down in writing certain simple, easy-to-follow rules that have helped thousands of men and women to regain their lost nervous energy and to acquire glowing health and youthful vitality. He calls his wonderful book

Strengthening the Nerves

If you follow Bernarr Macfadden's advice faithfully, you will be overjoyed at the results. You'll look better and feel better than you have in years; you will have greater endurance, a keener appetite and a happier outlook on life than you ever had before. You will banish headaches, worries, constipation. Your complexion will become clearer, your eyesight stronger and you will gradually build up a vigorous body that will be able to resist nearly every ailment that is at present sapping the energy of thousands.

The book is written in an easy, fascinating style. There is nothing difficult to understand. You'll enjoy every page because it shows you the way to glowing health and vigor. The knowledge you'll gain from reading Bernarr Macfadden's book will help you throughout your entire life, for it will build for you a solid foundation for your future success and happiness.

Your health, your strength, your success, your happiness depends upon the state of your nervous system. You can't be right and be nervous. The remedy is simple and easily applied. Just common sense rules—that's all. You'll enjoy practicing Mr. Macfadden's course and the benefit will be immediate.

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6. Ringing in the ears.
7. Feeling of numbness.
8. Cold hands or feet. Flushings and sweats.
9. Muscular weakness, lack of endurance.
10. Dyspepsia, other stomach troubles.
11. Pains around heart.
12. Spells of irritability.
13. Knee jerks.
14. Strange fears.
15. Continuous flow of thought preventing sleep at night.
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17. Gloomy—pessimistic, always looking on the dark side of things.

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GHOST STORIES

Vol. 2 *January, 1927* *No. 1*

CONTENTS

OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

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A Creole, a Corsican, and a Crown

The Romantic Careers of a Girl from Martinique and a Youth from Corsica.

WHEN MONSIEUR TASCHER DE LA PAGERIE, a successful planter of far-off Martinique, took his daughter Marie-Josèphe-Rose, called Josèphine, to Paris, her languid creole manner, voluptuous beauty, graceful litheness of figure, elegance of manner, quick intelligence, voice that charmed, and qualities of mind and heart fascinated the young aristocrat, Alexandre de Beauharnais; what must have seemed to M. de la Pagerie a most satisfactory marriage took place. He never could have guessed to what depths his daughter was to fall or what heights she would rise; or that, after a most romantic and stormy career, she was to wear the crown of France that a bloody revolution was to throw at the feet of a poor young Corsican lieutenant

During the Revolution her husband was guillotined and she imprisoned. Her life saved by a lucky chance, and released, the young widow, carried away by the license of the times and the sensuality of her nature, unfolding her wings like a butterfly, became the gay leader of one of the gayest sets of the many giddy coteries in the luxurious and dissipated life that arose after the Reign of Terror.

The young Corsican had now become a poor and rather obscure general whose energy, industry, military genius, power of calm calculation and self-control was to make him the ruler of Europe and the most universally known name in all history. He lost his self-control, however, when he met Madame de Beauharnais and fell madly in love with her. Rather awed by the elegance of her dress and station, captivated by her voice and grace of manner, dazzled by her beauty, and overcome by charms that the dress of the period scarcely concealed, his passion became almost a frenzy, and he became her infatuated slave.

She at last consented to marry him. On the wedding ring was engraved "*Au Destin.*"

I like to read about Napoleon. Certainly the Corsican was one of the most interesting human beings who ever trod this earth. WARREN G. HARDING.

Josephine charming, fascinating, sympathetic, and tender of heart. *The World, N.Y.*

Josephine and Napoleon

Passionate Lovers

The piquant and lovely Creole led the man of destiny a pretty dance, but while she tormented her impecunious lover with her extravagances, she always felt that he was in truth the man of destiny. That she grew afterward to love him passionately and profoundly and that she was devotedly faithful to him (barring one early misstep during his absence in Egypt) is known beyond a doubt. At times the ever-present menance of divorce bred fear of him, but gratitude for the undreamed of grandeur to which he had raised her filled her heart to the end.

Their Peculiar Fascination

Josephine and Napoleon—an emperor and an empress risen from the people—while living, were the centre of interest of the world. To-day, though dead over a hundred years, they still exercise over millions a peculiar fascination. It is not merely their lofty stations as rulers of most of Europe that creates this interest. Napoleon—whose name fills more pages in history than any other mortal—the great warrior whose marvellous career excelled that of Alexander the Great and Cæsar, has always compelled the admiration and the interest of mankind.

The Truth About Them

But it is as a human being that his greatest interest remains to-day. In some eyes a god, in others a monster; the truth is that Napoleon was neither, but a man, with man's weaknesses, who nevertheless continued kind and liberal to Josephine, a barren wife, who had consented to divorce and was even lenient and forgiving toward Marie Louise, the unfaithful wife who deserted him in time of trouble, but had borne him a son. After the divorce he was still friendly toward Josephine and allowed her to retain the title of Empress and showed her respect and regard. It is the truth about this living, palpitating woman, her faults as well as her virtues, that attracts us

The Real Woman Revealed

The real woman, the woman charming, fascinating, sympathetic, and tender of heart beyond all the women of her time, is revealed to us in the celebrated memoirs of Madame Ducrest. In them she lives and breathes—not merely as a type of the eternal feminine, but as a woman of her period, full of sensibility and also of humor.

Private Letters Tell About Napoleon

No more intimate picture of Napoleon and his entourage exists than that drawn in a series of private letters written from Paris to a nobleman in London at the time when Napoleon was emperor. With these and the memoirs of Madame Ducrest we are enabled to know Josephine and Napoleon as they were in the flesh, and to know their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows.

These are full size library volumes 8¼ x 5¼ x 1¼ *ins.*

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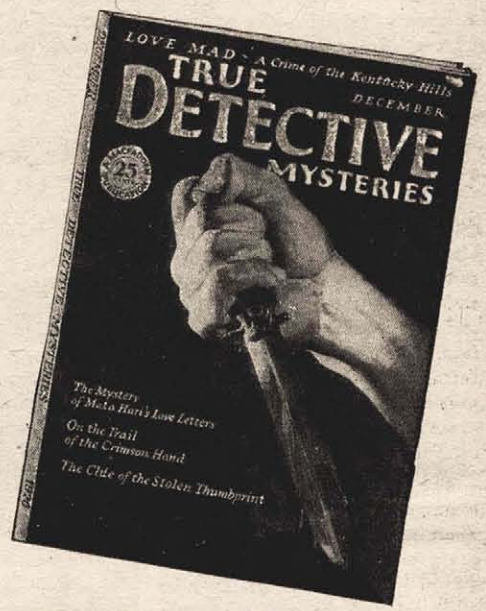
But even the best of these classic tales were woven of fiction. They had no basis in fact. Interesting as they proved they were, nonetheless, written about imaginary happenings—their plots were synthetic—their soundness was open to argument. The sympathetic, human element was lacking.



Partial Contents of the December Issue of True Detective Mysteries

- On the Trail of the Crimson Hand
- The Mystery of Mata Hari's Love Letters
- I Had To Break the Wellington Gambling Ring
- The Talking Bullet
- The Loot of the Eastbound Express
- The Woman Who Loved Too Well
- They're Going To Kill My Son
- They Tried To Insure Their Loot
- The Clue of the Stolen Thumbprint
- Love Mad, a Crime of the Kentucky Hills
- The Alibi That Failed
- Flying Diamonds
- The Man Who Lived Ten Lives

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By Alois Merke
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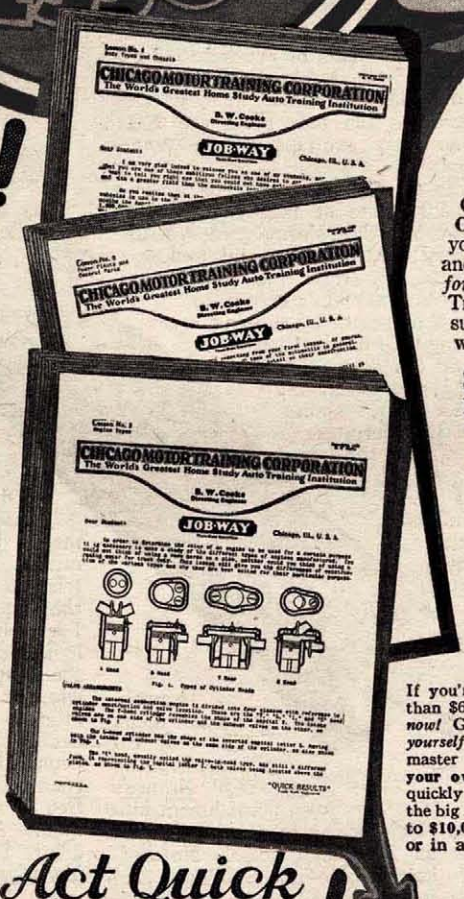

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NEVER SCOFF at a GHOST

By George William Wilder

HOW often have you heard people say "Ghosts? Nonsense! No such thing." "Who can believe that any but human beings of flesh and blood exist on this globe?" "There is no such thing as a haunt—and certainly no such thing as vengeance after death. This is a material world"?

Attend the case of Wizard Clip of West Virginia:

Long years ago, history states, in a little town in Jefferson County, West Virginia, a man lay dying. He was in the cabin of a neighbor, Adam Livingston. Death seemed inevitable, and Livingston did all in his power to relieve the physical suffering of his guest.

Came the dying man's request that Livingston get a spiritual adviser, a clergyman. Livingston refused.

The guest died, and from the time of that death, through many years that followed, a series of portentous events colored the life of Adam Livingston that only ended when he, himself—in terror and a nervous wreck—sought the aid of a recognized minister of the gospel and received what amounted to divine amelioration.

Shortly after the stranger's death, horses are said to have been heard circling the Livingston house, the steady *tread, tread* of their hoofs jarring the nerves of the inhabitants. Dishes pitched from their shelves and were broken; pieces of coal sprang from the fire; a barn burned down; heads were cut from chickens—all with no physical, human explanation.

Next came sounds of the grinding of shears as they clipped. Suits of clothes, hair from women's heads, shoes, curtains—all were clipped to shreds. This gave rise to the "Wizard Clip" as the name of the Livingston ghost.

Rumor declares that a woman, a skeptic, going to visit the Livingstons, had in the pocket of her dress a silk cap. She scoffed at the Livingston haunt—and when her cap was removed from her pocket, the cap was in shreds, plainly having been clipped. But no one ever saw the shears or the wielder of the cutting blades.

You never *saw* a ghost—you never *touched* a ghost—perhaps you never *heard* a ghost. But how can you say that they don't exist? Beware of scoffing! Beware—lest your clothes fall away in shreds, lest the haunt of horses' tramping hoofs wreck your peace. Beware—lest scoffing bring upon you shattered nerves, a restless spirit, a craving for peace that can be satisfied nowhere.

The SPECTER of the

When Smith was made Deputy Police Commissioner he never dreamed he would be thrown in touch with

By "John Smith"
As told to
Alan Van Hoesen

THERE are a few hoary-haired, retired policemen who once pounded the pavements of New York's Chinatown, and who haven't forgotten the ghost of Tsing Lai Low.

But if you encountered one of these and asked him for the story, he'd only wink knowingly, shrug—then walk away without replying.

As one of the leading actors in this thrilling drama, perhaps the weirdest that ever shook New York's yellow quarter— from the fan-tan rat holes behind the dingy shops to the stinking opium dives in the catacombs beneath the roadways and ramshackle tenements—I am able to tell the story—all of it. And it will be the first time the truth has ever appeared in print.

I must go back to early December, 19—, and, for the purpose of this tale—for particular reasons—I shall be "John Smith."

Six months previous, I had been appointed a Deputy Police Commissioner and assigned to direct the fight against the distribution of contraband narcotics in the Chinese district. This appointment came largely because of the fact that I had held a government post in China for a few years, and thereafter was supposed to possess an intimate knowledge of Celestials and their habits.

My Asiatic experience had taught me that the harder a white man tries to pry into the secrets of the Orient, the more he realizes they are beyond his ken, but, however, it didn't take me long to learn that opium, shipped from Germany and Turkey, was being smuggled into Chinatown in such quantities that the price had dropped from $150 a can, to $80.

Of course we arrested and tried to pump many of the known persistent smokers, the worst of the white and yellow driftwood. But, though we kept some of these in cells until they were half mad for a "drag at the dope," none would squeal. Also, though we uncovered and closed up a few of the joints, we never located sufficient of them to do any good. And we couldn't get a line on how the stuff was being smuggled in and who was distributing it.

FINALLY I decided that the contraband was being brought into the quarter in the early morning hours, when the streets were practically deserted and the uniformed and plain-clothes men on the night shift would be least watchful. I made a surprise trip there around three o'clock one morning and caught the men of the detail huddled in doorways beyond the sweep of the winter wind. I read the riot act. It's hard enough to catch a Chinese crook with everybody on the alert. With the police half asleep—good night! After that I made it my business to slip into Chinatown early each morning. The men were distinctly on their jobs. But all reported, "Nothing doing."

This went on for several days. Then came Sunday, December 16th. It was two o'clock in the morning in a raging snow storm when I swung from the Chatham Square "L" station. I had all but reached the upper west corner of the quarter, when a policeman whom I recognized as Clancy, a veteran of the section, came stumbling backward out of a tenement doorway, lunging out wildly with his club.

"What the ——" I began as he bumped into me. He turned with a jerk, and his hand went up in salute. I saw the man was badly frightened, for his eyes fairly bulged and his jaws twitched as he tried to speak.

"Come on, man. Be yourself," and I shook him roughly. "What's up?"

"God!" he gasped, then shot a frightened glance over his shoulder toward the entry, where the door stood open.

I felt certain Clancy wasn't doped or drunk. He was one of the old reliables of the force, and anything which had given him such a jolt must be decidedly unusual.

"I just had the scare of my life, Chief," he added shamefacedly, making an effort to recover his composure. "I never saw a ghost before. But if I didn't see one in there, just 'fore you came along, I'll be——"

"What are you driving at?"

"LISTEN, Chief. I'm telling you on the square. I was slipping along here looking for an unlocked door so's I could get in out of the storm for a few minutes. I stepped into the hall. I had just removed my coat to shake off the snow, when I heard a sound, and looked up. There was old Tsing Lai Low—standing on the stairs! You know, the fellow they call the 'wise one.' I nearly took a flop. Just as I was raising my club to give him a crack he suddenly pointed up, then—just disappeared into the air, right before my eyes and while the hall light was on him so's——"

"And you lost your head, eh?" I watched his expression closely. "You're certain——"

"I know what you're thinking, Chief. But I'm telling you straight. I've known old Tsing for more'n twenty years and couldn't be mistaken. But—well, I'll swear he didn't go up stairs. And you know he didn't pass you."

I was about convinced that for once Clancy had yielded to hard liquor in the hope of warming his blood and it had gone to his head. "We'll stop guessing and learn the truth," I replied sharply. "Tsing's flat is on the third floor. I've been there often. We'll go up there right now. Walk quietly. No good waking up the whole tenement and bringing half a hundred Chinks around us."

Obviously Clancy had seen something. No man, drunk or sober, could have so counterfeited the fear that he had shown. And he had not known of my presence when he came stumbling from the tenement, striking at nothing. But, though his story was too fanciful for me to swallow, I wanted to make certain of Tsing's safety. For I considered him a real friend. After I had established that fact, I would try to ascertain the foundation for the cop's hallucination. However, as my identity still was unknown to the riff-raff of the quarter and must remain so if I were

YELLOW Quarter

assigned to clean up trade in narcotics in Chinatown, some unseen world before his case could be settled

to accomplish anything, I cautioned him to say nothing.

As we rounded the head of the stairway and turned toward the front I thought I caught a low groan, as of some one in pain. A gasp behind me indicated that Clancy also had heard. It was with taut muscles and heart pounding that I hastened forward and grasped the door handle. To my surprise the door opened. But for a moment we stood rooted in our tracks as another groan, a sort of choking

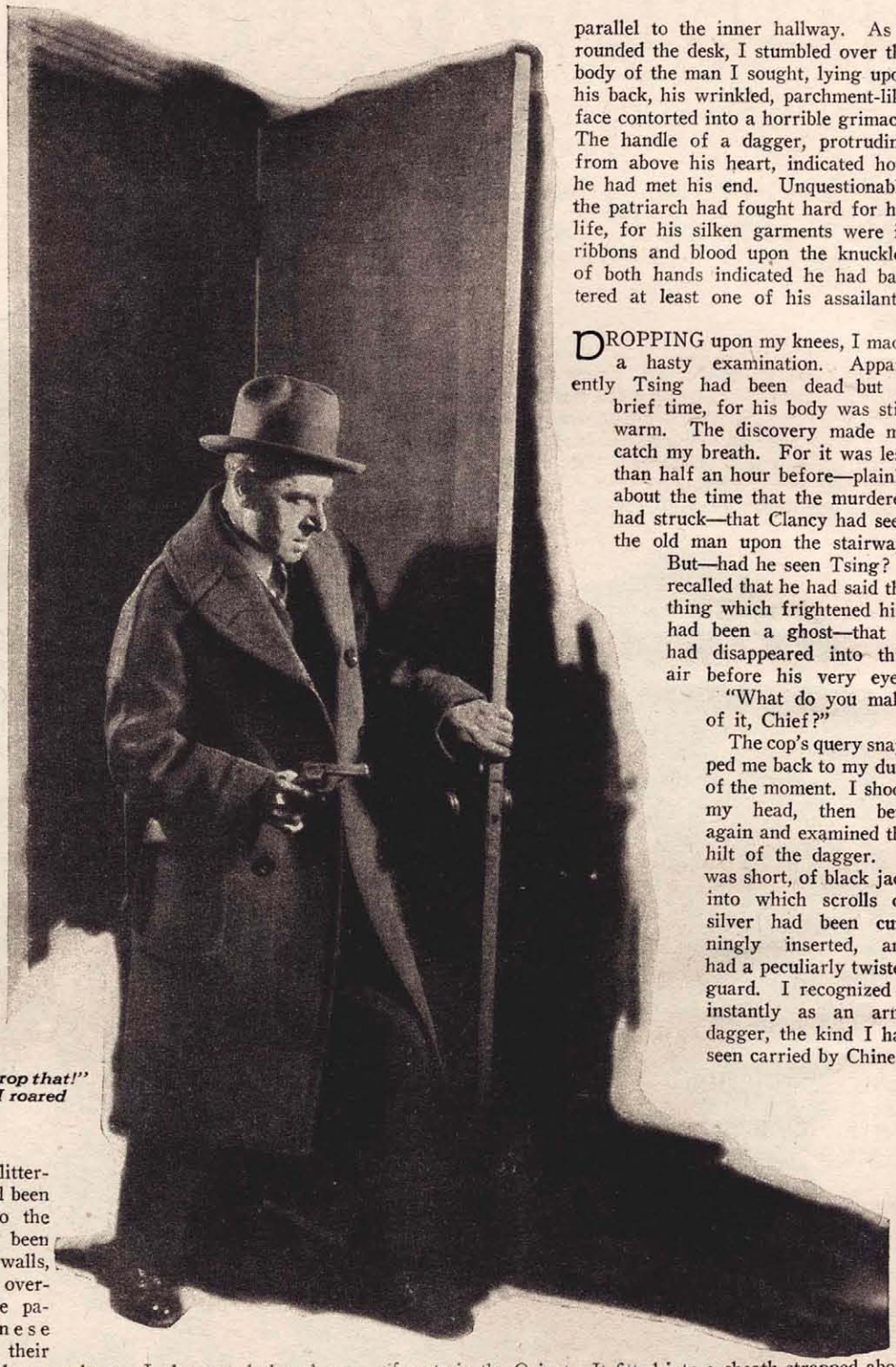
"I heard a sound, and looked up. There was old Tsing Lai Low—standing on the stairs"

some groan, but fainter. moan, came from somewhere in the darkness beyond.

I found the electric button and pressed it. Instantly the inner hallway sprang into light. Again we heard the fear-Jerking Clancy inside, I closed

the door without sound and snapped one of the several locks upon its inner side. Next, revolver in hand and followed closely by the policeman, I tiptoed to the far end, where heavy dragon-bedecked silk curtains hid the room beyond. This was a large room which I knew Tsing Lai Low used as a combination study and living quarters. I was glad to note a slit of light shining between the drapes.

The next instant I had flung them aside, and crossed the threshold, my weapon ready for action. What I saw, all but stunned me. The place, instead of being as I had last seen it—an orderly room, rich Oriental resplendent with hangings and tapestries, inlaid teakwood furniture and an assortment of costly ornaments from the shops of Tokyo's master craftsmen—was topsy-turvy and litter-strewn. Drawers had been pulled and tossed to the floor. Curtains had been rudely torn from the walls, chairs had been overturned. Innumerable papers showing Chinese characters upon their pages, were scattered everywhere. I also noted the gleam of coins, gold and silver, here and there upon the rugs.



"Drop that!" I roared

Only a large, jeweled Buddha on a gilded pedestal between the heavily screened front windows, appeared to be in its proper place.

But this chaos—obviously the work of vandals who had wrecked the wise man's quarters in a hasty and far-reaching search for something for which they had intruded—held me only momentarily. Everything suggested that something far more sinister had occurred. Then I recalled the groans. Perhaps they had come from Tsing.

Picking my way carefully, so as not to disturb anything, I moved toward the doorway leading to the rooms running parallel to the inner hallway. As I rounded the desk, I stumbled over the body of the man I sought, lying upon his back, his wrinkled, parchment-like face contorted into a horrible grimace. The handle of a dagger, protruding from above his heart, indicated how he had met his end. Unquestionably the patriarch had fought hard for his life, for his silken garments were in ribbons and blood upon the knuckles of both hands indicated he had battered at least one of his assailants.

DROPPING upon my knees, I made a hasty examination. Apparently Tsing had been dead but a brief time, for his body was still warm. The discovery made me catch my breath. For it was less than half an hour before—plainly about the time that the murderer had struck—that Clancy had seen the old man upon the stairway.

But—had he seen Tsing? I recalled that he had said the thing which frightened him had been a ghost—that it had disappeared into thin air before his very eyes.

"What do you make of it, Chief?"

The cop's query snapped me back to my duty of the moment. I shook my head, then bent again and examined the hilt of the dagger. It was short, of black jade into which scrolls of silver had been cunningly inserted, and had a peculiarly twisted guard. I recognized it instantly as an arm-dagger, the kind I had seen carried by Chinese of caste in the Orient. It fitted into a sheath strapped about the left arm near the elbow, where it was hidden by a flowing sleeve, but could be reached instantly with the right hand in case of emergencies.

To me the weapon established two things. First: Tsing had not been slain by a typical tong bravo. Such a killer would have used either an axe or a large caliber revolver. For, the tong murderer is a terrorist. He uses the more brutal weapons that all friends of the man slain may know that the assassination was part of an organization feud. Second: the old man was killed by a Chinese of one of the better castes, who had come to Tsing with certain demands, and had struck only when the other had refused

and attacked him. The quality of the knife told me that.

"Would you want to get Headquarters, sir?" queried Clancy, nodding toward a telephone instrument upon a taboret as I arose.

"Not yet. Things have been breaking too fast for me to think clearly. In the excitement I forgot there should be others here. Wait till I come back. Don't touch anything in the room."

The "others" who shared the place with Tsing Lai Low were Lee Poy, his aged servant, and his adopted daughter, Bow Ming, a beautiful Chinese girl of perhaps sixteen, whose existence in the quarter I believed was known to no other white man. By some means Tsing had smuggled her into New York about two years previous, and since then she had lived in the seclusion of his home.

I plunged into the room beyond, the sleeping quarters of the murdered man. The electric lights were burning. Though the coverings of the couch had been drawn back for the night, the orderly condition of the bed proved the old man had not slept there. And the fact that the couch and the other contents of the room had not been touched, indicated that the intruders either had been frightened away before completing their search for the mysterious something —or had located it in the study.

I SWUNG aside the curtains which I knew concealed the three small but luxuriously furnished rooms that Tsing had turned over to Bow Ming. The first two were lighted, and orderly. Then I came to the third, the girl's sleeping chamber. What I saw forced a sigh of mingled dread and relief. For, though she was not there and murdered, as I had feared, it was only too plain that she had been there recently and had been removed by violence. The bed clothing had been dragged to the floor, the garments she had discarded when disrobing lay scattered about an overturned chair and——

Then again came that tantalizing groan—but barely audible this time—from the rear, where Lee Poy cooked and slept. I found him, all but insensible, trussed and bleeding, lying in a corner into which he had been thrown by his assailants.

It required some minutes after I had removed the cords to bring him around sufficiently for him to recognize me. Then I helped him to a chair, gave him a drink and waited until he was able to stand, before questioning him.

His story was brief. He had been sleeping when aroused by a cry from the front. Rushing there, he had been overpowered by three natives who beat and bound him, then rushed him to the kitchen and hurled him into a corner, where he

(*Continued on page 92*)

Chino Joe stood over the cowering Bow Ming, a murderous-looking whip in his hand

Johnny Kelly's CHRISTMAS GHOST

By Antoinette Gregory
As related by
Edwin A. Goewey

THE tinkle of a tiny bell, shaken vigorously by a scarlet-coated Salvation Army Santa at the curb, echoed cheerily through the frosty air.

I stepped into the doorway of a little shop whose lights, peeping from behind panes festooned with greens and holly, shone out into the shabby thoroughfare.

For my numbed and tired limbs called for a moment or two of rest. Rest, beyond the reaches of the steadily falling snow which the wind from the not-distant river whipped into swirls before tossing it into drifts along the pavement. Rest, to recover a bit of energy to continue the gladsome task which had kept me on the move almost continuously since early morning.

For it was Christmas Eve, and I had spent the day distributing gifts and money among those of the great city's needy whom I knew personally.

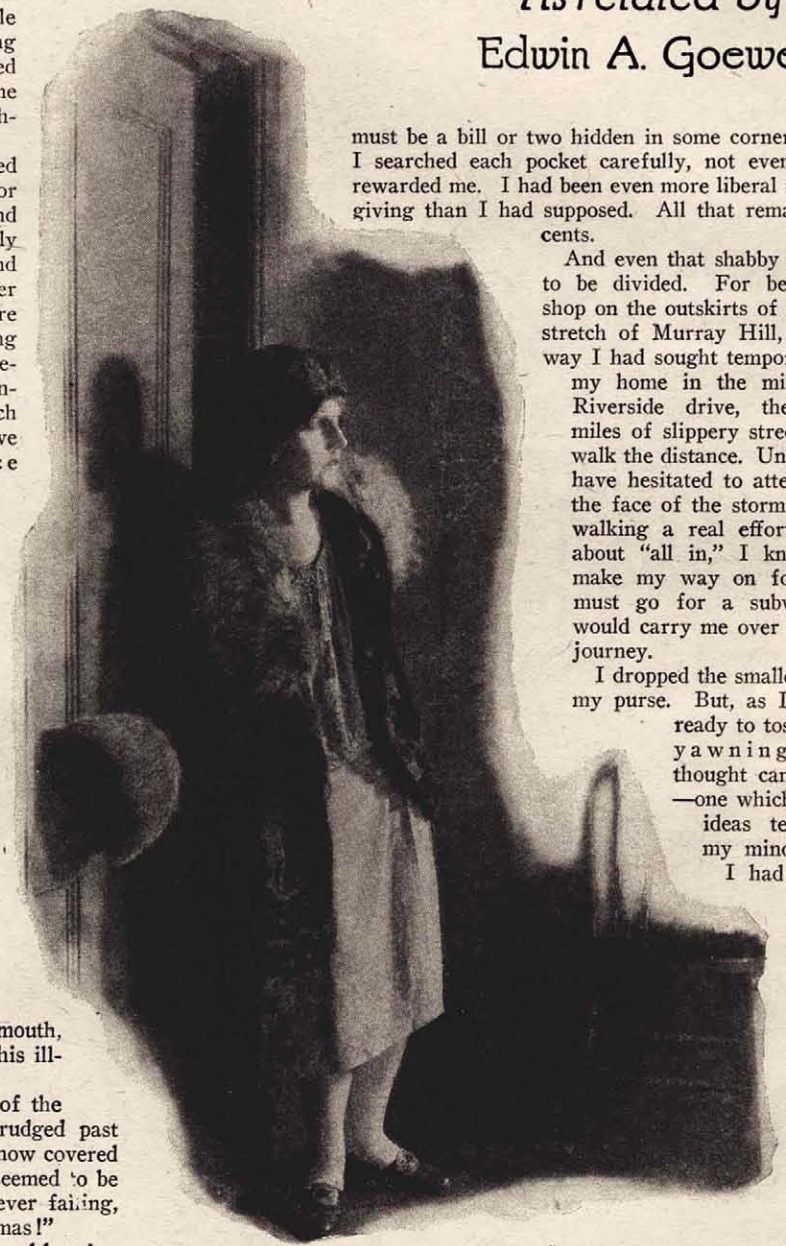
As I wiped the snow from my eyes and dusted it from the fur about my throat, the little bell again sent forth its merry clatter.

I looked at the counterfeit Santa who stamped energetically about his kettle to keep up circulation in his body. But no hint of his personal discomfort could be noted in his twinkling eyes, or his mouth, twisted into a grin behind his ill-fitting whiskers.

And, as one or another of the bundle laden crowd that trudged past him tossed a coin into the snow covered bottom of his kettle, there seemed to be music in the tone of his never failing, "Thank you! Merry Christmas!"

Anxious to do my bit toward keeping that particular pot boiling with a liberal contribution which would go toward providing a bumper Christmas dinner for the city's derelicts on the morrow, I opened my purse and reached deep with eager fingers. But I gasped a bit when they drew forth but two coins: a silver quarter and a nickel.

"Surely there must be some mistake," I thought. "There must be a bill or two hidden in some corner." But, though I searched each pocket carefully, not even a stray penny rewarded me. I had been even more liberal in my Christmas giving than I had supposed. All that remained was thirty cents.



And his features—somehow they appeared familiar

And even that shabby sum would have to be divided. For between the little shop on the outskirts of a tenement-lined stretch of Murray Hill, in whose doorway I had sought temporary shelter, and my home in the middle reaches of Riverside drive, there lay several miles of slippery streets. I could not walk the distance. Unfatigued I would have hesitated to attempt the hike in the face of the storm which made all walking a real effort. But, already about "all in," I knew I could not make my way on foot. The nickel must go for a subway ride which would carry me over a portion of my journey.

I dropped the smaller coin back into my purse. But, as I held the other, ready to toss it into Santa's yawning kettle, a new thought came to plague me—one which drove all other ideas temporarily from my mind.

I had not yet visited the Kelly tenement at the other end of Murray Hill. The little three-room flat in which lived the widow, Bridget Kelly, who eked out just sufficient by "day work" to maintain a home and feed and clothe herself and her five-year-old son, Johnny. What would Johnny think if I missed him?

Tears of vexation came to my eyes as I thought of them. For I was fond of Bridget, always hard working and uncomplaining. And of all my young friends, I loved Johnny

Little Johnny faces a lean Christmas, with no toys, no cheer, hardly enough food. Then, from some unseen world, comes——

most. For he was a manly fellow, ever planning and looking forward to the day when he would be old enough to "go to work and help Mother."

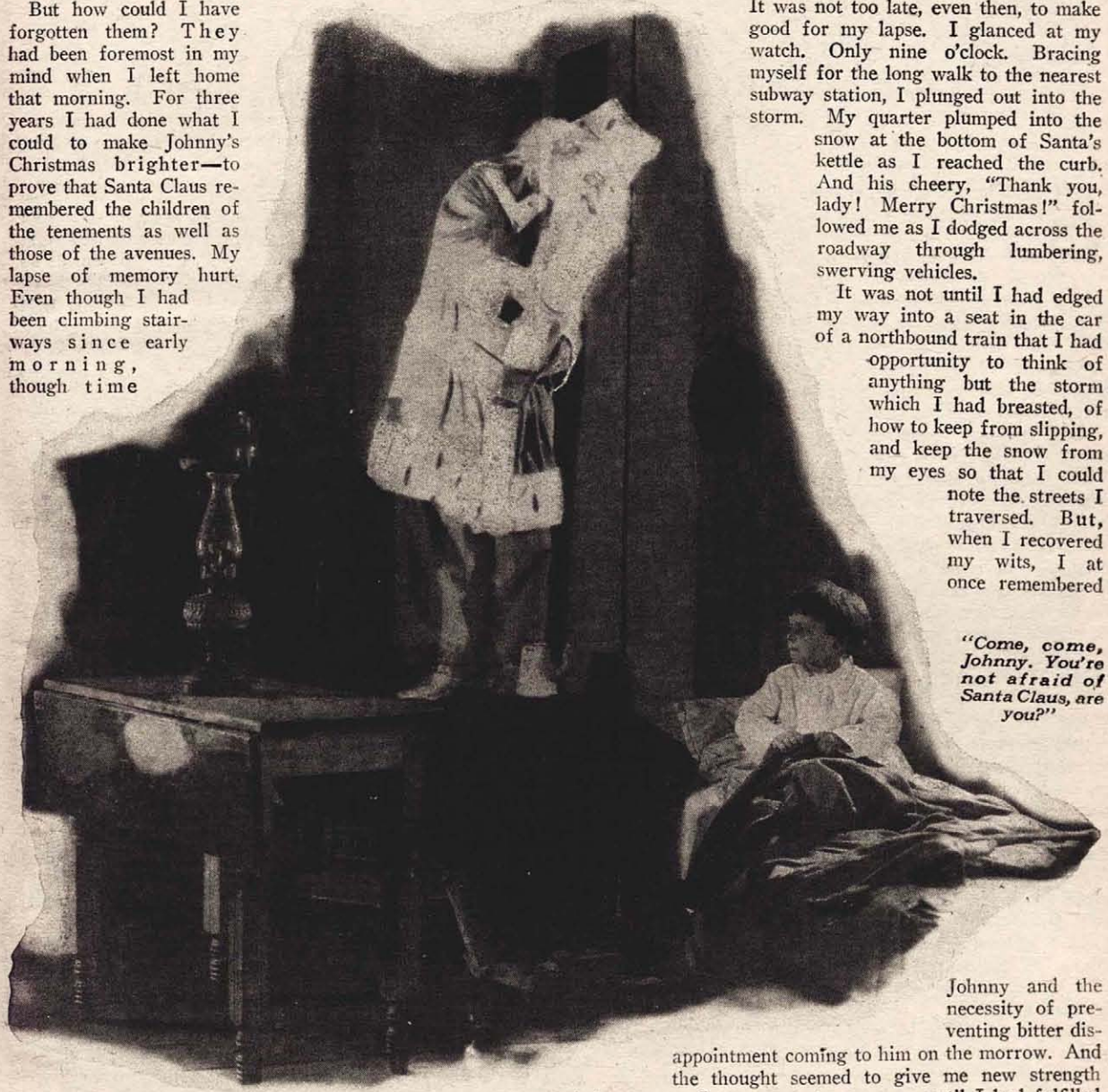
I would have given material help long ago—to both of them—but the proud Bridget would not permit. Kind words she welcomed. Charity she refused. She would continue to work and care for Johnny until he had been to school. And then——

But how could I have forgotten them? They had been foremost in my mind when I left home that morning. For three years I had done what I could to make Johnny's Christmas brighter—to prove that Santa Claus remembered the children of the tenements as well as those of the avenues. My lapse of memory hurt. Even though I had been climbing stairways since early morning, though time after time I had replenished my stock of toys and candy, though I had spent hours planning the distribution of gifts with wan and work-worn mothers, I should not have forgotten Johnny.

Then, as many times, since I first had become acquainted with Mrs. Kelly and her little son, I wished that, by some freak of chance, they could be placed in possession of a secret hoard of money I was certain that old house contained. Money which had been hidden there by a former owner. That cache probably would be sufficient to place the plucky widow and her boy beyond want for a long time.

But I put aside my wish in order that I might consider the more material need of the present. It was not too late, even then, to make good for my lapse. I glanced at my watch. Only nine o'clock. Bracing myself for the long walk to the nearest subway station, I plunged out into the storm. My quarter plumped into the snow at the bottom of Santa's kettle as I reached the curb. And his cheery, "Thank you, lady! Merry Christmas!" followed me as I dodged across the roadway through lumbering, swerving vehicles.

It was not until I had edged my way into a seat in the car of a northbound train that I had opportunity to think of anything but the storm which I had breasted, of how to keep from slipping, and keep the snow from my eyes so that I could note the streets I traversed. But, when I recovered my wits, I at once remembered Johnny and the necessity of preventing bitter disappointment coming to him on the morrow. And the thought seemed to give me new strength and courage. I was eager to carry on until I had fulfilled the task to which I had set myself.



"Come, come, Johnny. You're not afraid of Santa Claus, are you?"

Then, probably because of old associations connected with the tenement in which the Kellys lived, I recalled the first Christmas Eve I could remember. For it had been spent in the self same structure.

But things were so different then, (*Continued on page* 54)

"They Who Play With

If Jennings, distraught, nervous, worried, could have the spiritual advice given by his friend, then he never committed his ghastly crime

By Jim Kirkland — *Told to* Mark Mellen

"SAVE me, Kirkland, save me for the love of God!" said Ed Jennings when I had led him into my living room. "Don't let it get me, will you?" His deep bass voice now was so husky I could barely distinguish words.

"Sit down, man. Whatever is the matter with you? Take the big leather chair—that's right. Wait a second and I'll pour you a drink. Take it straight, or with a little——?"

"No—no! Don't leave me!" he cried, taking hold of my arm as I walked past him toward the cupboard in the dining room. "I—I can't bear to be alone."

"All right—as you wish. Have a cigar. They're right at your elbow, on the stand there. Match?"

Ed Jennings was my next door neighbor in Deauville, where detached frame houses and wide, spacious lawns and hedges were the rule. His house stood fifty feet or so from mine. Seeing him on the Commuters' Special of a morning regularly, and mowing his lawns of a Saturday afternoon, or comfortably reading his paper on his front porch of a Sunday morning, his wife at his side—I came to know a normal, contented business man of thirty-five or so, happily married, entirely satisfied with the placid routine that made up his little world.

IMAGINE my surprise, then, when he walked in on me like this—looking like the wreck of the man I had grown accustomed to see. His white collar, always spotless, stood up on one side, as if he had started to take it off and got only half-way finished with the job. His hair was rumpled and hung down over his eyes. He was in his vest and shirt-sleeves, and baggy carpet slippers covered his feet.

While I held the lighted match to his cigar, I did some rapid thinking. What could this mean? I knew the man only slightly, and as a dignified, steady fellow. To see him looking as he did, and in this upset state of mind—why, I might have a lunatic on my hands. Plainly, my best plan was to humor him—at least, until I could be on more familiar ground.

"Now tell me," I said, making my voice as calm and even as I could, "what is this that's pursuing you?"

"Why, it's a frightful, clawing monster—it's nothing. I really don't know what it is."

Instinctively I reached toward a pair of fire tongs that rested close at hand beside my fireplace. My impulse was self-protection, if, indeed, I had a madman to deal with. "Clawing monster—nothing! . . . ." Outwardly I smiled, and made myself appear cool and collected. But before I could frame a reply he went on:

"I've wanted to come over and have a talk with you Kirkland. But I just couldn't get myself to do it. Hang it! Why should a man thrust his troubles onto another? But tonight I felt so unstrung—so unnerved, I suddenly made up my mind to come. And here I am."

The man wasn't entirely irrational. Back of his wild appearance and jumpy condition, he retained all his faculties. There was a sort of sensitive consideration, too, for he knew he was at liberty to drop in on a solitary bachelor like me, any time he pleased. I saw now that my best move was to wait and see what was in his mind, then act accordingly.

"Kirkland, I know you are interested in spiritualism," he said. "I have tried every known way to rid myself of a bugbear that hounds me every minute I'm awake—which is nearly every minute I live. I've failed. And now I'm pinning my hopes in you."

I waited. Rapidly I went over in my mind, what he had said. It is true I hold to the beliefs of the church—sect, if you like—called Spiritualism. Yet I was at a loss to know just how that fact could be of use to Jennings. I didn't know what it was that troubled him. I didn't know whether or not I should propound the doctrines of my belief to him—narrate for him some of the demonstrations I had seen. I seemed to be at a complete loss.

A present and vital need, as I could plainly see, was to get the man in a calm frame of mind. While he talked, his hand had kept going to his head, his fingers combing through his hair. And instead of looking me in the face as he spoke, he would glance at me, then stare at the book-shelves across the room, quickly find the corner of the mantel behind me with a swift glance, then show the whites of his eyes in a nervous start as he focused his attention on me again. So, I took a safe tack and trusted to developments to guide me.

"Let me give you a viewpoint, old man," I said. "All life is spirit. Not material, understand. All that really lives is spirit. When you once realize that, you will find your affairs shifting around into natural grooves. Nothing much can worry you if you once understand that great fundamental truth. Even death will cease to terrify you. For, if all life is spirit, then life goes on after death. Come now, buck up! These worries of yours can't amount to much. All that really *is*, is spirit."

I COULD see I had caught his attention, for he kept his eyes on me steadily until I had finished. He didn't attempt to speak, not until he had given some thought to what I had said. Then he turned to me, a light of earnest zeal

SACRED Things—"

used sanely would have

"Get away from here! I never want to see you again"

brightening his face.

"You mean that a man will putter along with something on his mind, for months or years maybe, without settling his worry? But if he once got it into his head that all life is spirit, then he would stop worrying? He would keep his mind on the spiritual side of affairs, and be calm in his mind? Is that it?"

"Precisely." I was surprised that the man had caught my meaning so well.

He drifted into another few moments of thoughtful silence, and when he spoke again, I believed he had taken himself in hand. At that moment I little dreamed how far wrong my judgment of his condition was.

"Kirkland, there is no reason why I should force my personal history on you, but I'm going to. I want to because you seem so well able to help me. My trouble is all in my mind. It began about a year ago. It was at the time my wife began to ail and fret so unaccountably."

"And you think there is a connection between the two?"

"Undoubtedly. I wake up at night, and see her standing at the foot of my bed. She is crouching, ready to spring at me. Her face is distorted horribly, so that she seems like a creature who might have lived ten thousand years ago—on raw flesh, and in a cave. I start up, terrified, when I see her so—and when I get the courage to speak, or leave my bed to investigate, she disappears. Each time, for three times after this apparition has appeared, I have gone to my wife's room, and there I have found her peacefully asleep. On days following these visitations, I inquire cautiously how she has slept, and she gives me no sign that she was disturbed during the night."

"That's very strange," I said when he paused. I really was held fascinated by what he was telling me. Here was

a poltergeist, or an astral body demonstration, or maybe an example of thought transference, right next door to me!

"I say that my wife began to ail and fret about a year ago," he went on nervously. "She did. She is irritable with me, apparently for no reason. She doesn't like the cut of the clothes I wear. She says they should be less conservative, more showy. If I go out of an evening, I tell her I'll be home at eleven. I go nowhere without her except to the Civil Club in town, for a game of cards. But if I come home at eleven-fifteen, even at a quarter to eleven, she upbraids me for not keeping my word to the minute. She tells me out of a clear sky: 'I hate you! I don't know why I ever married you!' and ten minutes later she is putting her arms around my neck, and saying how sorry she is to have made such an outburst. Then each time she confesses to me, like a child, that she spoke as she did, because she was *in the grip of something*—forced to fly into a tantrum, because something compelled her to."

This was a serious matter. But I said nothing to Jennings, and nodded for him to continue.

"And she is losing weight, Kirkland. She is wasting away. And my nightmares go right on. Tonight I saw her standing at the door. She pointed her finger at me, and said: 'Get away from here! I never want to see you again!' And when I went into the house, I found her upstairs, reading. Her maid told me she hadn't left her room since lunch-time. And it was that experience which weighed on me until I came over here to talk to you tonight."

I was greatly interested, needless to say. I wanted to pry into Jennings' affairs, but I dare not. I didn't know the man well enough. It seemed to me there might be some natural reason why his wife was tired of him, and wanted to be rid of him. But I couldn't ask him that. And from what I knew, from observing the man, Jennings was an ideal husband. He went regularly to his work and made a fair income in the export business. I say fair, for he owned a house that couldn't be bought under twelve thousand, always dressed well, and dealt with the best provision stores in town. He rarely went out without his wife, as I knew.

"Have you seen a doctor about Mrs. Jennings?" I asked my distracted neighbor.

"No. She won't go. She says that slenderness and a thin face are the things for her type of beauty. That's the way she puts it. And when she has a temperamental outburst, she calls it 'upset nerves,' and lets it go at that. No, she won't see a doctor. And frankly, I'm worried lest she waste away. Why, she has gone down from a hundred and thirty to about a hundred, in the last year. If she keeps on she'll die, sure."

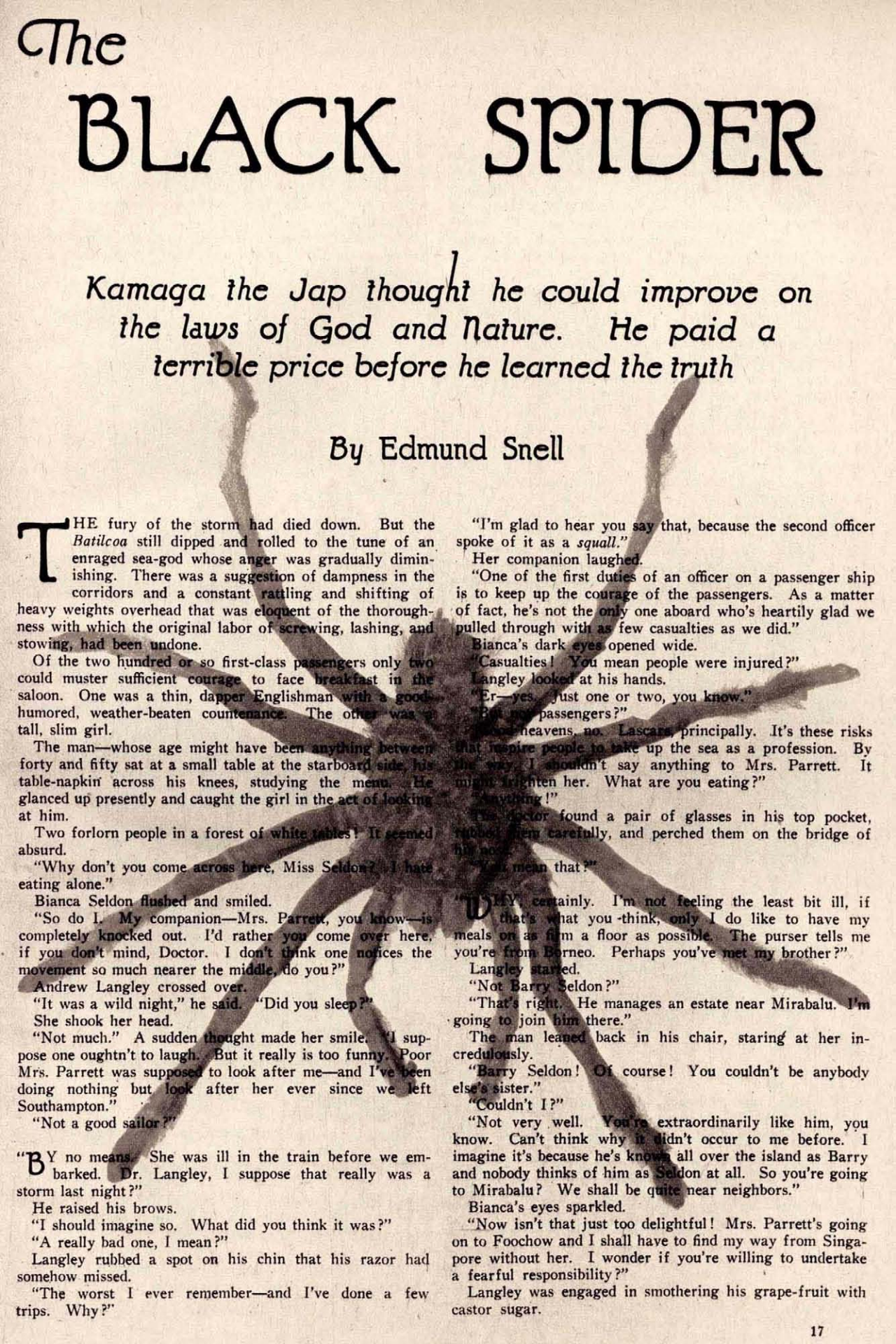
I was drawn to the man, and wanted to help him. But I couldn't see what specific thing I could say or do right then to relieve him of his worry. I could make a quiet investigation within the few days following, right enough, but what he needed was a friendly (*Continued on page* 88)

"All life is spirit—I can see it! I feel it! After death there is no worry—All is happiness!"

The BLACK SPIDER

Kamaga the Jap thought he could improve on the laws of God and Nature. He paid a terrible price before he learned the truth

By Edmund Snell



THE fury of the storm had died down. But the *Batilcoa* still dipped and rolled to the tune of an enraged sea-god whose anger was gradually diminishing. There was a suggestion of dampness in the corridors and a constant rattling and shifting of heavy weights overhead that was eloquent of the thoroughness with which the original labor of screwing, lashing, and stowing, had been undone.

Of the two hundred or so first-class passengers only two could muster sufficient courage to face breakfast in the saloon. One was a thin, dapper Englishman with a good-humored, weather-beaten countenance. The other was a tall, slim girl.

The man—whose age might have been anything between forty and fifty sat at a small table at the starboard side, his table-napkin across his knees, studying the menu. He glanced up presently and caught the girl in the act of looking at him.

Two forlorn people in a forest of white tables! It seemed absurd.

"Why don't you come across here, Miss Seldon? I hate eating alone."

Bianca Seldon flushed and smiled.

"So do I. My companion—Mrs. Parrett, you know—is completely knocked out. I'd rather you come over here, if you don't mind, Doctor. I don't think one notices the movement so much nearer the middle, do you?"

Andrew Langley crossed over.

"It was a wild night," he said. "Did you sleep?"

She shook her head.

"Not much." A sudden thought made her smile. "I suppose one oughtn't to laugh. But it really is too funny. Poor Mrs. Parrett was supposed to look after me—and I've been doing nothing but look after her ever since we left Southampton."

"Not a good sailor?"

"BY no means. She was ill in the train before we embarked. Dr. Langley, I suppose that really was a storm last night?"

He raised his brows.

"I should imagine so. What did you think it was?"

"A really bad one, I mean?"

Langley rubbed a spot on his chin that his razor had somehow missed.

"The worst I ever remember—and I've done a few trips. Why?"

"I'm glad to hear you say that, because the second officer spoke of it as a *squall*."

Her companion laughed.

"One of the first duties of an officer on a passenger ship is to keep up the courage of the passengers. As a matter of fact, he's not the only one aboard who's heartily glad we pulled through with as few casualties as we did."

Bianca's dark eyes opened wide.

"Casualties! You mean people were injured?"

Langley looked at his hands.

"Er—yes. Just one or two, you know."

"But not passengers?"

"Good heavens, no. Lascars principally. It's these risks that inspire people to take up the sea as a profession. By the way, I shouldn't say anything to Mrs. Parrett. It might frighten her. What are you eating?"

"Anything!"

The doctor found a pair of glasses in his top pocket, rubbed them carefully, and perched them on the bridge of his nose.

"You mean that?"

"WHY, certainly. I'm not feeling the least bit ill, if that's what you think, only I do like to have my meals on as firm a floor as possible. The purser tells me you're from Borneo. Perhaps you've met my brother?"

Langley started.

"Not Barry Seldon?"

"That's right. He manages an estate near Mirabalu. I'm going to join him there."

The man leaned back in his chair, staring at her incredulously.

"Barry Seldon! Of course! You couldn't be anybody else's sister."

"Couldn't I?"

"Not very well. You're extraordinarily like him, you know. Can't think why it didn't occur to me before. I imagine it's because he's known all over the island as Barry and nobody thinks of him as Seldon at all. So you're going to Mirabalu? We shall be quite near neighbors."

Bianca's eyes sparkled.

"Now isn't that just too delightful! Mrs. Parrett's going on to Foochow and I shall have to find my way from Singapore without her. I wonder if you're willing to undertake a fearful responsibility?"

Langley was engaged in smothering his grape-fruit with castor sugar.

"'Fearful responsibility?' Just what do you mean?"

"Taking charge of me from Singapore to Mirabalu."

The doctor relinquished his spoon and sat up.

"I shall be delighted, of course."

"Then that's settled. What an idiot Barry was not to tell me you were coming by this boat. It would have saved such a lot of trouble."

"Barry didn't know. I was due back a month ago, but managed to get my leave extended." He surveyed her doubtfully. "I don't know that you're going to be altogether satisfied with this arrangement. I have no small talk and my dancing is execrable."

"You can tell me all about Mirabalu," suggested Bianca hopefully."

"IN about half-a-dozen sentences. Mirabalu is a wilderness populated by half-baked niggers and Chinese coolies, with about seven white men to look after them. There's not another white woman for fifteen miles."

The girl laughed.

"What a charming description! If it's really as bad as you try to make out, why does anybody live there at all?"

"That is a question which invariably crops up at about the fourth whisky. The queer thing is that nobody's ever been able to answer it. Whenever a chap goes on leave he takes a fond and final farewell of his friends, murmurs something vague about influence and a comfortable job at home—and drifts back to the same old area as soon as ever his time is up."

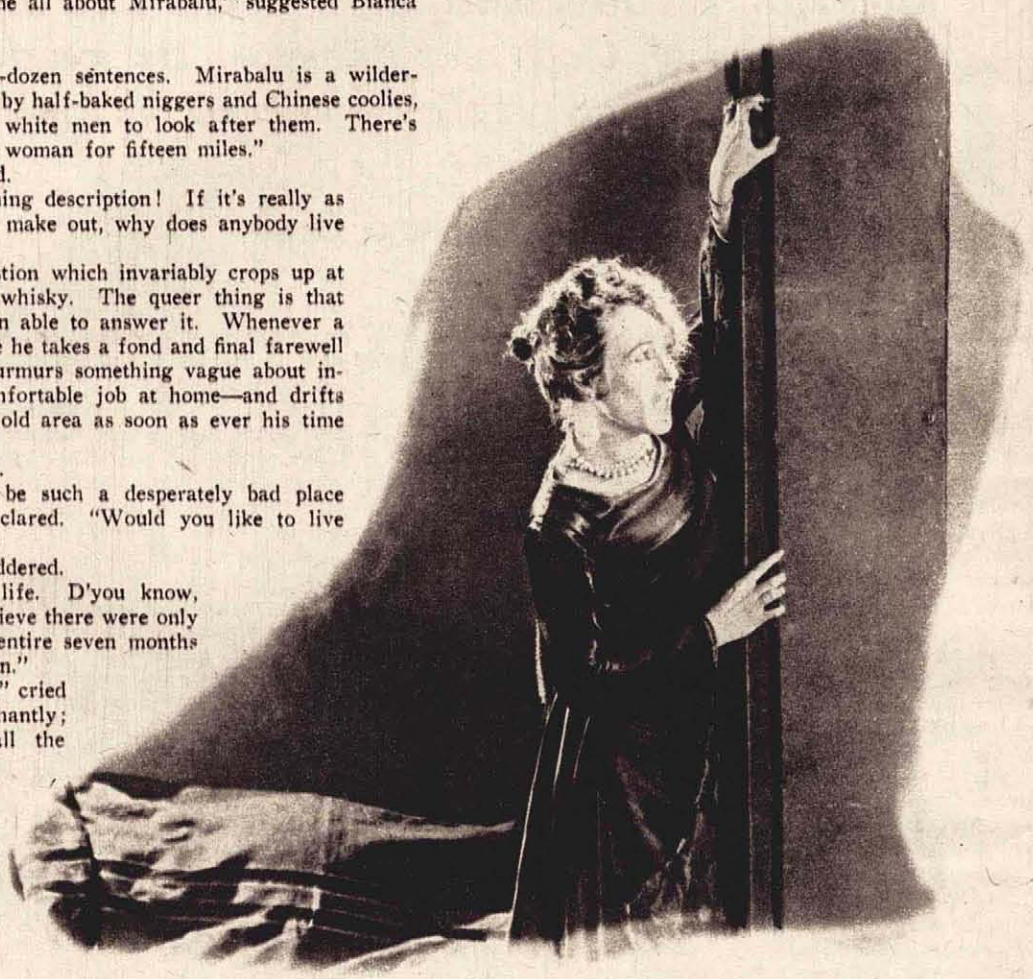
Bianca frowned.

"Then it can't be such a desperately bad place after all," she declared. "Would you like to live in England?"

The doctor shuddered.

"Not on your life. D'you know, Miss Seldon, I believe there were only nine days in the entire seven months when it didn't rain."

"There you are," cried Bianca triumphantly; "you men are all the same. You drink more than is good for you, develop liver trouble, and distort your outlook on life. Really and truly, I expect Mirabula is a delightful spot, with glorious views and any amount of amusement to be had if one only takes the trouble to look for it."



Langley smiled.

"You'll find out soon enough."

"I suppose I shall. Anyhow I've fully made up my mind to enjoy myself."

"You'll be bitten to death," said the doctor.

"I don't care. Barry says you get over that."

"You'll be eternally pestered by a mob of disorderly young ruffians, each with a proposal of marriage in the back of his mind."

"I shall like that."

"And you'll be very unwise if you accept any of 'em, because your brother's bungalow is the very best in the neighborhood; the only one, in fact, with glass windows." He chuckled to himself and moved to one side to allow the steward to take his plate. "You'll like Mirabalu, the life, the views, everything. Presently you'll be bored to extinction—and then you'll like it so much that you won't want to leave it at all. Mirabalu's an acquired taste, but once acquired it sticks to you like a leech until—"

"I see," said Bianca thoughtfully; "but you didn't want to let me down too lightly at first. I suppose that's the line you take in your profession. You swoop down upon your unfortunate patient, send him to bed, terrify him with an endless list of probable complications, until the poor wretch feels so utterly grateful to you for saving him from such terrors that he cheerfully sends an enormous cheque by return mail!"

The purser's steward, entering suddenly, stared around the saloon until his eye fell upon Langley. He came across to the table.

"Excuse me, sir, but Dr. Murphy sends his compliments and would like to see you in the cabin."

The doctor glanced up sharply.

"Oh?—what's the trouble?"

"I don't know exactly, sir. I think he's got his hands pretty full."

"Want's help, eh?"

"That's my opinion, sir."

Bianca, who had been trying to see out of a port-hole, touched Langley's arm.

"I believe we've stopped," she declared.

"BEEN stopped this half-hour, Miss," said the steward. "Our wireless carried away in the storm last night and we haven't been able to pick up calls. They've just brought aboard a fellow who was tied to some boards. The chief steward thinks he's Japanese, possibly washed overboard from the ship we passed yesterday afternoon. He was fully dressed, with a small box strapped to his waist. I saw him when they got him up."

"Is he still alive?" interposed the doctor.

"I believe so, sir; but he's in a bad way. Must have been in the water for hours."

"Very well. I'll come along now. You'll excuse me, Miss Seldon, won't you?"

"Why, of course. Isn't there some way in which I could help?"

Langley shook his head.

"There are plenty of stewardesses," he reminded her; "besides, you may have to look after your friend."

"No," said Bianca; "they won't let me. Do send for me if you're short-handed."

"We're short-handed right enough," put in the steward. "All the staff that aren't sick themselves are up to their eyes in it. There's hardly a bit of china left in the kitchens—and how we're going to serve dinner tonight I don't know."

"We'll be in Colombo tomorrow," said the doctor grimly, "and nobody's likely to want much dinner before then! Let's see—which way do we go?"

AS he made his way down the corridor at the steward's heels, it occurred to him that Bianca Seldon was going to be something in the nature of a disturbing influence in Mirabalu. For one thing, she displayed an enormous amount of character for a girl of her age, and for another, she was a great deal too good-looking. For all his morbid description of the place where he lived and worked, he knew Mirabalu as a colony that was essentially masculine—masculine in its outlook, its amusements, and its excesses.

There was not a more amiable group of men to be found anywhere, and why Barry Seldon had been such an unmitigated ass as to bring his sister out there, Langley didn't know. He wasn't in the least sorry for Bianca, for she could look after herself and was bound in any case to have a tolerably good time—but he was mortally sorry for Mirabalu. For some reason or other he was feeling depressed that morning and was prone to regard Bianca in Mirabalu, and a bottle of fire-water in a camp of Indians, as one and the same thing. They had been perfectly all right up to now. But—when she arrived——

He found the ship's doctor in his shirt-sleeves. He was a fat, broad-featured man, with a Belfast accent, and dark lines under his eyes which betrayed that he had been up all night.

"I hate to trouble you again, Doctor——" he began; but Langley cut him short.

"Trouble be damned, Murphy! If you had had the nerve to attempt to carry on without me I should have been mortally offended. What do you want me to do?"

"Have you had breakfast?"

"I've had enough to carry me along, thanks. I don't mind betting you haven't had a bite yourself!"

"Right—but I'm going to now. I wish you'd take that poor devil of a Jap off my hands for a bit. The steward here will show you where he is. I tell you, Doctor, I never want another night like this. I've had eight more fresh cases through my hands since you turned in and I don't think one of 'em will live."

Langley dropped a hand lightly on Murphy's shoulder.

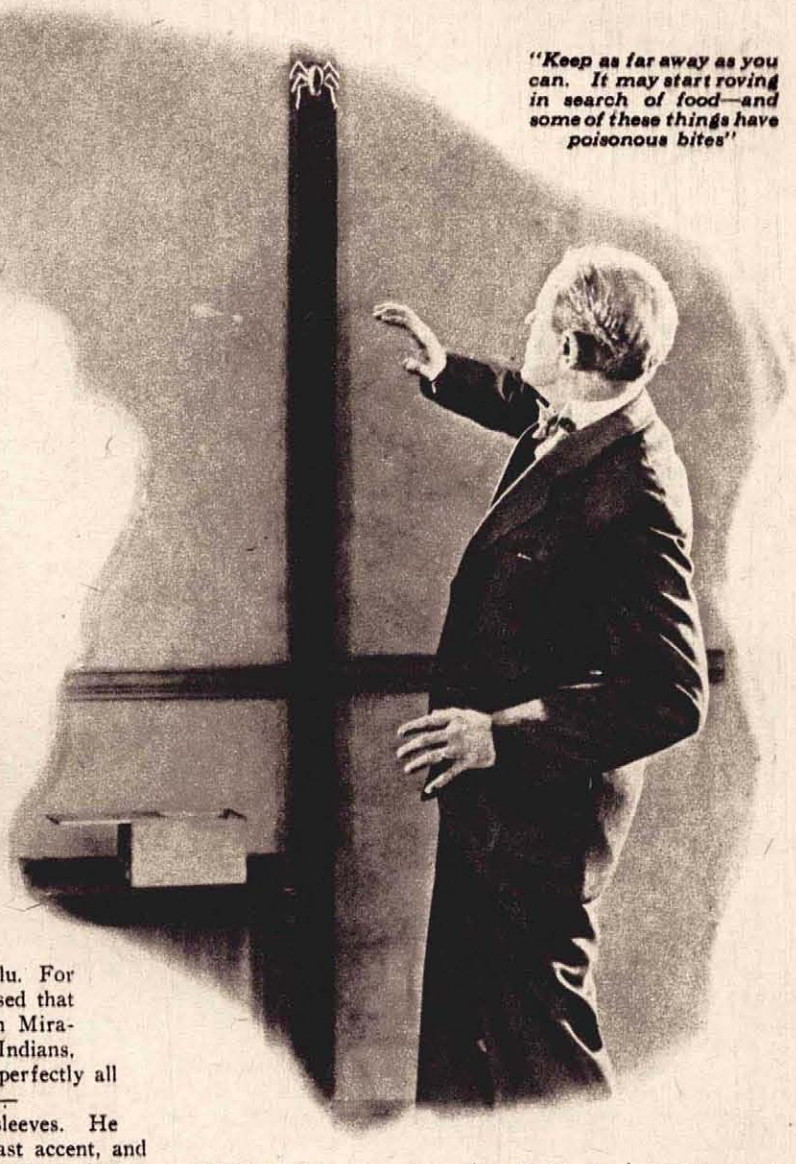
"Get some food into you and try and close your eyes for a spell."

A patch of green water obscured the port-hole and receded again, revealing a stretch of blue sky.

"We're getting into clear weather again," said Murphy.

"That's something to be thankful for. Well, cheerio! I'll be getting along to see my man."

He found his patient in a spare, second-class cabin. A man in a white coat rose as he came in.



"Keep as far away as you can. It may start roving in search of food—and some of these things have poisonous bites"

"Did Dr. Murphy put you here?" Langley asked.

"Yes, sir."

The man moved aside so as to allow Langley to come close to the berth.

"How is he?"

"Pretty queer, sir. He's in a high fever now, and keeps talking, first in Japanese and then in English."

The doctor bent down.

"It'd be a pity to let him slip through our fingers—after all he's gone through." He glanced at a chart, fixed to the wall by a couple of pins. "You've been up all night, too, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Anybody about who can relieve you?"

"No, sir. Dr. Murphy told me I'd have to hang on for a bit longer."

(*Continued on page* 83)

The Woman with TWO SOULS

By Allan Gordon

Narrated by J. Paul Suter

"DOCTOR," I said—and I must have been crazy to talk like that to the man; "if you don't save her, I'll get you. I'm not fooling, Doctor. You can hide where you please, but it won't do you any good. I'll find you. I'll get you. You'd better save her, Doctor!"

I suppose doctors become accustomed to such grief-crazed lunatics as I was then. The name of this one has escaped me. He was a large, calm man, slow of speech and with a trick of smiling quietly behind his thoughtful frown. I had told the people at the hospital to find the best surgeon in the city, regardless of the cost, and this was the chap they had routed out of bed at two in the morning. He put a broad hand on my shoulder, peered intently into my face for a moment, then backed me into a comfortable arm chair, as easily as I could have handled a child.

"Sit there," he commanded me, without a trace of resentment in his voice. "You've been through a good deal tonight. I know what it means." He paused, and his deep tones sank to a whisper. "I lost my own daughter, last year. If there is any hope, at all, your agitation will lessen it. Control yourself, man! Look at that girl, there! Don't you think she feels it, too? Yet there hasn't been a word out of her."

I glanced about the room as he released me, with something more of sanity in my mind than had been there for the last hour. Just the three of us were in the room, beside the doctor and the nurse. Sally, on the bed, was like wax, and I could not see that she breathed. Norma, her twin, sitting stiffly on a chair at the farther side, seemed as still as her dying sister—as still, and nearly as pale. She gazed steadfastly at the face on the pillows, and the resemblance between them was so complete, so perfect even to the last detail of delicately chiseled nose and sweet, sensitive mouth, that she might have been looking into a mirror. And there was I, their father, and also their manager.

You have heard of the Gordon Twins? Perhaps you have seen them? They were twenty-two, no more, when this happened, yet they had danced their way around the world. Most of the European courts, and many Oriental throne rooms had applauded them. Could you come to my home some day, I could show you six books full of clippings—newspaper and magazine notices, write-ups in theatrical journals—no harsh words, but only praise, praise, praise. And they merited it all. I, their father, should know. Please forgive an old man's vanity in speaking of this.

I WAS their teacher before they acquired such skill that I could also be their manager. Did they learn first to walk or to dance? I can't remember. They were with me on the stage when they were four, and to me it was as if the spirit of their mother, who died in giving them birth, had been dancing. They were her image, and the image of each other. She, too, was a dancer. I have thought, at times, that her soul passed to them when she died, so that they were bound to each other by a stronger tie than other twins are. But you shall judge for yourself.

Of the last hurrying motor ride between cities through the darkness, I need not speak, save to tell its end. A sharp turn of the road, hidden by the blackness of the heavy night until we were fairly upon it—a missing signal of warning—to the left, a culvert—to the right, the road and safety. Our speeding chauffeur swerved too late, and paid for the error instantly, with his life. Norma and I were miraculously uninjured, not even rendered unconscious by the shock. But Sally . . . . When the distinguished surgeon had examined her, his verdict was short and terrible:

"To operate now would kill her. If she gains a little strength, then I will operate."

"But will she live, Doctor—will she live?" I demanded, fiercely.

"Do you believe in God?" was his reply, and when I nodded——"Then pray!"

That was when I threatened him, frantically. But it was only some shallow surface layer of me which uttered the threats. Deep in my heart I knew that this surgeon, as eminent in his profession as my twins were in theirs, would not surrender while life remained. But I had seen enough of hospitals to know something else, and I think it was this knowledge which made me desperate.

HERE were two of us in the little room who need not have been admitted. No one really was needed there except the doctor. Had there been any hope, Norma and I would have waited in the hall. The fact that we were there, unchallenged by the surgeon, proved that Death, too, stood by—Death, who withheld his hand through the few minutes during which we hoped and prayed . . . . then struck.

Only a second or two before the end, consciousness returned to Sally, and she looked, not at me nor at the vigilant, hovering doctor, but into her sister's eyes. I saw them meet—those two pairs of blue eyes. The glance of understanding which passed between them was so definite, so palpable that it seemed almost a material thing.

"What did she say to you, Norma?" I demanded, almost at the instant that the surgeon bowed his head.

My other daughter—the only child I had left now—looked at me, but did not answer. It was the doctor, instead, who spoke, to the nurse:

"Have them arrange for connecting rooms at a hotel," he directed. "A taxi, too." He hesitated, and glanced inquiringly at me: "Or, if you prefer, you can both have beds here. The accident has left you both uninjured, but the shock——"

Before I could decide, Norma took the thing out of my hands, speaking for the first time since the accident:

"We will go to the hotel," she said, quietly, but in a voice from which all color, all intonation, had fled. Then she walked slowly from the room, with no backward glance, I following mechanically. For the time, her will had assumed dominance. I was dumb, unable to think.

I climbed into the taxi beside her. I had no word for anyone—none even for my old friend, Bertolli, manager of the theatre in which we were to have danced the next night,

Surely death does not check the growth of a soul so beautiful as Sally Gordon's—and yet——

who awaited us with bowed head at the hotel. Bertolli had arranged for the accommodations. No detail remained undone. I looked into his dark eyes filled with tears, his kindly, rugged face, and looked away again. But Norma went to him, and said something, rapidly and earnestly.

Bertolli started violently. I could catch neither his words nor hers, but I thought—as far as thought was possible for me—that he seemed incredulous, almost frightened. Norma was demanding something. He was protesting. She had her way, however, for I saw him nod and shrug his shoulders, then walk rapidly from the hotel.

When she returned to me, her delicate face was as set and devoid of expression as that of a marble statue. She followed the deeply concerned clerk, who himself showed us to our rooms, and I followed her.

So much had happened to me in those last few hours, cutting my very soul to ribbons, that I no longer had the power to feel deeply. I expected to lie awake, but it was not so. I had hardly said goodnight to Norma and staggered back into my own room, leaving the door of her room ajar, when complete and utter weariness took possession of my frame. The bed was soft and inviting. I flung myself upon it, without having undressed, and was soon asleep.

"But will she live, Doctor—will she live?" I demanded fiercely

But before sleep engulfed me, I thought of Norma, as she had kissed me goodnight—her beautiful face still cold and stiff like marble, her voice hardly louder than silence itself. She was numb, too. I remember being thankful for that, and wondering vaguely what terrible pangs would come, when feeling returned to us.

One other thing I wondered about. What message was it that had passed between Norma and her sister—at the last? It was this thought that hovered insistently before my mind, just before I sank into unconsciousness.

Suddenly, I was forced back from oblivion. Someone had spoken. The voice fell on my ear like the tinkle of a bell, soft and musical, yet so commanding that even my deep sleep was shattered. I sat up. The lights were still on, as I had left them. Norma stood beside my bed.

She was dressed in the black velvet suit of a page boy. I knew the costume well. Our act had always begun with the girls clad as pages, and their first dance in the soft, closely fitting velvet, was the keynote for all that followed. Some of their other dances were more difficult, or more startling, but none exceeded that first one in grace. For convenience, they had always left our hotel clad in their page costumes, covered by long cloaks, though all the other clothes for the act were laid out for them with the theater properties.

"Are you ready, Father?" she said, quietly.

"For what?" I demanded, in bewilderment.

"For the act. I'm afraid we're a little late. Isn't it lucky that Bertolli's theater is only a few steps from the hotel? He's going to have things all ready for us, Father. I spoke to him, and he promised. Ours is the only act to-night, you know."

I stared at her, in utter dismay. So this was how feeling had returned! She thought—oh, my God, she thought the two of them were to dance together, as usual. What could

I do? Should I remind her of the truth, or should I humor her? Yet how *could* I humor her? Perhaps if I took her to the theatre and danced with her myself. . . .

"You talked with Bertolli——" I began, feeling blindly for a way out; and to my amazement she laughed—her old, tinkling laugh.

"YOU know I did, Father—you saw us. Mr. Bertolli promised to be there himself. Oh, I believe I forgot to tell you! I forgot to tell my poor old padre, so he went to sleep while I was changing my clothes!" She patted my shoulder, then threw both arms around my neck and kissed me. "I'm sorry, Father—poor, tired Father! But you'll take me over to the theatre, won't you, and watch me through the act?"

Stiffly, I led the way to the door. It was about four o'clock in the morning. The hotel attaches who saw us pass down the stairs to the lower hall and thence to the street, must have eyed us with wonder.

As for myself, I saw only the slender girl in the long cloak, walking silently by my side. Somewhere I had learned that when the mind has reached the limit of endurance—when it totters on the brink, with black insanity ahead—all that it does must be accepted as a matter of course, if the reason is to be saved. Though I was not able to think clearly that night, this idea must have possessed me, for I took her through the deserted streets to the theater that night quite as I might have done at any other time.

Bertolli's theater, like its proprietor, was one of my oldest friends. Its associations reached far back into my own dancing days. It was Bertolli whose strong, quiet sympathy, never intrusive but always to be relied on, had helped me through the time of bereavement when my little girls were born—at the cost of their mother's life. As children, they had danced upon his stage, and his shrewd eye had detected faults for me to correct before they grew into habits.

Many times since, the old theater had welcomed their tripping feet, and had echoed back the applause of forgotten audiences. Though fate had meted tragedy to us, she had not cast our first bitter moments among strangers. Bertolli was my friend, and a friend of wonderful insight. Since my girl had spoken to him of this strange freak of her mind, I felt he would understand. He would help me save her reason.

I was not surprised when the old man met us at the stage entrance. He had been waiting.

"You still wish to dance, *cara mia?*" he asked Norma, softly. "Then you will find all as it should be. The stage is set. In your dressing room are the costumes, as usual. At other theaters you did your own unpacking, maybe, but Bertolli always arranged everything—you remember? And you, my old friend," he said, kissing me on the cheek, after the Italian fashion. "—she will need your help in putting on the costumes. I will sit in the audience. To-night, I *am* the audience!"

I caught his meaning, when he referred to Norma's needing my help. The girls had helped each other into their more elaborate costumes. That saved time for both. I followed Norma down the dimly lighted passage-way to the dressing room. But she stopped me at the door. Her blue eyes, wide and inscrutable like those of a sleep walker, looked into mine, and she smiled.

"I shan't need your help, Father. Sit with Mr. Bertolli."

THAT night, she was in command. I could do nothing but obey. My old friend, just behind, threw an arm affectionately over my shoulder.

"A rehearsal in a darkened house!" he said, making an effort to laugh. "It will be like that. We shall sit quite near the front. I think that will be better. If she sees with her mind a house full of people, clapping, stamping with their feet—bravo!—you and I, we shall not spoil the picture. Come!"

As we crossed the stage and descended by the little flight of steps at the side, I glanced about. Bertolli had done his part, indeed. The stage was set for our act, just as he had set it many times before. Deep red curtains hung in the background, undulating even now with the ripple of wind that sighed through the empty theater. In my day, I had used black hangings, but years before, Norma and Sally had suggested red. They were right. There was more of mystery in the warm, red shadows.

I cried out, and tried to rise, but Bertolli's iron hand held me down

When they stepped from the large frame—like a picture frame—in which they were discovered when the curtain rose, a quiver always went through the audience. It was caused partly by their grace; but also, I think—though the very people through whom the thrill was passing would not

have guessed that—by black velvet merging into red, softly, inexplicably, yet always to be distinguished by the eye—so carefully chosen was the shade of red.

The frame was there now, shielded by curtains across its front, which could be drawn aside with the pressure of a spring by the dancers within. I choked at sight of it. Something of the spell which had held me in its grip since we left the hospital was dissipated, and I might have broken down entirely, had not Bertolli seized my arm with an imperative, "Come!"

Mechanically, I went with him, across the orchestra pit, thence into the aisle. He was careful not to release me again. I saw him glance sharply into my face, once or twice, as if to read my thoughts. When we were seated, there came a tense silence before he spoke.

"Old friend, her mind is at stake!" he whispered, grimly. "Do not ask how I know; I cannot tell you. I see beneath the surface in things like this. I have vision which others have not. It is her mind, I tell you—her mind! If this shock is great for you—a strong man—think what it means to her. To-night, I hope, by doing just as she says—by humoring her—we shall keep her sane."

I looked at him, dumbly. Often, when with him, I had felt the truth about himself which he now put into words. Certain things hidden to other men were revealed to him. But I have always been practical. Even now a commonplace objection came to me, and I told him of it. The act was arranged for two dancers. Throughout, it was a poetry of give and take, in which the actors at once opposed and helped each other. I could not see how even Norma could go through it alone. But Bertolli shook his head, and in the dim light his seamed face softened in a comforting smile.

"Have no fear for that, my friend. This that she does to-night is not an exhibition of your art. If she satisfies herself with her dancing, that suffices. She will be saved."

A SOFT quiver passed along the curtains which hid the little stage within the frame. I felt that Norma had entered. I started and leaned forward. Bertolli's firm hand gripped my knee for an instant. "Steady!" he whispered—and the curtains parted.

"Dio mio!" His heavy voice choked with a kind of a sob, but I was not watching him. Norma stood within the frame. Rather, I should say she hovered within it, clad in her velvet page costume, poised so lightly upon her toes that she hardly seemed to touch the miniature stage beneath. Her lithe body arched forward, one arm outstretched. She was smiling; and as the significance of that smile sank into my dazed mind, I, too, sobbed. For it was thus she had always been posed at the beginning of the act, but her hand, now lightly proffered into vacancy, had then grasped another hand, and she had smiled into the up-tilted face of her sister, who had knelt gracefully on one knee and returned her gaze.

My little girl was supported by a ghost figure—the figure of Sally!

"She is going to do the double dance!" I exclaimed, in an amazed whisper.

"Dio mio! Merciful God!" answered Bertolli, crossing himself.

THE dance began—— She tripped lightly from the frame to the stage of the theater, and bowed—a long, sweeping bow, directed toward vacancy. In that first dance, the girls had touched only their finger tips, approaching each other and retreating, gliding one about the other as lightly as thistle down, held together by but one bond—the steadfast gaze of their blue eyes. Norma's eyes were steadfast now. They did not waver from the place where her sister would have been. They smiled at nothingness, while she pirouetted and bowed. Her fingers touched nothingness with as much certainty, it seemed, as they had ever met the tips of fingers they should never meet again.

At the finish of the dance, she opened both arms wide with a gesture of invitation. That gesture had been the signal for Sally's retreat to the (*Continued on page* 51)

Can the SPIRITS of the DEAD

If you sit before a camera to have your picture taken, possibly hovering around you, can be impressed on Don't scoff until

By Samri Frikell

THE most persistent mystery in all spiritualism is the riddle of the haunted cameras.

Can we photograph ghosts?

In spite of the repeated and authoritative efforts to show up the whole business as a sham and a fraud—which most of it certainly is—the thing will not down. As fast as one medium is caught at a new trick, another scientist of indisputable respectability comes forward with evidence which cannot be blown away with the breath of contempt.

On the face of it, the thing seems to be absurd. How can any sensible human being, in his right mind, come to believe that phantoms of the dead, invisible to the naked eye, can become visible, present and evident, on a photographic plate? By what process of reasoning can men and women, otherwise normal in all their ways of thinking, accept such a fantastic idea? That is the natural reaction of anyone who hears about spirit photography for the first time.

Yet a little examination into the subject will make the matter clearer to him. He may be a greater skeptic than ever, but he will certainly be puzzled and amazed.

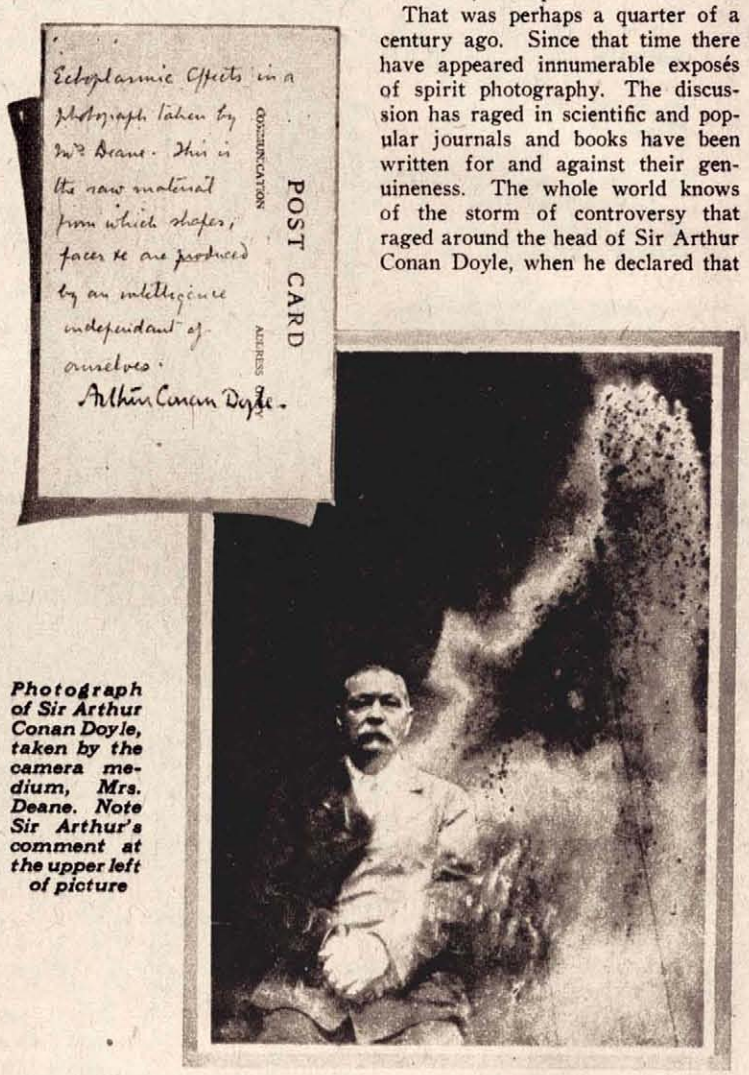
For the wonders of spirit photography are manifest and manifold, nor can they be easily dismissed.

I remember very clearly my introduction to the whole subject. It was through the pages of "Hours With The Ghosts," a very fine book in its period, written by my friend, Doctor Henry Ridgely Evans. Through his gentle and cynical style, I first learned the theory of spirit pictures and their makers—the "mediums" of the camera.

It seemed that not everyone could take spirit photographs. One had to be psychic. In the vulgate, one must be a medium. If I used the same camera, the same plates, the same studio, the same everything—nothing would appear. There would be no ghosts on the negative. That was because I was not a psychic. But all that was necessary, was the presence of the medium in the room. His hand must press the little rubber bulb, and lo—a miracle! Ghosts would throng into the room and some of them would impinge their likeness on the picture.

That was the theory. My friend, Doctor Evans, went on to explain certain facts. He revealed the methods of double exposure, not so generally known when his book was published; also tricks by which prepared plates could be substituted, and other devices employed by tricksters and swindlers, to dupe the victims.

That was perhaps a quarter of a century ago. Since that time there have appeared innumerable exposés of spirit photography. The discussion has raged in scientific and popular journals and books have been written for and against their genuineness. The whole world knows of the storm of controversy that raged around the head of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, when he declared that



Photograph of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, taken by the camera medium, Mrs. Deane. Note Sir Arthur's comment at the upper left of picture

he had found pictures, not only of ghosts, but of gnomes, fairies and elves.

Some pictures are reproduced in connection with this article for your especial benefit. These same pictures have been the subject of considerable controversy. In the meantime, a society has been formed in England for the sole purpose of studying spirit pictures.

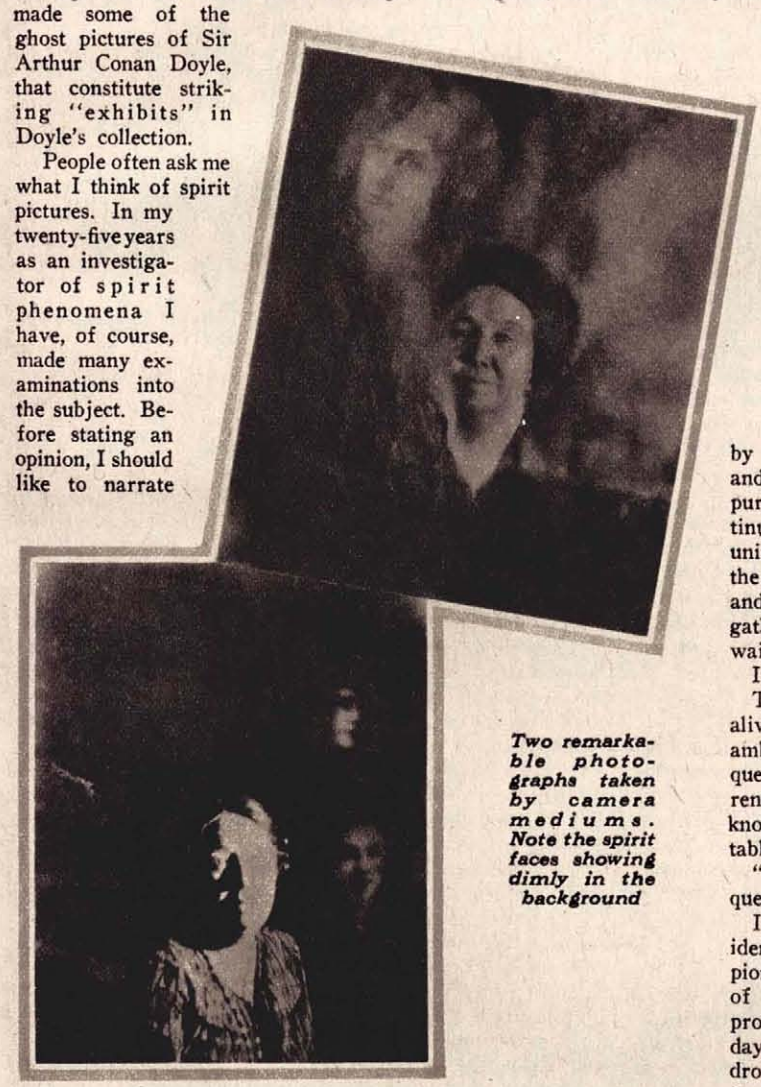
There are famous camera mediums in England, in various

be PHOTOGRAPHED?

do you believe that spirits from some unseen world, the photographic plate that bears your likeness? you read —

parts of the United States, even in far-away Australia. Perhaps the most celebrated is Hope, of England, who made some of the ghost pictures of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, that constitute striking "exhibits" in Doyle's collection.

People often ask me what I think of spirit pictures. In my twenty-five years as an investigator of spirit phenomena I have, of course, made many examinations into the subject. Before stating an opinion, I should like to narrate one or two experiences that I have had with camera mediums and their methods, and then state a conclusion at which I have arrived.



Two remarkable photographs taken by camera mediums. Note the spirit faces showing dimly in the background

In advance, however, let me say that I consider intolerant incredulity a fault far graver than stupid credulity!

My first famous experience with spirit photography created a national, even an international, furore, and was a deliberate hoax undertaken to prove that even under the most rigid test conditions one could accomplish spirit pictures by fraud.

At that time—in the summer of 1922—I believed that every spirit photograph ever exhibited was a conscious or an unintentional fraud. I had arrived at this conclusion after years of experimentation with one camera medium after another, and detecting them all in deliberate trickery.

THERE had been formed in New York that summer, what was known as the New York Committee for Psychic Science and Philosophy. An ambitious title for a serious little group! One evening we all assembled at the home of Doctor Edwin F. Bowers, on West End Avenue, in Manhattan. Practically every one present had devoted more or less time in the past to investigating spiritualism—spirit raps, mysterious messages spelled out by the rockings of a table, slate writings, trances and the materialization of ghostly forms. The purpose of the organization was merely to continue such investigations under a loose form of unity and coherence. Within half an hour after the first meeting was called, the lights were out, and the little group of men and women were gathered around the table, with their hands prone, waiting for a demonstration.

It came.

The table gave a leap into the air as if it were alive. It rocked back and forth, tilted, turned and ambled from one room into another. Instantly questions were put to it, to which replies were rendered in loud and sonorous knocks. These knocks seemed to come from the very heart of the table.

"Is there a spirit in this table?" was the first question.

It appeared that there was and the presence identified itself as the soul of Hyslop, the great pioneer of psychic research in the United States of America. But no one was very cordial to the professor, for he didn't remember his own birthday or his own middle name. The experiment was dropped in discouragement, and the group applied itself to a serious discussion for the remainder of the evening.

This discussion turned on spirit photography. I had just read where Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had laid down the rules of evidence for psychic photography, and I was telling the others about it.

Sir Arthur laid down the following rules, by which to judge the authenticity of a spirit photograph:

1—The usual control of plates, camera, and photographer. (Which means that the *(Continued on page 59)*

OUT of a

When Ralph Durham ran away to sea, came back home, his father was the Durham wealth be? Only the

By Ralph Durham

MY heart was pounding violently as the clang of the doorbell echoed through the big silent house. I began to wish fervently that I hadn't come. In spite of myself the "prodigal son" feeling persisted.

The old home seemed to have gone to seed, I thought, in these fifteen years I had been away. The yard was weed-grown, the paint was peeling from the house and the porch furniture was shabby. Perhaps father had sold it and had moved somewhere else. Why the devil didn't someone answer the bell! I tugged at it again.

Followed another long wait, then there came the faint sound of pattering feet down the carpetless hall and I heard the bolt being pushed back. The door was thrown open and a small, bright-eyed, elf of a woman stood before me.

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting," she began at once, in a thin, high-pitched voice, "but you see I wasn't dressed fit to answer the door-bell——" A childlike, helpless sort of smile finished the sentence more eloquently than words.

"Oh, that's all right." I found myself responding to the faint charm of her, in spite of my earlier annoyance. Such a futile sort of little old lady she seemed. One couldn't help liking her. "I was looking for Major Durham who used to own this house," I told her.

"Oh—Major Durham? He's dead." She nodded her head once or twice as though to give emphasis to the flat statement. "His widdy rented the house to me and moved to t'other end of town, down by the railroad tracks."

Father dead? And that woman still alive—and living down by the railroad tracks? But I might have expected something of that sort. Lots of things can happen in fifteen years.

I'D better stick around awhile and do a little investigating, I thought. I had no desire to see my step-mother, the cause of my youthful unhappiness—the woman who had driven me away from home. Still, I must sift this thing to the bottom. Then I had a bright idea. Why not spend a few days in town incognito? I was quite sure no one would recognize me. I had met half a dozen old-timers on my way from the station and not one of them had cast me a glance of recognition.

"Was you a particular friend of his?"

I became suddenly aware that the little old lady's bright eyes had been regarding me steadily, with both interest and compassion, and I made an effort to pull myself together.

"Yes," I said, slowly, "—in a sort of a way. Fact is, I hoped to do a little business with him."

"Can't you see his widdy? Couldn't you do the business with her instead? I can give you her address."

"No—no thanks. She wouldn't do at all." I began to think fast. "How about that piece of land up by the lake that Major Durham used to own? Was that sold?"

"Yes, he sold that a couple of years before he died. But I might be able to put you in touch with the man who bought it." Her face was all alight now and I could almost hear the thoughts formulating behind that radiance. She would arrange it for us both and perhaps there would be something in it for her. Foxy little old girl!

"Well, perhaps I might be interested—" I smiled at her reassuringly. "Meanwhile I'd like to find a place to stay for a few days. Do you know anyone in town who takes in boarders and might be able to put me up?"

A beatific smile greeted these words, and her excitement simply refused to be suppressed.

"Yes, indeed, I know someone. You might stay here with me. You know I'm supposed to be—well, you see——" She paused uncertainly. "I keep boarders. There aren't any staying here right now, of course, but then things haven't been as busy as they are sometimes."

"You mean that you could put me up here?"

"Yes!"

"Why, that would be just fine! Are you sure it won't inconvenience you——"

"NOT at all! Come right this way." She made a futile grab at my bags, but I forestalled her, and with a face wreathed in smiles she lead the way into the house and upstairs.

I glanced hurriedly about, as I followed her, and noted with a pang, the decay and ruin that had come upon the home of my childhood. All that was fine, all that was of any value, seemed to have disappeared, and what remained of the furnishings and fixtures were shabby and worn and dingy.

We had reached the upper floor, now, and suddenly the little woman—"Miss Southwick" she told me was her name—stopped before a door. It was the door of my old room.

I found my heart pounding violently with excitement. Was it intuition, or just strange fate, that had prompted her to give me this, of all the rooms in the house? She couldn't know me, for I had never set eyes on her before in my life.

At sight of the old room, memories of a thousand hours spent there rushed back at me like myriad ghosts. Strange, too, that the place was practically as I had left it, save that some of the books and little personal belongings were missing.

"Will this be all right, Mister——?"

"Evans is the name—George Evans."

"Well, Mr. Evans, if this isn't all right I can show you some of the other rooms. But this one is ready and the others would have to be made up."

I ASSURED her that this was perfectly satisfactory. Then she left me to meditate in the room that had seen the first eighteen years of my life.

I found, to my surprise, that I was inclined to sentimentalize about it. Yet, after all, I suppose anyone would feel the same way, coming back to their childhood home, after a long absence.

I laughed it off. What was the use? I must find out what had become of the old man's money and then clear out. There was a big world outside, and work to be done and new adventures to be found. No use staying around here. I mustn't let this thing get me like this.

There came a knock on the door and little Mrs. Southwick entered.

Gleaming TOMB

his father was wealthy. When Ralph dead, the money gone. Where could Ghost of the elder Durham could tell!

"I've just been talking to the man who owns that piece of land you was asking me about. He telephoned me about something else and I just happened to mention you and——" She stopped, in confusion.

Not such a good actress, I thought with amusement. I knew she had called the man on the phone immediately she left me.

"Well, now, that was nice of you, Mrs. Southwick. What did he say?"

"He said he might consider selling it, though he wasn't exactly decided. Said he'd be home all afternoon, if you wanted to stop in and see him. Lives right down the square here a little way. Name's Higgins."

Higgins? Ruth Higgins' father! I'd nearly forgotten Ruth, but now I remembered her vividly. The sweetheart of my youth, she was—the little girl whose books I had joyfully carried home from school. I fell into a reverie—forgot all else for the time being.

"—and it's the third house from the right."

I came to, with a start. Mrs. Southwick had been giving me directions. As though I didn't know every inch of the way by heart! Why, I could have found the house, blindfolded! I thanked her and seizing my hat, hurried downstairs and out the front door. It was more than the desire to learn of my father's affairs that sent me hurrying down the street and through that familiar front gate.

A shadowy form was rising—rising out of the earth!

The house had changed surprisingly little in fifteen years, I noted as I rang the bell. When the door opened Ruth stood before me in all the full blown beauty of her thirty years. The same fragile loveliness, but with a maturity, an added poise. The same gaiety, tempered now with a touch of sadness, of worldly-wisdom the younger Ruth had never known.

For a moment we stood there dumbly, wide-eyed, staring at each other, and I wondered vaguely, whether she recognized me. She waited for me to speak, her face inscrutable,

and almost unconsciously I made my decision to see through my original plan.

"Does Mr. Higgins live here?" I asked, as I might have addressed a stranger.

And, in the same manner, she answered me: "Yes. Won't you come in?"

She lead me into the library—the same, familiar library in which we had spent so many happy hours reading and conversing and dreaming together. I saw that it had changed hardly at all. A few more books, perhaps. New covering on the furniture. Electric fixtures instead of gas. Nothing more.

With trembling fingers I drew out a long legal document—my father's last will and testament

"Mr. Higgins is upstairs. I'll tell him you're here." She waited a moment, half expectant, then,, as I did not speak. "Who shall I tell him is calling?"

"Evans is the name—George Evans. Mrs. Southwick telephoned him about me a little while ago."

"Oh, yes. I'll tell him." And she was gone.

Gad, what a fool I had been! Why, she was perfect—simply perfect! And I had lost her. In one swift moment the years had rolled back like a film, baring all the old emotions, the old longings, the old thrill her presence had never failed to bring me. Buried there in the dust of time I found my love for Ruth as fresh, as alive, as blooming, as it had ever been. And I had not known it was there, had not dreamed it!

I smiled quietly to myself. I knew now, why I had never married. There had been many girls, many chances in those fifteen years of wanderings over the world—

My thoughts were interrupted by the entrance of old man Higgins. I should hardly have recognized him, so completely had the years changed his appearance, and it was quite evident that he did not recognize me. He greeted me cordially, and we began to talk about the land, but my mind refused to lend itself to the subject. Somehow the advent of Ruth seemed to have dulled it to everything else, and time and again I found myself absent-mindedly answering some remark of his without in the least knowing what he was talking about. Finally he suggested that he drive me out to the lake to look things over, and I gladly accepted the offer.

As he went back to get the car, I made a desperate effort to pull myself together. I was here to get information about my father and his affairs, and I must get it. By the time the car rolled up to the door I had myself fairly well in hand. But I couldn't help glancing back at the windows of the house as we drove away, hoping against hope for another glimpse of Ruth—a hope that was not fulfilled.

HIGGINS had always been a cagey old bird, and the years seemed to have intensified this quality. Talk as I would, I could get no real information out of him. Yes, he had owned this land about four years. Bought it of Major Durham. Knew him, did I? Fine old man, that! Yes, he did have a son. Left home years ago, though. No one hereabouts knew anything about him. Went to sea, they said. Some said he was dead.

Was there a faint tightening of the mouth at mention of my name? I fancied so, but it might have been only my imagination.

Did the old man leave any property? Guess not. Mrs. Durham was living down by the car tracks in the old Stoner shack. She didn't seem to have any money, but then you never could tell.

As we drove up to the Higgins house again, I felt utterly baffled. I had learned practically nothing I didn't already know, and had spent a whole afternoon doing it. At his invitation I followed him in to look at some photographs he was anxious to show me.

(*Continued on page* 64)

They Hanged a Phantom for MURDER

In the body of one man, the soul of another kills a woman. How can a phantom be held responsible?

By "Doctor Grey"

Told by R. Cummings

AS I pace back and forth in my cell in San Quentin, anxiously awaiting the coming hour when I will be hanged by the neck until dead, I have no remorse for the crime for which I am to forfeit my life. Instead, an ecstasy fills my whole being, and I thrill from head to foot with expectancy!

Does this sound like the words of a sane man, or the ramblings of a diseased mind past the landmark of sanity? Am I sane? That is the question which the world wants answered.

I WILL start with the beginning.

Everyone is now acquainted with the bizarre and fiendish murder case that rocked the whole Pacific Coast with its gruesomeness. For those not familiar with the case, I will state briefly wherein Doctor Grey (I call myself by this name, in this narrative, although known to the world by another name), a prominent Los Angeles dentist, is supposed to have murdered his wife by administering gas—as used by the profession in the method of extracting teeth. There was the hint of a scandal between the said Doctor Grey and his assistant, whom I will call Grace Turner.

It all came about by my attending a spiritist seance in Hollywood. Being of a sensitive nature—one of those humans endowed with something akin to the mysteries—I soon became an interested student of the occult. As I was blessed with a clientele far larger than my fondest expectations, the occult afforded me a form of relaxation from office hours.

On this particular night I was attending a seance. I was accompanied by my wife. The hostess of the evening, (there was to be a party followed by a seance conducted by a celebrated English medium) introduced my wife and myself to a Dr. Ralston, who was quite an adept in the study of mysticism or occultism, whichever you prefer to call it. It seems he had spent considerable time in the Orient, mastering mysteries of the Far East.

Dr. Ralston was several years my junior, of athletic build, while I am anything but athletic. He had delicately chiseled features—almost effeminate. I noticed his lips were very thin. They somehow gave me the impression of a brutal cruelty, well hidden by the veneer and polish attained through much travel and contact with many types of people. The man had that masterful self-possession which so many strive to attain.

I learned that he was a new-comer to the State of California, a dentist by profession, and looking for a suitable location. He was perfectly at home with the ladies and held them spellbound with his thrilling accounts of his experiences in the Orient and elsewhere, in his study of the occult. I noted too, with annoyance, that he paid my wife quite a bit of attention at the seance. No one else seemed to notice it, however, and I soon forgot it.

A few days later while passing a suite of rooms in the same building in which my office was located, I was greatly surprised to see Dr. Ralston's name printed in large gold letters on the door next to mine. I knew that the rooms had been vacant a short while, but it never entered my mind that of all the office buildings in Los Angeles with offices available, that Dr. Ralston would choose the building in which I was located.

In the course of time we became quite friendly, since I was broadminded enough not to be jealous of my competitor, and we had many things in common. He belonged to the same lodges, clubs, etc., that I belonged to. And beside, my wife was even more interested in spiritualism than I was, and enjoyed hearing Dr. Ralston relate his many experiences—especially those dealing with the astral plane and soul flights.

Thus entered the snake into the Garden of Eden.

He became a frequent visitor to our home. On occasions that sometimes came up, when I was too tired, or had business matters to clear up, he would escort my wife to a show, or perhaps a lecture, or whatever the occasion called for.

I would usually be in bed when they returned, but one evening as I was detained down town later than usual, I decided to leave my car, which had been giving me trouble, at a garage about four blocks from our residence, and walk the remaining distance. As I am light on my feet for a man of my weight, I approached the house almost silently, and was about to enter when I heard voices. I recognized them as my wife and Dr. Ralston.

THE doctor was pleading with my wife to run off and leave me, and go to Europe with him. He was professing his love for her in the most endearing terms I have ever heard a man use. All through his siege of love-making, my wife kept trying to quiet him, assuring him every so often that she loved me only, and could never love another man as long as I remained alive.

I felt triumphant in that moment, that my wife was not losing ground, and was as true and as loyal as I knew she would always be. I carried an automatic in my car, as there had been a number of holdups shortly before around Los Angeles. For the moment I was almost persuaded to take it, and shoot him. But from the study of the occult I realized that if I took his life I would probably be earth-bound for years, trying to work out my salvation for the deed done in a moment of passion.

AT this moment the doctor turned around, and, although I ducked down by the side of the porch among the bushes, I had the feeling that he had seen me. Anyway, the voices ceased. I walked slowly around to the back door and into my room, and was soon prepared for bed.

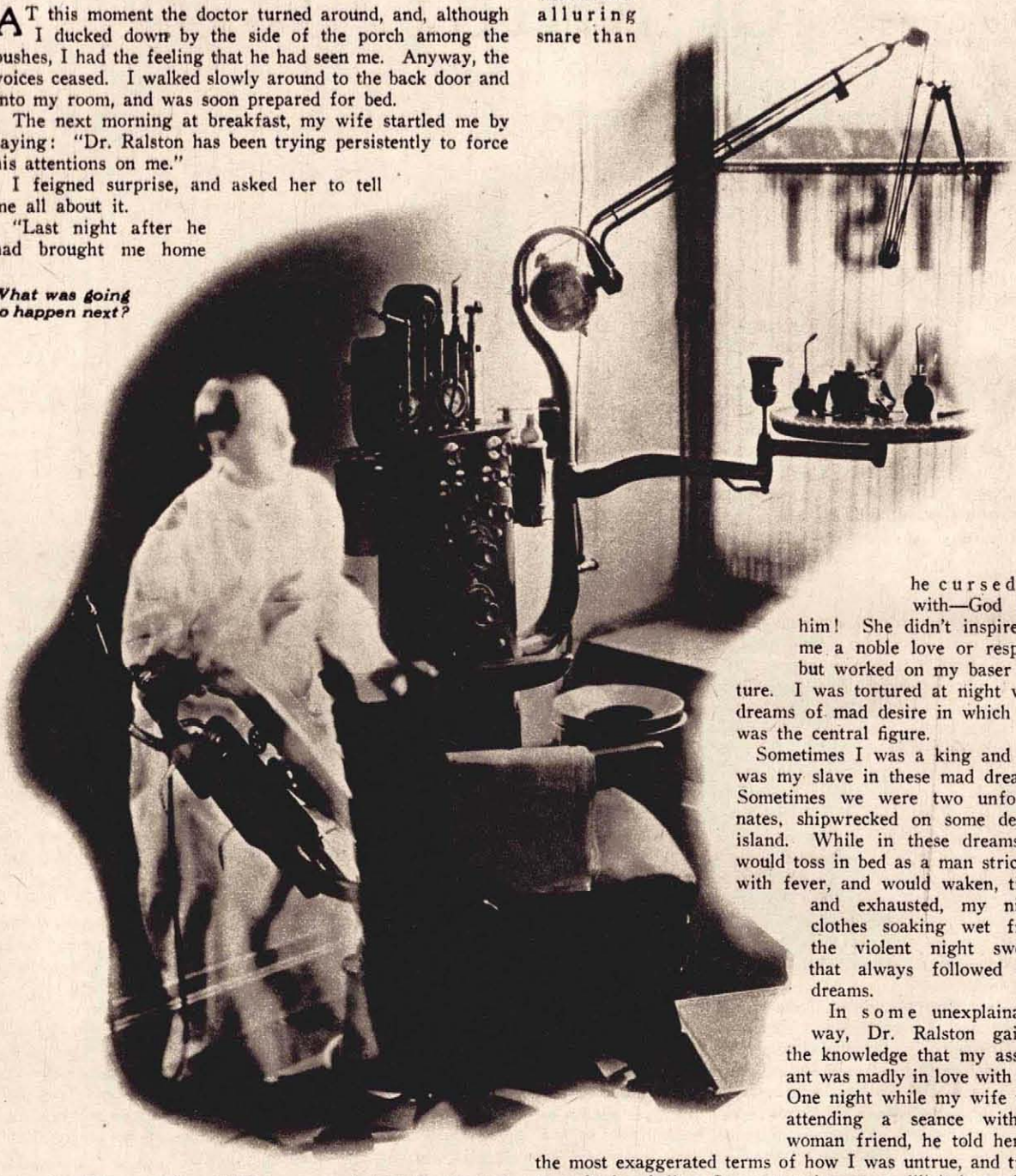
The next morning at breakfast, my wife startled me by saying: "Dr. Ralston has been trying persistently to force his attentions on me."

I feigned surprise, and asked her to tell me all about it.

"Last night after he had brought me home from the theater, before bidding me goodnight, he pleaded with me to leave you." She looked up at me timidly.

I smiled at her reassuringly. "If there is any fault here, my dear, it is not yours. But I have noticed for some time that Dr. Ralston has been paying you marked attentions. I thought he was a gentleman, and would keep in his place. Hereafter you will not be annoyed by him."

So that was the end of my wife going out with the doctor.



What was going to happen next?

To make things worse, however, and to bring matters to a head, shortly after this happening, my assistant, who had been with me ever since I had opened the office, decided to get married to a meal ticket she had found out in Hollywood, and I was forced to get a new girl. From among the many girls who applied, I decided upon a beautiful little southern girl by the name of Grace Turner.

I believe she must have loved me from the first moment she saw me. And, I must say, if ever Lucifer tempted man with a more alluring snare than he cursed me with—God pity him! She didn't inspire in me a noble love or respect, but worked on my baser nature. I was tortured at night with dreams of mad desire in which she was the central figure.

Sometimes I was a king and she was my slave in these mad dreams. Sometimes we were two unfortunates, shipwrecked on some desert island. While in these dreams, I would toss in bed as a man stricken with fever, and would waken, tired and exhausted, my night clothes soaking wet from the violent night sweats that always followed the dreams.

In some unexplainable way, Dr. Ralston gained the knowledge that my assistant was madly in love with me. One night while my wife was attending a seance with a woman friend, he told her in the most exaggerated terms of how I was untrue, and tried to make her believe I was carrying on an illicit love affair with Miss Turner. Of course my wife did not believe him, so, he began planning in earnest for my destruction, as he believed if I was out of the way he would have no trouble in winning my wife, who was a wealthy woman.

I should mention here that all along the doctor was professing his friendship for me. I had never disclosed in any way my knowledge of the night I had heard him making

love to my wife, and had heard her repulse him.

One night he called me on the phone and asked me how I'd like to go to a slate writing seance to be held in Venice, by a member of the British Research Society. At the time I thought it was rather strange that he didn't mention my wife, as she had developed into a fair medium herself. Then it flashed through my mind that he would be embarrassed after the love-making scene in which my wife had called him down. I assured him I should be delighted to go and see what this medium could do.

THE seance was the most startling and mysterious one that I had ever witnessed. For those of you who have never attended an independent slate-writing seance, I will tell as best I can what took place.

It is the general custom of the most celebrated mediums, to have only persons acquainted with spiritualism attend. This precaution is taken in order to have the conditions right for obtaining the best results. But such was not true of this seance, which was open to the general public. Anyone could bring his or her slate, and personal writing paper. I was surprised to find the hall brilliantly lighted, since most seances are conducted in semi-darkness, under a ruby light. Some, in fact, are held in total darkness.

Most of those present had written their questions at home. The few who had not already written questions were furnished paper and pencil. We wrote our questions in this manner: First, the name of the dead relative or friend, then where they passed out. Next came the question. Last—our name and place of birth. Each person placed some mark of identification on it, and deposited it on a solid mahogany table, in view of all.

As we were early—the medium not having arrived as yet—we had a good opportunity to view the crowd as it filled the hall. There were people from almost every walk of life, and I also noticed a number of foreigners among the mass.

Presently the medium came in and took his place by the table. He had with him a little traveling bag that contained a few pairs of slates—about six pairs, if I remember rightly, and several pieces of white crayon. The room was full of beautiful flowers that scented the whole hall with almost a nauseating odor.

The medium selected a little high school girl and a young man of perhaps seventeen or eighteen years of age to come up front and wash the several pairs of slates he had on the table. He had them also wash the private slates which different persons among the crowd, had brought with them. In all, there must have been twenty or thirty pairs of slates made ready.

Doctor Ralston, in my body, walked up to my wife and smiled in my usual way

AFTER the operation of washing and drying the slates, the medium had the two young people pick at random from the pile of sealed questions on his desk, about ten or twelve questions. These sealed envelopes were given to certain individuals among the crowd. They were each to be kept in the pocket and opened only after the question had been answered.

Dr. Ralston had brought two pairs of slates that had three large screws in each pair, to hold (*Continued on page 67*)

Pawn of the Unseen

By Lyon Mearson

"Let's take one last look at the body."

WHEN Martin Grimm was found, apparently murdered in his home, a number of persons were suspected. Terry Lenihan, young bachelor who lived just across the way, was one of them. So was Blood, the dead man's butler. So was Lenore, his beautiful young niece.

Nevertheless, Detective Carton, who was in charge of the case, could find no definite evidence against any one of the three, and the coroner gave a verdict of "Death from heart disease."

And now, strange things began to happen in that death house where the old recluse had met his sudden and mysterious death while seated at the telephone. Ghostly footsteps were heard; horrible, mirthless laughter floated through the empty halls; a disembodied hand, in a circle of light, appeared and left imprints of blood where it touched.

Old man Grimm himself, lying dead in his coffin—seemed not to be dead. For a message from him appeared on a slate. It was in his handwriting, stating that no undertaker was to be allowed to come near his body. Then, when this warning was ignored, and the undertaker arrived, the heavy door leading into the death chamber was suddenly locked by unseen hands!

When Terry, with his valet, Marius, entered the death house to investigate, Terry's house suddenly burst into flames—seemingly without natural cause. The fire was put out, but its origin remained a mystery. Was it another warning from the unseen powers that hovered over the old man's body? Terry and Marius believed that it was, but nevertheless they rushed back to the death house again to continue their investigation.

There, standing in the darkness on an upper stair landing, they heard a horrible scream—a scream of agony and terror. It was Lenore's voice, and they rushed to the door of the room from which it came.

IT was only an instant that they stood outside of that door, yet it seemed an eternity. They could review their lives to their earliest childhood in that instant, much as a drowning man can go back over every incident of his life in the moment of going down for the third time.

What terrible presence lay behind that door they had no way of even guessing, yet they knew that nothing should stop them from going into that room, from which they had heard the agonized scream, that they were certain had come from Lenore. Perhaps she was even then lying there, already stiffening in death—a death that had come to her, swift and terrible, in tone with the other happenings in this strange house. What awful apparition had appeared to her to shock her into that piercing, screaming emotional expression? What shape from another and unheard of world, what portent from the powers that seemed to rule the darkness in this place, what throwback from the twilight of our civilization and our era?

These thoughts coursed through their brains with the

Terry and Marius had no warning of that arrow shot from an unseen bow, to chill their blood with its dread message. What IS the secret of that house of mystery and death?

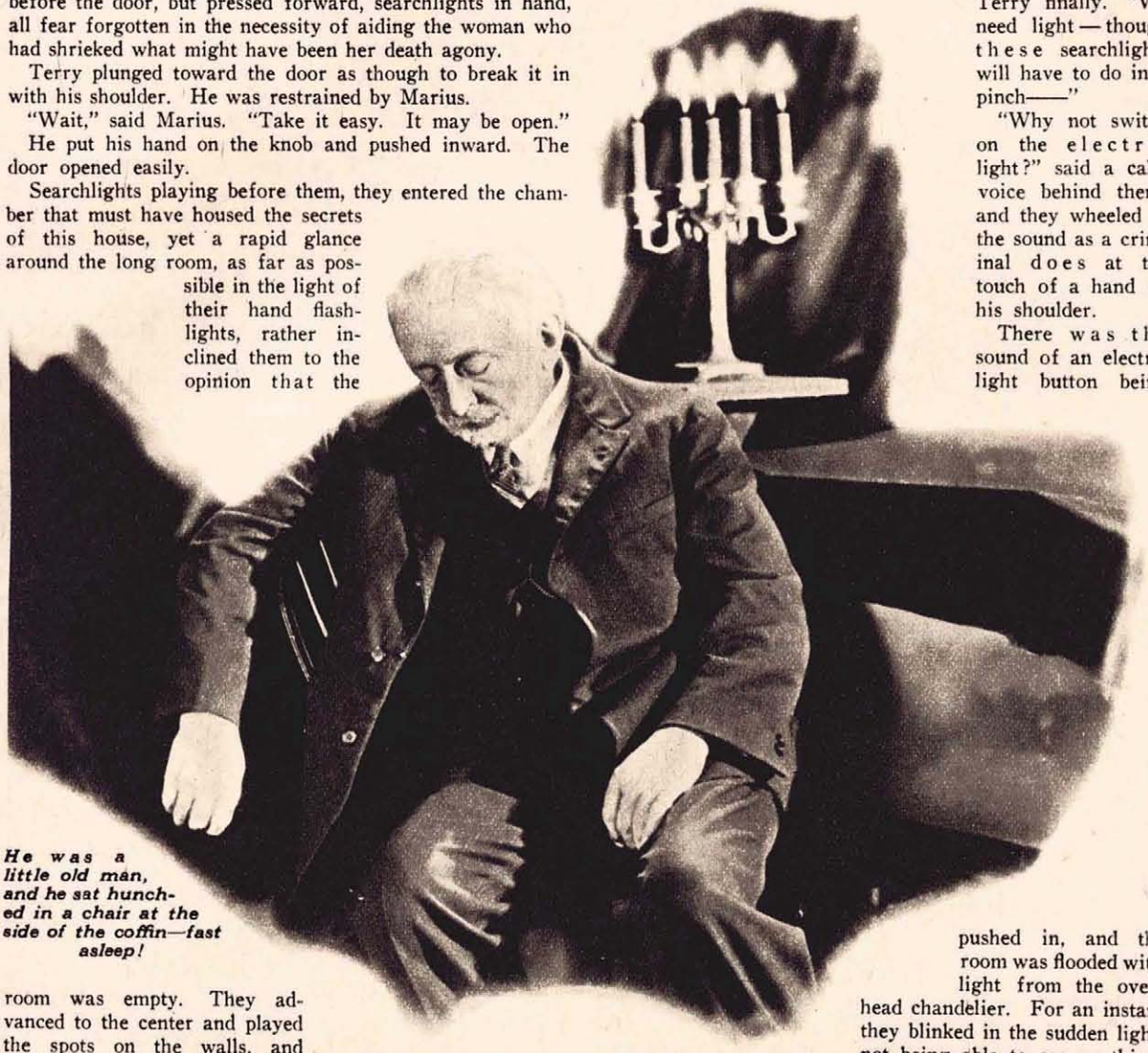
speed of light, taking only a millionth of the time it requires to detail them, for Terry and Marius hesitated not at all before the door, but pressed forward, searchlights in hand, all fear forgotten in the necessity of aiding the woman who had shrieked what might have been her death agony.

Terry plunged toward the door as though to break it in with his shoulder. He was restrained by Marius.

"Wait," said Marius. "Take it easy. It may be open."

He put his hand on the knob and pushed inward. The door opened easily.

Searchlights playing before them, they entered the chamber that must have housed the secrets of this house, yet a rapid glance around the long room, as far as possible in the light of their hand flashlights, rather inclined them to the opinion that the room was empty. They advanced to the center and played the spots on the walls, and found nothing. No human was there.



He was a little old man, and he sat hunched in a chair at the side of the coffin—fast asleep!

"I don't understand this," said Terry, forgetting, in his excitement, to whisper.

"Doesn't seem to be anybody here," replied Marius. "And yet——"

"We heard her—and I am sure it was from this room," said Terry. "After all, there are certain things one can be sure of——"

"I wonder," replied Marius succinctly.

There was a silence between them for a brief space, before Terry spoke.

"Whatever it is that's going on here is a deep game, and you can count on that! I heard Lenore scream—and I'm going to find out where she is and what's happening to her if it's the last thing I ever do."

"I'm with you in that—though there doesn't seem to be anything in this room," said Marius, glancing around.

"We'll have to examine it thoroughly—every inch," said Terry finally. "We need light—though these searchlights will have to do in a pinch——"

"Why not switch on the electric light?" said a calm voice behind them, and they wheeled at the sound as a criminal does at the touch of a hand on his shoulder.

There was the sound of an electric light button being pushed in, and the room was flooded with light from the overhead chandelier. For an instant they blinked in the sudden light, not being able to see anything, and somewhat dazed by this swift answer to Terry's remark.

Standing by the switch at the door, completely dressed, stood the butler, Blood. His pale, ageless face was perfectly composed, and he bowed to them in greeting just as soon as they recognized him. How long he had been standing there—or whether he had been standing there at all—they had no way of knowing. In any event, if he had been there when they entered, they had overlooked him, though it was difficult to see how. Yet nothing, of that kind, Terry reflected as he stared at the butler in a moment's silence, appeared to be very difficult in this house, where the most extraordinary circumstances seemed to happen as a matter of course.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said the dead, toneless voice of Blood, as he looked at them steadily, quietly. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"There certainly is," snapped Terry, now complete master of himself. "You can tell me how long you've been standing there, and just what's happened in this room—over there."

He motioned to a spot just in front of the door, which was liberally stained with fresh, wet blood.

BLOOD looked at it in silence for a space. There was an utter absence of sound in the room—a silence pregnant with expectation. Finally Blood spoke. His voice was quiet and calm, as before. He looked Terry directly in the eye.

"I have no idea, sir," he said coldly.

"Something has been going on here——" began Terry with a scarcely veiled excitement, a rising anger that fed itself on his anxiety about Lenore.

"Why do you think so, sir?" asked Blood.

"Why do I think so? Why, that scream alone——" began Terry.

"What scream, sir?" asked the imperturbable Blood.

"Why, you heard the scream! It was Lenore—she screamed—one of the most terrible sounds I ever heard in all my life. You don't mean to say you did not hear it? Why, a dead man could have heard it."

"I heard nothing, sir. No scream . . . nothing."

"There came again that strange, far-away laughter—that ghoulish glee that seemed to belong to another world. It was somewhere in the house. Where?—they could not know. . . . It was a disembodied, flat, fiendish, inhuman sound. Terry and Marius shivered, and stood rooted to the floor. Then—"

Marius and Terry stared at Blood in an amazed quiet, born of their need for adequate expression at such a time. Surely this man must be lying! There was something furtive about him—always had been. There was something sinister . . . something . . . of the night. . . .

TERRY recovered control of his voice, and his next question was rapier-like in its steely hardness.

"Then what brought you up here?"

"You," replied the voice of the butler who called himself Blood.

"I!" said Terry.

"Yes."

"You heard us?"

"Certainly, sir," replied the butler quietly.

"And you came up like that all dressed?" persisted Terry, who did not trust him at all.

"Yes," replied the butler again.

"How does it happen that you are all dressed at this time of the morning—if you came up immediately you heard us?" inquired Terry, not to be balked.

"I heard you when you were first here—when you ran down the stairs," said the butler. "I dressed then, because I rather thought you might be back. Of course, sir, I had no idea who it was—nor what your errand might be here in this house, now that the master is gone."

There was a short space of quiet, and then the flat voice of Blood cut in once more.

"Since we're asking questions, sir, I think I'm within my authority if I ask just what you and this other gentleman are doing here at this time of the night. I don't remember letting you in, sir," he added significantly.

Terry was somewhat taken aback by this, and hardly knew for the moment, what to reply. He knew, of course, that his presence there was unlawful, and that he was quite without legal right or authority in the matter. If Blood chose to make trouble for him he could do so with little difficulty. Terry knew that he and Marius were in the position of burglars, before the law, and that any judge would quickly adjudge them guilty of "breaking and entering," as the legal phrase has it.

The voice of Blood went on, suavely, calmly, but there was in it an accent that transcended that of the butler—it was a tone of inquiring authority, thinly veiled under a mask of politeness. His tones dripped with ice.

"You see, until some member of the family—or estate—arrives to take charge, I am in complete charge here. I should, therefore, be familiar with everything that goes on here—and, with everyone who enters or leaves."

Terry cut in on him angrily.

"It doesn't seem to me that you know a great deal of what goes on, Blood—or, if you do, you contrive to conceal it more than a little. I think I can tell you more of what is going on here than you can tell me. At least, more than you wish to tell me, it seems. I see I'll have to speak plainly to you."

"I don't know what you mean, sir. Just what is there that is 'going on,' as you put it, that I——"

"Well," said Terry, "that scream, for instance. You stated that you did not hear it. Now, both of us here, heard it—very loud, and terribly plain. It is not possible that there is anybody in this house who did not hear it. I am only surprised that it hasn't yet been reported to the police by the neighbors. And yet, you have the face to stand there and tell me you didn't hear it.

"I tell you, Blood, there is a great deal that you know that is going to be of interest to me—and to the police." Terry paused significantly here to let this threat sink in, but it produced not a ripple on the sinister calm of the butler. Some day, I intend to find out what it is. Why, that scream could have been heard by Martin Grimm, who is lying dead downstairs. And it would not be the first thing that he heard, deaf as he was in life and dead as he is now—that you claimed you did not hear."

"I don't know what you are referring to, sir," said Blood, and his cold face was emotionless.

"Yes you do know what I am referring to," went on Terry. "But if you want it plainer, I'll tell you. I am referring to the unexplained footsteps that one can hear in this house. They are not made by any one who lives here. A deaf man could hear them. Yet you claim you have not heard them."

"I'm sorry, but the deaf are subject to hallucinations about sounds——"

"HALLUCINATIONS nothing! I'm not deaf, and neither is Miss Lenore. We both of us heard them, on more than one occasion. If you're concealing anything, Blood, I warn you that it's going to go hard with you. You want to know what I'm doing here, and I'll tell you, since you have the face to ask. I am not satisfied with the explanations of the death of my friend, Martin Grimm. I think there is more here, in this house, than has met the eye, and I'm going to find out about it. And as for your being in charge here—you *were* in charge, until I came. Mr. Grimm had no kin except Miss Lenore, as you well know, and as the fiancée of Miss Lenore, I have taken charge here until she herself appears on the scene and makes whatever disposition of affairs—and of you—that (*Continued on page 79*)

The Doll that Came to LIFE

Why should anyone—man or ghoul—want to torment an innocent child?

By Arthur Branscombe
Told to Victor Rousseau

Against the wall was a stand on which was an enormous doll, propped up beneath three lighted candles

"BUT, my dear Mrs. Temple, why were you not satisfied to let well enough alone?" demanded Doctor Martinus brusquely. "You had established a little shrine in that room of yours. You had filled it with happy influences. But you were not content to leave that little haunt for the hallowed spirit to revisit in its dreams. Why did you throw that bolt into the mechanism of the astral universe?"

"Well, Doctor, you know people were beginning to talk about it, and to say that my mind had become unhinged through brooding. And my friends said it was heathenish. They told me that my dear little Doris is now an angel in heaven, and that I shall meet her there when I die, but until then there is no possibility of our knowing anything about each other. And so I——"

"And so you ran to a charlatan, a mere dabbler in psychic matters—of which he is, and always will be, ignorant," said Martinus savagely.

"But, Doctor—Mr. Craven has a very strong spiritualistic power, and he assured me that he could lay the spirit for ever, and so I let him try."

"And instead of the little shrine, you got a full-blown haunted house," said Martinus. "How long after this man Craven performed his operations in that room did these manifestations begin?"

"Three or four days, Doctor," said Mrs. Temple tearfully. "At first I thought it was my darling Doris——"

"Pulling hair and pinching, and throwing glass and crockery!" Martinus snorted.

"Mr. Craven said it was an after-manifestation that would soon disappear."

"And what did your heart tell you?" demanded Martinus.

"Why, it—it told me——"

"It told you it was a devil, and it was right!" the doctor shouted. "Very well, madam. I'll come, and see what I can do. Hereafter, rely more upon your Bible and less on fools like Craven, and remember the passage about the seven devils. You drove out the legitimate tenant, and its place was taken by one devil—or seven. That we shall see. Good afternoon, Mrs. Temple."

Doctor Martinus turned to me when our visitor had departed.

"Sometimes, when I get a case like this, I almost despair, Branscombe," he said. "That Mrs. Temple is the wife of a wealthy mining man, now out West. They have a big house, here in New York. Last year they lost their little girl, and she was almost distracted with grief.

"She did what the natural instinct of nearly every mother bids her do. She collected the child's toys, and her favorite doll, in the bedroom, and turned the place into a little

shrine—just as the Japanese do when their loved ones die. And because the act was so simple and so natural, and because nothing that is evil can pierce the armor of a mother's love, she turned that little room into a channel through which the loveliest influences descended to bless that home.

"YOU can picture the dreaming soul of the child, revisiting its home, and finding there everything that it had known—its toys, a mother's love, and the mother who spent a good part of her time there, sewing, or doing other domestic duties, because, as she expressed herself, 'It was the happiest room in the house.'

"What happens? The neighbors begin to talk. They say her mind has become unhinged. Then her friends persuade her that it is a heathenish practice—that the dead are cut off for ever from the living. So, she goes to this man Craven, this quack spiritualist who knows nothing whatever about the real spiritualism, and—he comes on a visit of inspection!

"He sees the doll and the toys, and he persuades the mother that the spirit of her child has become 'earth-bound' (as he phrases it), and that the mother is wrecking her child's heavenly happiness by drawing it down from realms of bliss to an earthly environment. As if there could be any greater bliss in heaven than the remembrance of a happy childhood!

"What does he do? Mumbles some incantation, perfectly efficacious, not because it is a charm, but because of the intent that underlies the words. This faker breaks up the shrine, lays the doll away in a cupboard, turns the bed and furniture around so that the child shall not recognize the room, and goes away telling the mother that the 'spirit is laid.'

"That was six weeks ago, Branscombe. Three days after that the manifestations began. Our friend Craven had turned the shrine into a typical haunted house."

I had not been in the room during the beginning of the Doctor's conversation with Mrs. Temple. "You mean that noises are heard, things thrown about, and so forth?" I asked. "And I heard something said about pinching and pulling hair."

"Yes, all the typical phenomena of the poltergeist," responded Martinus. "And that ass, Craven, insists that these manifestations proceed from the spirit of the child, angry that it has lost its earthly home. Stark nonsense!"

"I remember," I said, "you once told me that these noisy hauntings generally had a merely physical explanation. You referred to the fact that in every such case, as reported from time to time in the newspapers, there appears to be present a boy or girl of about fourteen years, and that the child is subsequently supposed to be detected in trickery."

"I alluded to the simple explanation which, so far as I have read, has always escaped the notice of spirit

"Here is your mother, Doris," came the Doctor's voice

investigators—that, with the advent of maturity, the etheric, or so-called 'astral' body on which the human frame is modeled, becomes capable of enormous extension. The child discovers that it has the faculty of throwing articles—glassware, or crockery—from a distance, by grasping with the extended etheric hand. When it is detected in the act of throwing, even from a distance, the trick is proclaimed and the explanation is considered obvious. But that is neither here nor there. There is no mischievous boy or girl of about fourteen in this case. It is a case of a genuine haunted house, and the haunter is not the child Doris, but one of the devils that enter into empty houses.

"But let us drop the subject for the present, Branscombe," said Martinus. "We have an engagement to visit Mrs. Temple's home to-morrow afternoon, and then we shall see what we shall see."

THE house, which was about ten years old, was a large one, standing in some small grounds, and well set back from the noisy street. A maid in a cap and apron opened the door. The interior showed some standards of taste, and advanced ones of comfort. As we entered we heard a man's high, rather shrill, unpleasant voice in the living-room. Mrs. Temple, who was in conversation with him, appeared embarrassed.

"Doctor Martinus, let me introduce you to Mr. Craven," she said.

Martinus, who had not presented me to Mrs. Temple in his office, did so now, and I was introduced to Craven in turn. He did not impress me favorably. A stout, florid person, apparently in his early forties, in a semi-clerical coat and a clerical collar—pompous, over-fed, and evidently obsessed with the idea of his own importance. He greeted Martinus with a touch of condescension—as a professional might greet an amateur.

"Pleased to meet you, Doctor," he said. "Mrs. Temple has been telling me about your work. Well, we psychic dabblers must stand together, whether inside the church or outside—eh, Doctor?" he chuckled.

Martinus looked at him blankly, but that did not disconcert him. Mrs. Temple intervened tremulously.

"Mr. Craven has been so kind as to promise to co-operate with you, Doctor," she said. "I thought two heads might be better than one if——"

I thought Martinus would explode, but he did nothing of the sort. "I shall be delighted to have Mr. Craven's co-operation," he said, with a cynical smile.

"THAT'S fine!" boomed Craven. "Nothing small about us researchers, is there, Doctor? We can't afford to have any petty jealousy of each other. The subject's too vast."

"Yes—as big as the universe," replied the doctor. "Or, as small as a bath-room," he added, with a meaning glance at me. "Just as we make it, you know, Mr. Craven."

I knew he was thinking of the character in one of Dostoievsky's novels, who spoke of death as a possible imprisonment instead of a release. Craven saw nothing sardonic in the remark.

"Well, have you seen the room since I've altered it again?" he asked. "We might go up, Mrs. Temple? Yes, Doctor, I've put everything back again exactly as it was before. I'm not ashamed to own where I've made a mistake. There's nothing petty about *me*, Doctor."

It was a pretty little room, overlooking the quarter-acre of back lawn—a room containing a little white bed, with fresh sheets and a white and blue coverlet. A few engravings were

(*Continued on page* 75)

"Mamma, where are you?" The voice piped. "I can't find you. I've been looking for you. I'm all alone."

"What a Man Sows——"

The Law of Karma declares that evil deeds bring their reward in kind. If Forber and Roberson could have known in youth the terrible price they would pay——

By Colonel Norman G. Thwaites

IT was expected of Hetty Delville's guests that they should do something more than eat her very excellent dinners when invited to her attractive house. In fact, unkind folks said that unless you earned your dinner by useful conversation, you were never likely to be invited to her spacious London mansion again.

She was not a lion hunter in the ordinary sense of the term. She merely aspired to provide something that made people talk—and she succeeded. One heard such phrases as: "Curious thing I heard at Hetty's the other night," and then would follow a strange story, or, a weird and wild solution of some political problem. Sometimes she would have nobody more intellectual than a young subaltern who had done something worth while—a V. C., or an escaped war prisoner.

She trifled with the esoteric and had some leaning towards spiritism. I confess her dinners were sometimes worth while. I was not a lion nor a *raconteur,* but I was a good listener and as I once told her, I will always listen to a lie once.

This story is the latest yarn I heard at Hetty Delville's table. I give it for what it is worth, just as it was offered by the man who told it.

Conversation had been led by Hetty in her favorite direction—hypnotism, ghosts, premonitions, etc. Then Major Hardman, with a string of letters after his name, gave tongue. It was what he was there for!

Hardman is one of those rather unusual persons who sits silent when talk is general, but always appears to be able to speak an epilogue that enhances the value of everything that has gone before. We settled back in our chairs, prepared to hear something good. This is his story:

SINCE you have touched on the mysterious, I should like to tell you of a curious experience I had, for which I offer no explanation, but which even now I cannot think of without shivers down the spine.

Some years ago I made a trip to East Africa. I did a bit of shooting but my main purpose was to make a report on conditions out there for a certain group of capitalists. As a matter of fact, the information was also to be passed on to the Colonial Office.

By chance I ran across a man who was one of the pioneers in the coffee growing business near Nairobi. There were not many British settlers in those days. This chap called himself Forber—Gerald Forber. His real name, I discovered, was very different. He had been in the Congo at one time and various other parts of Africa. He claimed to know every race and tribe on the Continent, and could handle the black man better than anyone else.

Forber certainly had an uncanny power over the natives who worked for him. One came across his tracks wherever one went. Chiefs and medicine men and humble bearers knew all about him. He was not liked and I confess I did not take to the fellow. But a white man in the wilds is not over fastidious.

I spent a week on my way up country with Forber and on my return had a few days more with him. On this occasion he had a fellow named Roberson staying with him. As far as I could make out, Roberson was a sort of traveling agent for him. In addition to coffee planting, they ran some mysterious business of which they said nothing.

Roberson was a rather good-looking man, but was marked by dissipation. He drank a great deal, I noticed. I found myself wondering why I had accepted Forber's invitation to stay with him on my way back. I did not like the man, and Roberson was even less to my taste.

HOWEVER, there were certain reports to be completed and mailed home before I could leave, so I decided to put in the time with Forber, rather than be alone. As a matter of fact it was very hard to refuse Forber anything. He was a man of extraordinary force and when he was thwarted in anything he overcame obstacles by a sort of concentrated earnestness that somehow suggested a menace. I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to let me go on the date I had fixed. He was most anxious to keep me a few days more. He lived very comfortably. Most of his servants were East Indians, excellently trained and curiously eager to serve him. In fact they were cowed—whipped—doglike, I might almost say.

We parted with the usual promises to meet again, exchanged club addresses, and talked conventionally of the "damned good dinner" we would have when we foregathered in London some day.

It must have been two years later when one evening as I entered the Junior Sports Club, the hall porter said a gentleman had been to see me not half an hour before, and he handed me his card. It was Gerald Forber. He had told the porter he would call later. I had no very keen desire to see Forber again, but as I had some interests in East Africa at that time, and information at first hand being always useful, I told the porter to give Forber my address and telephone number.

At eight o'clock, as I was about to leave my rooms, the

telephone rang. A voice I did not recognize asked whether I was in. Then an agonized, breathless voice exclaimed: "That you, Hardman? For God's sake come round to No.—Pall Mall. I must see you. Top floor. . . . Come at once!"

I replied that I was going out and asked who was speaking.

"This is Forber! Roberson is with me! We want to see you! Come quickly!" The voice had the sound of terror in it.

I said I was sorry. But Forber was not to be put off. He begged me to come round after dinner. For some reason I was curiously annoyed. I answered that I could not promise anything. With that I rang off.

Throughout dinner with some stodgy, family friends, my mind returned again and again to the memory of that anguished voice. The result was that at ten o'clock I made my excuses and went to the address given.

I was obliged to walk up four flights of stairs as the lift had ceased running. I had hardly touched the bell of flat No. 18 when the door was flung open by Roberson.

"Thank God, you've come," he said. "Forber is in an awful state." I looked at the man. He was white and haggard. Drops of perspiration stood on his forehead, and his hands were trembling as he closed the door.

He led me into the sitting room. Forber was gazing at the window. He paid no attention to me. He was breathing heavily and his face was ghastly pale. His collar was ripped off and the shirt was open at the front. On his throat I noticed at once were finger marks and across his forehead was a long scratch from which ran a small stream of blood. I thought the two men had been fighting.

"Here's Hardman," said Roberson.

Forber sat up, then sprang to his feet, but still keeping his eyes on the window with a concentrated and terrified gaze. He grabbed me by the hand. "Thanks for coming," he said hoarsely.

There was a curious musty smell in the room that I found very unpleasant. Both men were very hot, although the room was cold. There was a small fire in the grate, but it seemed to throw out no heat.

"Well," I said, "what's the trouble? You fellows look a bit agitated." I kept an outward appearance of nonchalance, but I confess I felt far from comfortable. Roberson had sat down and he made a queer attempt to laugh. Forber was mopping his brow. Both men kept stealing glances at the window. Gradually they both grew more composed. Forber repeated that it was good of me to come.

Cursing under their breath, the two men staggered about the room, struggling desperately with their invisible opponent

Presently, after a few stupid remarks from me, and little more than grunts from Forber, they appeared to regain some measure of sanity.

"You will think all this very strange, Hardman," Forber remarked, "but Roberson and I have had a rather trying time. I can't explain it but I felt that the presence—the presence——" His mind seemed to wander and his eyes turned to the window again. Roberson, too, was staring round the room, furtively, with sudden, quick twists of the head. It was uncanny.

Then Forber resumed. "The (*Continued on page 90*)

NEXT!—Within

Skeptics doubt that a room can have thing. But those who

THE outer door downstairs was closed with a sharp click, and the two men who had entered began to ascend the well worn stairs. As the sounds of footsteps and jerky conversation became louder, the lurking shadow at the door of John Tempest's rooms resolved itself into the figure of a young man who appeared to listen, and then as a pair of eyes rose above the level of the corridor floor, to move softly away and be lost in the dimness which lay beyond the bracket light—but not before Charles Walters had caught a startled glimpse of that excessively pallid face.

A look of puzzlement flitted across Walters' features—a phrase died unspoken on his lips. He automatically paused. Tempest brushed past him and stepped to his door.

Tempest was a large man. He wore an ulster over a rough weave gray suit. A soft hat was pulled down over his face. Walters was round of feature, keen of eye—a certain type of London barrister, neat in his conventional dress suit and dark overcoat.

Tempest pushed open the door and turned to his companion.

"Are you coming in, Walters?"

"Eh? No! I think not. Thanks."

"What's the matter? You seem upset all of a sudden."

"I—I'm all right," said Walters hastily. He peered down the hall with an anxious look in his eyes that he could not disguise, then as if ashamed of his action and with an attempt at a smile, he repeated: "I'm all right, Tempest."

"I'll take your word for it," said Tempest jovially. "Do come in for a little, Walters. It's early yet."

Walters hesitated.

"I've got to be in court early tomorrow morning. It must be midnight now. I must get my sleep to keep fit."

"Nonsense. Another ten minutes won't kill you," Tempest urged. "Come in and have something to drive out the chill. That lecture hall was as cold as a tomb. Just a drop of whisky for a night cap, a cigarette with me, and you can go upstairs."

"Well—all right then. A drink sounds tempting. But I can't stay."

As he followed Tempest, he looked once more along the corridor with the same puzzled stare, then closed the door.

"We need something after that hour and a half's torture," said Tempest, tossing his ulster and hat on a chair. "I always thought Professor Capri was a fool. Now I'm sure of it."

Walters took off his coat and hat with slow deliberation, and laid them down carefully. Standing with his back to the open fire, he nodded.

"Ugh! Ninety minutes on suicide! Jove!" He glanced around the room. "You're cosy in here."

Tempest looked up from the tray, set with glasses and a decanter.

"You'd scarcely think there was much to be said on the subject of suicide—apart from the medical and legal aspect."

"Or that anyone would care to sit and listen to it—yet, good heavens, the hall was packed! Lot of women too. What on earth do you suppose they went for?"

"Same reason as ourselves, I imagine—curiosity. Well, here's your drink. Here's to a well filled brief bag, old man! Cigarette?

I would have liked to have seen into the brains of some of the people there, and found out what they were thinking of."

His stubby forefinger was raised—as though to say to the tenant who would now occupy those rooms "Next!"

Four Creeping Walls

the personality of a living, breathing
know the truth——

By Robert Sneddon

Walters smiled though faintly. "If you had pried off my skull-cap, you'd have found I was thinking I'd have had a lot more fun watching a chorus of pretty girls. I fancy most of our distinguished fellow auditors were thinking of much the same."

"Capri's a crank. Extraordinary looking man! I must say he spoke very convincingly too."

"YES," Walters agreed. "There were times I was really impressed. Only——well, that statement of his that fifty per cent of humanity is on the verge of suicide was a bit far fetched."

"Of course. If he had his way, no doubt he'd have you and me labelled as potential suicides." Tempest laughed heartily. "Us? I'm too fond of life. As for you, Walters, with the world in front of you——Suicide? Bosh!"

"Bosh is the word. But then, the public will swallow anything these days."

"Anything but the truth. Have a drop more?"

"No, thanks."

"Want a clear head tomorrow, eh?" said Tempest as he helped himself generously. "Quite right. You know, I can stand a lot of guff, Walters. I'm open to be convinced on most any subject—if it is supported by logic and proof. But, when Capri gets up on his hind legs and blandly states that a man, for no known cause, will end his life with a messy knife, a revolver, or a dose of poison—that's too much for me! A poor devil who's driven to the wall and sees no way of escape?—Yes, that's possible. But a man who has no mental taint, who has money, hope, ambition, health—to kill himself? Why, that's arrant nonsense!"

"Yes," replied Walters from his chair, where he sat gazing thoughtfully into the fireplace, "I agree with you. Only there have been cases of *fel-des-se* where no earthly cause could be discovered."

"I'd like to see the case!" Tempest retorted.

Walters looked about him reflectively. What a delightful room it was, with its dark wood panels, its carved fireplace, its low book shelves well filled, and the Italian cabinet which held Tempest's collection of coins. Comfort, tradition—it had everything that a student's room should have. He had an idea that its beauties were wasted on Tempest. Even the tragedy of young——

"Well?" said Tempest sharply.

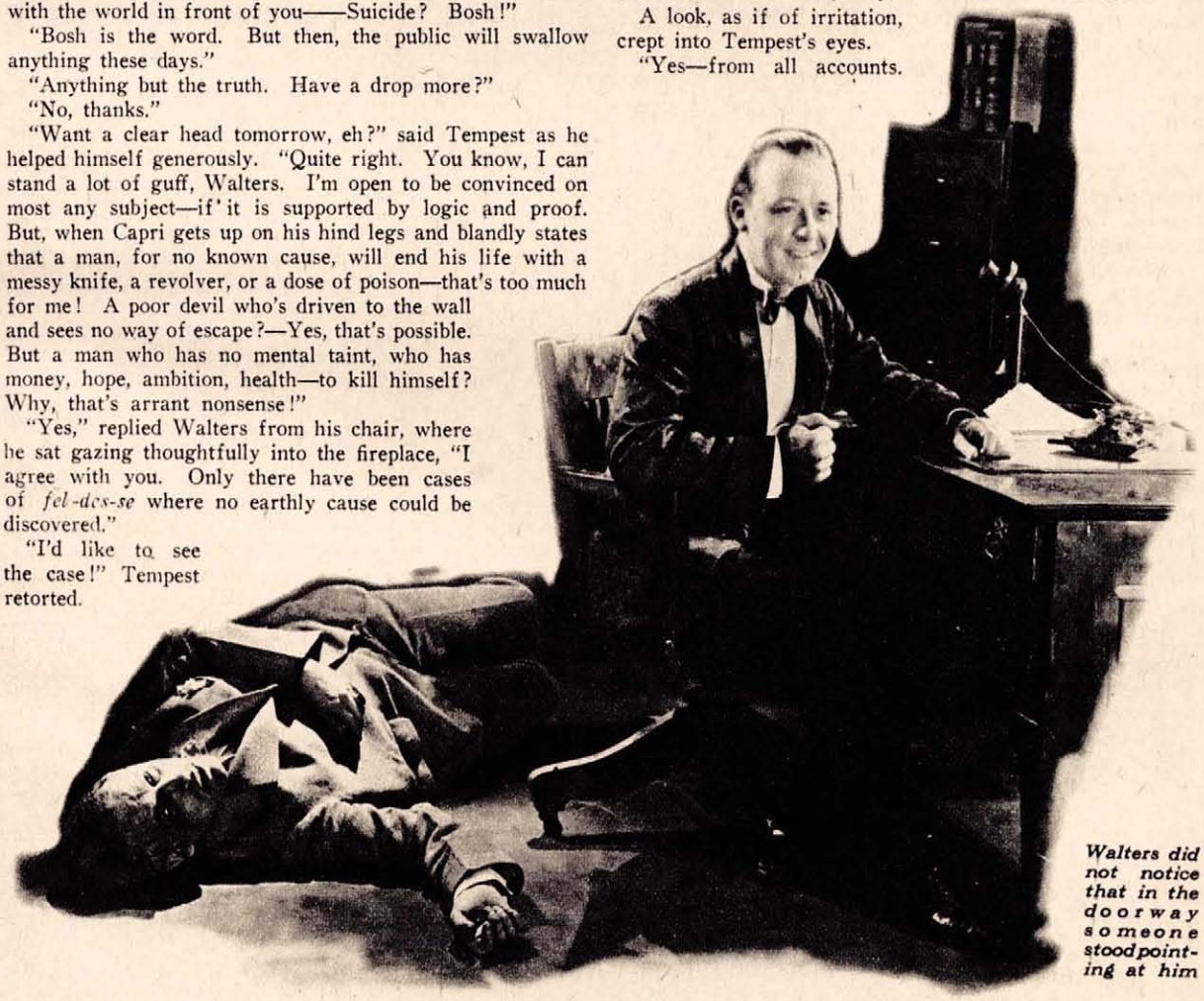
"A case, eh? Take the case of young——" Walters paused. "Oh well, perhaps I shouldn't."

"Go ahead, man. Case of whom?" Tempest prompted.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have brought it up," continued Walters, with apologetic reluctance. "But, as an instance, take the case of the poor devil who had these rooms before you. There was a mystery, if ever there was one!"

A look, as if of irritation, crept into Tempest's eyes.

"Yes—from all accounts.



Walters did not notice that in the doorway someone stood pointing at him

You're the one who first discovered him here, weren't you?"

Walters pointed to the archway dividing the room they were in, from the bedroom beyond.

"He was lying there. Poison. Not a scrap of writing to explain, excepting three words on an old envelope. Three words—without sense. *'This damned room'*——those were the three words.

"HIS affairs were all in order, and he had money in the bank. His life was insured three months earlier, and he had a clean bill of health. So far as I could learn, not the slightest trace of hereditary insanity existed. No reason—absolutely none—for him to kill himself."

"Didn't your legal acumen discern any trace of the usual woman?" asked Tempest, with a trace of sarcasm.

"He was engaged to be married. The girl was crazy about him, and he about her," Walters answered simply, "—so that theory is out."

"How about accident?"

"No one but a fool takes prussic acid by mistake. What on earth would he have prussic acid for, anyway—but the one thing?"

Tempest pointed to a vial on the mantel shelf.

"What am I doing with cyanide of potassium? You wouldn't infer that I mean to poison myself because I buy cyanide to clean my coins?"

"No! I'd never suspect you of designs on your own life, Tempest. But—some sudden impulse coming from God knows where, swept that poor devil out of his sanity. It interests me. It puzzles me. Some of these times I'm almost tempted to lie in wait for him, and ask him——"

Tempest stared, then burst into a loud laugh.

"Ask him? Good Lord, you amaze me, Walters! Surely you aren't on the level of mentality of old Briggs, the caretaker. You surely don't believe that yarn of his." Tempest paused and stroked his chin thoughtfully. "But I hope to heaven he doesn't carry out his threat to leave us. He's a thoroughly capable fellow, old Briggs is, even if he is overcredulous and acts like a fool at times."

"What would you say if I tell you I have seen young Halliwell's spirit?" Walters asked abruptly.

"I'd say you had more to drink than was good for you," Tempest told him boisterously.

"Do you think I am drunk now?"

"Eh?—no! What are you getting at?"

"Just this," said Walters slowly—"As we came upstairs, I saw him—at your door."

"Saw the poor devil who killed himself here in this room?" Tempest's eyesbrows raised, and he smiled sarcastically. "Oh come, come, Walters—I didn't think Capri could hypnotize you that badly."

Walters leaned forward earnestly.

"I'M not easily persuaded of anything, Tempest—you know that. When Briggs came to me with his story of seeing this thing, I laughed at him. In fact I said the same thing as you said about me—'Too much to drink!' But—well—I've changed my opinion. This is the third time I've caught a glimpse—just a fleeting glimpse of someone—or something—that is the image of young Halliwell."

"You're usually such a sane being, Walters, but this statement rather shakes my faith in you. You don't mean to infer that this wretched thing haunts the house? A ghost? Come—you're telling me that you've seen a ghost! That's a bit too much for me to swallow. Wrapped in a sheet, I suppose?"

"No, very much as he was in life, only his face was very white and drawn. He wore a dark suit. I couldn't mistake him, Tempest."

Tempest laid down his cigarette and looked at Walters steadily. Then he burst into a loud laugh.

"Very good! Excellent! Why, old man, you almost had me believing you, with that 'solemn old owl' manner of yours. I see now how you hoodwink juries."

Tempest rose to his feet with a wink, and took an exaggerated pose. "A slight impersonation of a well known figure in legal circles," he said mockingly. "Gentlemen of the jury, as I came up the stairs on the evening of December the twentieth, on the stroke of midnight, I saw before me, in front of the door giving entrance to the rooms of John Tempest, the apparition of a pale young man, which I state here, and now, without fear of contradiction, sustained by the evidence of my own eyes, by my own unshakable conviction, by the confirmation of a mind accustomed to weigh every trifle thrice over—was no other than that of a person whom I know to be dead. In fact, gentlemen of the jury, it was the ghost of——' No! old man, tell that to the marines, or to one of your trusting juries, but not to me. Have another whisky?"

> "'A suicide leaves some sort of impression on the place where he takes his life. He goes out unhappy, unexpressed, and leaves some—how shall I put it?—atmospheric depression, a certain lingering horror. Is it possible Halliwell left his gruesome influence on this room?'"

"NO, thanks!" replied Walters, smiling faintly. "Well, I see there's no use talking to you, Tempest. But seeing is believing, you know."

"Yes," said Tempest drily, "and I've heard of circumstantial evidence falling down with a crash. I'll wait until I see this ghost of yours. I give you my word I saw nothing as we came upstairs. And, I flatter myself my eyesight is as good as yours, my friend. Well, it's growing late. I mustn't keep you any longer."

Walters rose and yawned.

"I don't feel like it, but I've half an hour's reading in front of me tonight, before I turn in."

"I'll wait up a little myself," said Tempest. "Er—you say you found him here, did you?"

"Yes, just over there, under the arch—head in the bedroom, legs curled up in this room. Not a pleasant sight by any means."

Tempest walked slowly over to the spot and stared down at the dark flooring.

"I'm afraid one of Capri's theories is all wrong. You remember, he said something about the psychic trace of a suicide."

"No, I didn't catch that. What was it?"

"Oh, some crazy notion to the effect that a suicide leaves some sort of impression on the place where he takes his life. He goes out unhappy, unexpressed, and leaves some—how shall I put it?—atmospheric depression, a certain lingering horror. Is it possible Halliwell left his gruesome influence on this room? But I'm damned if I feel anything one way or the other. I have nothing but a desire at present to sit down, smoke a pipe, and toddle off to bed after that. My brother-in-law, fond of a joke you *(Continued on page 62)*

Under the SPELL of the Red Circle

With no let-up to Evelyn's hysteria—with the deadly influence of the Red Circle closing around the household—Doctor Grover himself suddenly vanishes as if the earth had swallowed him. What unseen hands spirited him away?

By Wilbert Wadleigh

"Doctor!" Travers called loudly. There was no answer—save the rustling of the leaves

PROF. EDWIN TRAVERS, eminent psychologist and well known authority on spiritism, is visited by Dr. Grover, a leader among the skeptics opposed to the professor. The doctor asks Travers to investigate the strange, trance-like actions of his pretty daughter, Evelyn.

Professor Travers magnanimously overlooks the doctor's opposition to his beliefs and teachings, and consents to visit the girl, to try to unravel the mystery of the "spells" she is subjected to that are such a source of worry to her parents.

Professor Travers learns, among other things, that the notorious Ronald Tracy, found dead from shock, shortly before, had tried by threats, and every other means, to obtain possession of the doctor's old Colonial manse, "Groverly," near Jamestown, Virginia, to use as his headquarters for the dreaded "devil cult"—the *Red Circle*.

Almost as soon as the professor arrives at the manse, Evelyn falls into one of her "spells" and talks, apparently in the person of another being. All are thrown into consternation, including her fiancé, Robert Briton, young newspaper man, who is present. A little later, Sam, negro butler, hurries in, reporting that the doctor's police dog, Rex, has met sudden death from the scratches of a great black cat that hovers about the place. Dr. Grover makes a chemical test and finds that the dog died of poison—poison scratches.

These happenings are not altogether a mystery to Professor Travers, who considers that they have a psychic cause. They do afford, however, an opportunity to furnish to Evelyn's father, incontestable proof of the existence of a spirit world in constant communication with the living. In fact, Travers is resolved that he will win the doctor over to his teachings and beliefs in regard to the unseen world, and he figures that these strange happenings will prove to be the very means to help him most in this.

IT was with these thoughts on his mind, as the sun was approaching the horizon, that the professor reached the old manse, feeling refreshed after an hour's walk to the ruins of Jamestown and back. The declining solar rays cast grotesque, elongated shadows of the old elms that lined the driveway. A few decades ago it had been a dirt road; now it was of decomposed granite, with cement sidewalks and expansive lawns on either side.

He halted, and surveyed the old house in fascination. The

structure was typically Colonial; of brick, with green shutters and a large veranda that ran the entire length of the house, spaced with round, white columns. The doctor had taken him through it that morning, explaining the various changes that had been made in the structure. As he viewed it now, he noted that the original building comprised the right wing, consisting of the living-room, dining-room, kitchen, and servants' quarters downstairs, and four bed-rooms and a bath-room upstairs. The upper right corner facing the front he knew to be Evelyn's room. He had been assigned the room next to it, and the doctor and Mrs. Grover were directly across the hall, which ran parallel to the front of the building.

The old section was covered with ivy, and a huge, ancient bogan-villea spread its purple bloom up the side of the veranda and in between the upper windows, spreading over the roof at the corner where the brick fireplace reared its chimney. An old grape-vine ascended an arbor to Evelyn's window, laden with half-grown fruit.

The new section was half the size of the original, and was also covered with vines, though not so thickly. Downstairs a hallway led off from the living-room in the old section to a music-room, a library, combination laboratory and operating-room, and a small bedroom in the back that was used for storage purposes. Upstairs were four guest rooms.

THE lengthening shadows of the tall elms bathed parts of the old manse in a premature dusk; moving splotches of sunlight on the walls filtering through waving branches gave a strange, animate effect to the ancient abode. The shutters stirred slightly in the breeze, with their windows seeming like so many monstrous eyes. Travers visualized the veranda with its white columns as a huge mouth; the house as a squatting-monster waiting to devour passers by.

"The stories you could tell!" he muttered to the brooding pile. "Tales of the birth of America; the Revolution—the Civil War——"

He walked on, and a car swept into the driveway. He recognized Evelyn Grover, the doctor, and young Robert Briton, and removed his cap to them.

"Well, Professor!" exclaimed Dr. Grover, as the party stopped in front of the house, "did you enjoy your walk?"

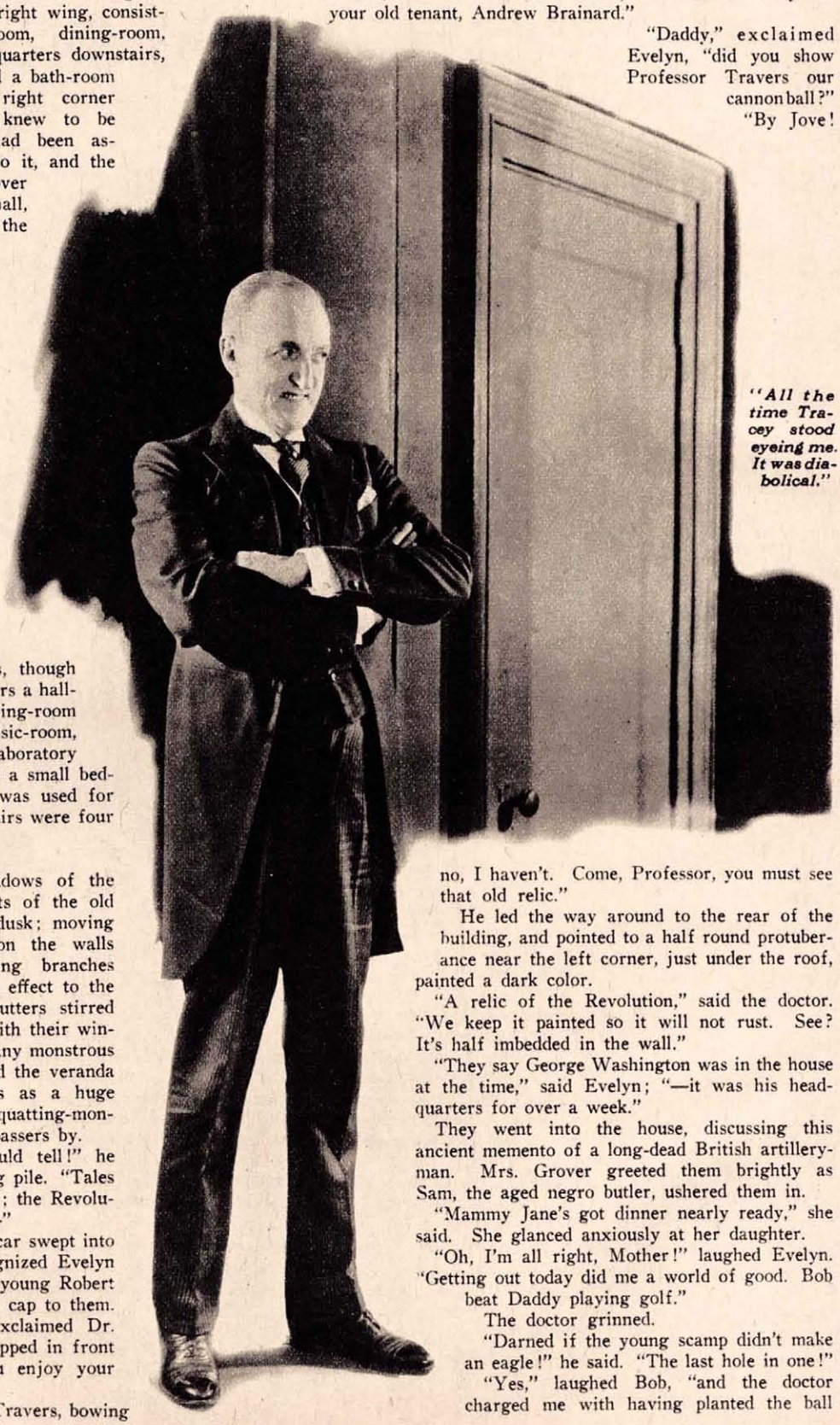
"Yes, indeed," said Travers, bowing to Miss Grover and Robert. "This is a historic old country hereabouts," he exclaimed. "I poked around Jamestown today."

"Didn't bump into Captain John Smith, did you Professor?" laughed Evelyn, jumping from the car.

"No," said Travers with a smile, "nor Patrick Henry nor your old tenant, Andrew Brainard."

"Daddy," exclaimed Evelyn, "did you show Professor Travers our cannon ball?"

"By Jove!



"All the time Tracey stood eyeing me. It was diabolical."

no, I haven't. Come, Professor, you must see that old relic."

He led the way around to the rear of the building, and pointed to a half round protuberance near the left corner, just under the roof, painted a dark color.

"A relic of the Revolution," said the doctor. "We keep it painted so it will not rust. See? It's half imbedded in the wall."

"They say George Washington was in the house at the time," said Evelyn; "—it was his headquarters for over a week."

They went into the house, discussing this ancient memento of a long-dead British artilleryman. Mrs. Grover greeted them brightly as Sam, the aged negro butler, ushered them in.

"Mammy Jane's got dinner nearly ready," she said. She glanced anxiously at her daughter.

"Oh, I'm all right, Mother!" laughed Evelyn. "Getting out today did me a world of good. Bob beat Daddy playing golf."

The doctor grinned.

"Darned if the young scamp didn't make an eagle!" he said. "The last hole in one!"

"Yes," laughed Bob, "and the doctor charged me with having planted the ball

there the night before. Shows how much faith he has in me!"

They dressed for dinner, which was served in the ancient dining-room with its blackened beams, peg-fastened, a venerable Colonial buffét and other old pieces of furniture surrounding them. The dining-table itself had been pointed out to Travers earlier in the day; it was of black walnut of the finest quality, over two hundred years old, and priceless.

SAM waited upon them with simple efficiency. Mammy Jane had prepared an old-fashioned southern chicken dinner with yams and corn-pone that put conversation to shame. Travers was charmed, both by the savory cooking, and the democracy in the Grover household. The two negroes evidently loved and were almost a part of the family. Sam was spoken to and made replies while serving, frequently cutting in on the conversation of the others. There was an utter absence of restraint, yet his manner was always profoundly respectful. Travers had never felt more completely at ease in his life. The doctor made a few joking remarks to Sam about the black cat, which the aged negro said had not been seen the rest of the day.

The subject of the house was brought up by the doctor, and remained the main topic of interest.

"It's terribly old," said Evelyn, "and sometimes it has a depressing effect upon me. I don't know how to describe it, exactly. I think of all the people who have lived here who are dead and gone: And Colonel Andrew and his old diary."

"I was working on the cipher after luncheon," said Travers. "It's rather difficult. I spent three hours studying it."

"So that's why you wouldn't come with us!" exclaimed Evelyn. "Rather pore over a musty old book!"

Travers laughed.

"A very interesting book, I assure you. Why, I read about Washington and his staff studying maps here, no doubt spread out on this very table."

"Think of that!" Mrs. Grover exclaimed.

"Interesting," said the doctor.

"This chicken *a la Maryland* is more interesting to me," laughed Briton, "than just maps."

"Mammy is a dandy cook," said Evelyn. "I don't know what we'd do without her. But she's frightfully superstitious. She believes the house is haunted!"

Sam appeared, and approached the doctor deferentially.

"Beg pahdon, suh, but Mammy wants yo' to 'vestigate some noises, suh; in th' kitchen wall, suh."

The doctor laughed, and rose.

"Speak of the devil," he said, "and he's bound to appear. Come on, folks; let's make it a convention."

They all rose and followed him to the kitchen, where Mammy Jane, her huge bulk braced against the kitchen stove, a meat cleaver in her hand, turned widened eyes upon them and held a black finger to her lips.

"Sh!" she whispered, pointing to the wall; "in dere!"

They listened, but heard nothing. Dr. Grover smiled indulgently, and shook his head.

"But ah tells yo', ah heerd 'em jes' now!" the old negress cried. "Yo' all jes' wait."

"Mammy," laughed Mrs. Grover, "every time we come to hear your noises, you haven't any to exhibit."

Mammy Jane put the cleaver

(*Continued on page* 70)

"I was about to rise when suddenly I was seized from behind by powerful arms and a gag placed over my mouth."

The Man Who Died TWICE

By Frank Belknap Long, Jr.

WHEN Hazlitt saw the stranger at his desk his emotions were distinctly unpleasant. "Upcher might have given me notice," he thought. "He wouldn't have been so high-handed a few months ago!"

He gazed angrily about the office. No one seemed aware of his presence. The man who had taken his desk was dictating a letter, and the stenographer did not even raise her eyes. "It's damnable!" said Hazlitt, and he spoke loud enough for the usurper to hear; but the latter continued to dictate: "The premium on policy 6284 has been so long overdue——"

Hazlitt stalked furiously across the office and stepped into a room blazing with light and clamorous with conversation. Upcher, the President, was in conference, but Hazlitt ignored the three directors who sat puffing contentedly on fat cigars, and addressed himself directly to the man at the head of the table.

"I've worked for you for twenty years," he shouted furiously, "and you needn't think you can dish me now. I've helped make this company. If necessary, I shall take legal steps——"

Mr. Upcher was stout and stern. His narrow skull and small eyes under heavy eyebrows, suggested a very primitive type. He had stopped talking and was staring directly at Hazlitt. His gaze was icily indifferent—stony, remote. His calm was so unexpected that it frightened Hazlitt.

The directors seemed perplexed. Two of them had stopped smoking, and the third was passing his hand rapidly back and forth across his forehead. "I've frightened them," thought Hazlitt. "They know the old man owes everything to me. I mustn't appear too submissive."

"You can't dispose of me like this," he continued dogmatically. "I've never complained of the miserable salary you gave me, but you can't throw me into the street without notice."

The President colored slightly. "Our business is very important——" he began.

HAZLITT cut him short with a wave of his hand. "My business is the only thing that matters now. . . . I want you to know that I won't stand for your ruthless tactics. When a man has slaved as I have for twenty years he deserves some consideration. I am merely asking for justice. In heaven's name, why don't you say something? Do you want me to do all of the talking?"

Mr. Upcher wiped away with his coat sleeve the small beads of sweat that had accumulated above his collar. His gaze remained curiously impersonal, and when Hazlitt swore at him he wet his lips and began: "Our business is very important——"

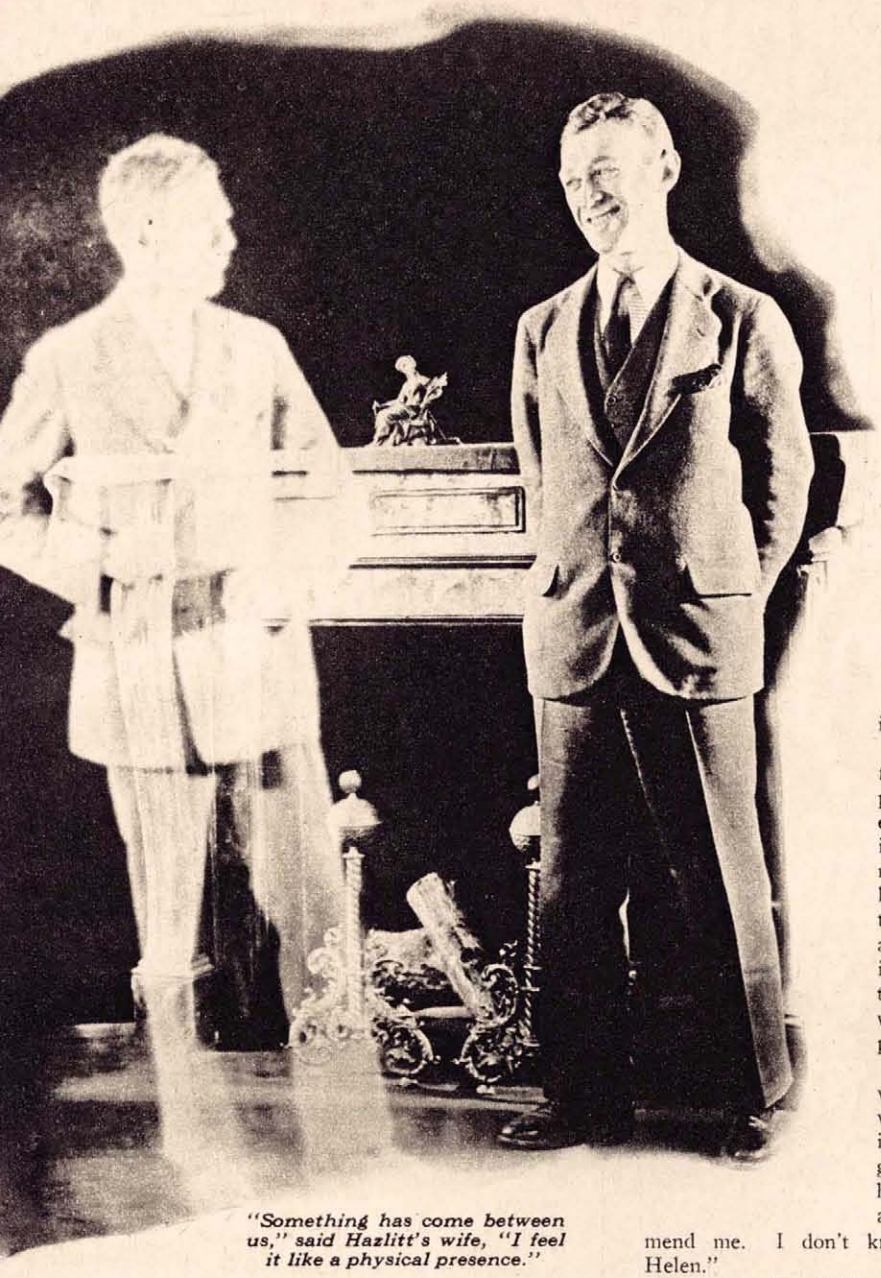
Hazlitt trembled at the repetition of the man's unctuous remark. He found himself reluctant to say more, but his anger continued to mount. He advanced threateningly to the head of the table and glared into the impassive eyes of his former employer. Finally he broke out: "You're a damn scoundrel!"

One of the directors coughed. A sickly grin spread itself across Mr. Upcher's stolid countenance. "Our business, as I was saying——"

Hazlitt raised his fist and struck the president of the Richbank Life Insurance Company squarely upon the jaw. It was an intolerably ridiculous thing to do, but Hazlitt was no longer capable of verbal persuasion. And he had decided that nothing less than a blow would be adequate.

The grin disappeared from Mr. Upcher's face. He raised his right hand and passed it rapidly over his chin. A flash of anger appeared for a moment in his small, deep-set eyes. "Something I don't understand," he murmured. "It hurt like the devil. I don't know precisely what it means!"

"Don't you?" shouted Hazlitt. "You're lucky to get off



"Something has come between us," said Hazlitt's wife, "I feel it like a physical presence."

In Death as in Life Hazlitt was futile, spineless, ineffectual. Then came one glorious opportunity

with that. I've a good mind to hit you again." But he was frightened at his own violence, and he was unable to understand why the directors had not seized him. They seemed utterly unaware of anything out of the ordinary; and even Mr. Upcher did not seem greatly upset. He continued to rub his chin, but the old indifference had crept back into his eyes.

"Our business is very important——" he began.

Hazlitt broke down and wept. He leaned against the wall while great sobs convulsed his body. Anger and abuse he could have faced, but Mr. Upcher's stony indifference robbed him of manhood. It was impossible to argue with a man who refused to be insulted. Hazlitt had reached the end of his rope; he was decisively beaten. But even his acknowledgment of defeat passed unnoticed. The directors were discussing policies and premiums and first mortgages, and Mr. Upcher advanced a few commonplace opinions while his right hand continued to caress his chin.

"Policies that have been carried for more than fifty years," he was saying, "are not subject to the new law. It is possible by the contemplated——"

Hazlitt did not wait for him to finish. Sobbing hysterically he passed into the outer office, and several minutes later he was descending in the elevator to the street. All moral courage had left him; he felt like a man who has returned from the grave. He was white to the lips, and when he stopped for a moment in the vestibule he was horrified at the way an old woman poked at him with her umbrella and actually pushed him aside.

The glitter and chaos of Broadway at dusk did not soothe him. He walked despondently, with his hands in his pockets and his eyes upon the ground. "I'll never get another job," he thought. "I'm a nervous wreck and old Upcher will never recommend me. I don't know how I'll break the news to Helen."

The thought of his wife appalled him. He knew that she would despise him. "She'll think I'm a jellyfish," he groaned. "But I did all a man could. You can't buck up against a stone wall. I can see that old Upcher had it in for me from the start. I hope he chokes!"

He crossed the street at 73rd Street and started leisurely westward. It was growing dark and he stopped for a moment to look at his watch. His hands trembled and the timepiece almost fell to the sidewalk. With an oath he replaced it in his vest. "Dinner will be cold," he muttered. "And Helen won't be in a pleasant mood. How on earth am I going to break the news to her?"

WHEN he reached his apartment he was shivering. He sustained himself by tugging at the ends of his mustache and whistling apologetically. He was overcome with shame and fear but something urged him not to put off ringing the bell.

He pressed the buzzer firmly, but no reassuring click answered him. Yet—suddenly he found himself in his own apartment. "I certainly got in," he mumbled in an immeasurably frightened voice, "but I apparently didn't come

through the door . . . . Or did I? I don't think I'm quite well."

He hung up his hat and umbrella, and walked into the sitting room. His wife was perched on the arm of his Morris chair, and her back was turned towards him. She was in dressing gown and slippers, and her hair was down. She was whispering in a very low voice: "My dear; my darling! I hope you haven't worked too hard to-day. You must take care of your health for my sake. Poor Richard went off in three days with double pneumonia.

Hazlitt stared. The woman on the chair was obviously not addressing him, and he thought for an instant that he had strayed into the wrong apartment and mistaken a stranger for his wife. But the familiar lines of her profile soon undeceived him, and he gasped. Then in a blinding flash he saw it all. His wife had betrayed him, and she was speaking to another man.

Hazlitt quickly made up his mind that he would kill his wife. He advanced ominously to where she sat, and stared at her with furious, bloodshot eyes. She shivered and glanced about her nervously.

A woman passed through him. "Horrible!" he groaned. "There isn't anything to me at all! I'm worse than a jellyfish!"

The stranger in the chair rose and stood with his back to the fireplace. Hazlitt saw that he was tall and lean, and handsome. He seemed happy, and was smiling.

Hazlitt clenched his fist and glared fiercely at this intruder into his private home.

"Something has come between us," said Hazlitt's wife in a curiously distant voice. "I feel it like a physical presence. You will perhaps think me very silly."

The stranger shook his head. "I feel it too," he said. "It's as if the ghost of an old love had come back to you. While you were sitting on the chair I saw a change come over your face. I think you fear something."

"I'll make you both fear something!" shouted Hazlitt. He struck his wife on the face with his open hand. She colored slightly and continued to address the stranger. "It's as if *he* had come back. It is six months to-night since we buried him. He was a good husband and I am not sure that I have reverenced his memory. Perhaps we were too hasty, Jack!"

Hazlitt suppressed an absurd desire to scream. The blood was pounding in his ears, and he gazed from his wife to the stranger with stark horror. His wife's voice sent a flood of dreadful memories welling through his consciousness.

HE saw again the hospital ward where he had spent three days of terrible agony, gasping for breath and shrieking for water. A tall doctor with sallow bloodless cheeks bent wearily above him and injected something into his arm. Then unconsciousness, a blessed oblivion wiping out the world and all its disturbing sights and sounds.

Later he opened his eyes and caught his wife in the act of poisoning him. He saw her standing above him with a spoon, and a bottle in her hand, on which was a skull and crossbones. He endeavored to rise up, to cry out, but his voice failed him and he could not move his limbs. He saw that his wife was possessed of a devil and primitive horror fastened on his tired brain.

He made dreadful grimaces and squirmed about under the sheets, but his wife was relentless. She bent and forced the spoon between his teeth. "I don't love you," she laughed shrilly. "And you're better dead. I only hope you won't return to haunt me!"

Hazlitt choked and fainted. He did not regain consciousness but later he watched his body being prepared for burial, and amused himself by thinking that his wife would soon regret her vileness. "I shall show her what a ghost can do!" he reflected grimly. "I shall pay her for this! She won't love me when I'm through with her!"

There had followed days of confusion. Hazlitt forgot that he was only a ghost, and he had walked into his old office and deliberately insulted Mr. Upcher. But now that his wife stood before him memories came rushing back. (*Continued on page* 52)

Amazing Experience of One who was Saved from Life-Long Baldness through Koskott

"I HAD a very bad case of Alopecia Areata," writes Mr. Barnes. "It had advanced so far that every single hair on my head was **gone.** And to make matters worse, my eye-brows and eye-lashes fell out, too!

"I paid out $150 to a noted scalp specialist for a special treatment, in the hopes of effecting a cure. At the time he took my case he very frankly told me that he would not make any promises, as it was the worst case he had ever seen. To be brief, at the end of six months' treatment, there were perhaps one hundred hairs scattered over my scalp—and those were very weak. In fact, they were so weak that I hardly dared massage my scalp, for fear of having them fall out. And within that time, not an eye-brow, nor an eye-lash appeared.

"Then, by accident it seems, I came across your little book entitled 'Perfect Hair.' Ever since that day I have always thought of it as the psychological moment. I immediately started using your preparations, without missing a single day. I followed directions faithfully. Today my faith is rewarded by having a fine head of hair. My head is completely covered with hair.

"Furthermore, I wish to say for your benefit that there are dozens of men, friends of mine, who, seeing the results of the Koskott Method, say that it is the most wonderful thing they ever saw. One of these men made the remark that—'If I had not seen it with my own eyes, I would never have believed it.'

"Words cannot express my gratitude for the benefits I have received from the use of the Koskott Method."

Ghost Stories is a very popular magazine. So guard this copy carefully as someone might borrow it and fail to return it. Then you would not be able to get your testing box of Koskott.

The best advice is to fill out coupon and send it today. Then you will be sure to receive a reply by return mail.

Want To Grow Hair?

Do You Want to Grow Hair on that Bald Spot?
Do You Want to Overcome Dry Scalp?
Do You Want to Stop Falling Hair?
Do You Want to Banish Dandruff Completely?
Do You Want to Darken Gray or White Hair?

Then Test the True Value of Koskott

Do you want, FREE, a trial box of Koskott that has proved successful in so many cases?

If so, you need only answer this advertisement by post-card or letter, or fill in the coupon below, asking for FREE BOX.

This famous preparation is for dandruff, thinning hair and several forms of BALDNESS.

In many cases a new hair growth has been reported when all else had failed. So why not see for yourself?

What Koskott has done for others' hair, why not for yours?

KOSKOTT IS USED by MEN and WOMEN

It is perfectly genuine and often starts hair growth in a few days.

W. H. COPELAND (photo above) reports: "My hair is improving right along, the bald spot looks darker; I am thankful I heard of Koskott."

MISS MILDRED PERRY sends her photograph to show that her hair is exactly one yard long. She writes that before using Koskott her hair was short and ugly and her head had three large bald spots.

Ladies: Bobbed hair is stylish—and beautiful. To keep it attractive-looking, it must be lustrous, abundant and free of dandruff. To maintain a lovely hair growth, **use Koskott.**

FREE BOX

Rejoice in the possession of

A Beautiful Hair Growth

Do not be discouraged if you have tried various lotions, shampoos, tonics, hair dyes, etc., without success. Most of those things are prepared according to the same obsolete principle. **Koskott is different.**

But why think of the past? Send for a free box of Koskott. We have evidence from those who had lost most, or nearly all their hair, and from others whose hair was gray and dull-looking, who now rejoice in the possession of a beautiful hair growth. What has been accomplished for others, why not for you?

Do not pass by this message without giving it full heed. Convince yourself about Koskott.

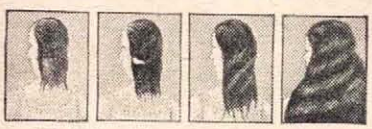
You Can Do a Kindness

If your own hair is strong, healthy and of good color (and if you feel confident that it will always remain so), you will probably be interested in Koskott for the sake of friends and acquaintances whose hair is **thin, falling out, or perhaps bald.**

They might be glad to hear about Mr. Barnes and the others who gained such remarkable results after using Koskott.

By sending us their names and addresses, you can do them a great kindness. We shall be glad to communicate with them, and they will appreciate your thoughtfulness. If you prefer, your name will not be mentioned.

LOVELY HAIR GROWTH



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SPIRIT TALES

Timely Topics of Current Interest

THERE are still witches—in New Jersey.

Legally, they still exist in the state that lies across the Hudson River from New York. One can still be jailed for being a witch and for practicing witchcraft in the flourishingly modern cities of Newark, Trenton (where Woodrow Wilson was once governor), and the other great industrial communities of the state.

Some years ago a woman who claimed to be a female preacher was arrested in Newark, charged with being a witch within the meaning of the statute. At that time it was said that the police of the city were conducting a private war of their own, directed at witches, with a wizard squad specially detailed for the job.

All this seems preposterous, but it is all true. The woman minister who was arrested on the charge (no good would be served by mentioning her name here) was the head of a ghost cult, as the papers called it, and she was accused of communing with evil spirits.

Michael Long, who was at that time Chief of Police in Newark, was quoted as saying about the case:

"This woman is a witch within the meaning of the statute. The information that she gives out at her 'circles,' breaks up homes. One man complained to us that his wife had become a raving maniac, as a result of the things she told her. Newark has made up its mind to get rid of witchcraft."

All this was a number of years ago, and yet, so far as can be learned, the law still prevails. Moreover, such laws persist today in many states, although the voters do not dream they are still in force.

Of course the belief in witchcraft is older than the Bible. Its practice is gravely condemned in the Mosaic scriptures, and it was by the authority of such condemnations that many old women were burned in New England. There were sorcerers and sooth-sayers in the days of ancient Babylon and Egypt. In the famous code of Hammurabi, who lived 2,000 years B. C., and who was a contemporary of Abraham, appears this law:

"If a man has laid a charge of witchcraft upon a man, and has not justified it, he upon whom the witchcraft is laid shall plunge into the Holy river, and if the Holy river overcome him, he who accused him shall take himself to his house."

Apparently the earliest record of a witch being burned to death is in the year 1275, the witch confessing that she fed her offspring the flesh of babes. At Toulouse, in 1335, sixty-three persons were accused of being witches, eight of whom were burned to death and the others were imprisoned for life.

One of the most famous trials in the United States was that of Grace Sherwood, of Princess Anne County, Virginia, who, in July, 1706, was "put into water above man's depth, to try how she swims."

According to Connecticut laws, adopted in 1642, but, so far as is known, never repealed, "anyone that be a witch, or consulteth with familiar spirits, shall be put to death."

One of the most serious problems today in the Philippines is the native belief in witchcraft.

ONE of the most persistent beliefs in the rural portions of the United States is that good luck attends anyone who possesses a piece of the rope with which a criminal is hanged. After hangings in Maryland there is always a division of the rope. One Baltimore druggist exhibited in a showcase, dozens of pieces of rope about the length of a man's finger, and attached to each was a tag bearing the name of the felon whose neck was broken by the rope.

ONE of the great occult waves of the present century was that of the ouija board. During the war it leaped into amazing popularity; the fame of Patience Worth and other psychic celebrities was achieved on its shining surface, with the black letters and numbers and the little moving table.

How did the ouija board originate?

Its history is most undistinguished. Its inventor was a Baltimore manufacturer—a man who sold billiard tables, and who was looking for an addition to the line. He put out the ouija board as a hazard, regarding it purely as a game, just as today in the novelty and toy shops you will find many other fortune telling games that have no conceivable importance in the minds of serious people. But the ouija board surprised William Fuld, the man who patented it. Over night it became a blazing, meteoric success. He had to turn his billiard table factories into ouija board factories. He even licensed other manufacturers to produce the boards under his patents.

President Wilson had one in his home and it was said even to have predicted his first election. Sir William Barrett conducted grave experiments with it. Science and religion examined it, debated it, praised it with hosannahs, or denounced it with anathemas, as became them. Scarcely anyone ignored it.

Meanwhile Mr. Fuld continued, unexpectedly, to get rich on his ouija board. To this day he doesn't understand it.

AN amazing case of psychic power has just come to light through the reports of the celebrated Doctor Osty, one of the most famous of all the scientific investigators of such phenomena.

This case involves the recovery of lost property, and here are the facts, considerably abbreviated, as reported by Doctor Osty:—

"In May, 1921, Mme. S. went from Paris to Versailles for the day, to visit friends. She was wearing a valuable diamond star and on returning home, missed the jewel.

"No trace could be found. She was taken to see Mme. Morel, who held one of her gloves—Mme. S. sitting in a corner of the room while her friend spoke to the clairvoyant.

"Mme. Morel, who works in a light state of hypnosis, asked, 'What am I about to see about this woman?' She was told, 'Look for something that is troubling her at this moment.' She said, 'She is distracted about the loss of something . . . a large jewel, shining and valuable. It is not lost, it is hidden, and will be restored. . . . I follow this lady as she leaves her home in an automobile with another person . . . she goes to a town near here. . . . I do not know its name . . . she visits three houses . . . the jewel has fallen near one of them. . . . I see it picked up by a woman, young, very stout, with light eyes and hair. The jewel has been locked up; she thought of keeping it but is afraid . . . she will restore it before the week is out. No police measures should be taken . . . she will give it back.'

"Mr. S., who had informed the Mayor of Versailles, received a letter four days later, summoning him to that town, and the jewel was restored by a workman whose sister had picked it up. The man was stout and very fair in coloring. Mr. S., did not see the sister, whom he supposed to resemble her brother."

In passing, it should also be remarked that this is one of many hundreds of such cases assembled with painstaking and discerning care by Doctor Osty.

A CERTAIN celebrated medium has written the editor of this department making two startling predictions.

One of them is so grave in its character that we are withholding it, for reasons of public policy. If by any sad chance it should be fulfilled, we shall refer to this item and then publish her prediction.

However, she also makes another prophecy which we feel under no obligation to withhold.

"President Calles will send troops over the border and invade American soil," she says in her letter.

Now note this important point:

Many mediums make vague prophecies which can mean almost anything. These are called Delphic. But this woman has left herself no avenue of escape. She has made two definite predictions. We are making a public record of them here, in case we should have cause to refer to them again.

The Woman With Two Souls

(Continued from page 23)

frame. I watched with dimmed eyes while Norma followed the retreat of nothingness, never missing a step, overlooking no slightest turn or flutter of all they had faithfully practiced together for that dance, until she was back on the miniature stage and the curtains had closed upon her.

"Bertolli," I said, then, "shall we applaud?"

THE old man turned his face to me. I could not understand the look in his deep eyes. It seemed to be fear, held in check by his terrific power of will.

"I think we shall do best to sit very still," he said, slowly. "I had reproached myself for not providing music, but I see now it is not needed. Yes, we must sit still, my friend. There may be danger."

"Danger! To her?" I exclaimed.

"To us, perhaps. Who can say?"

"Bertolli!" I was angry, for the moment. Danger, from my little girl? But his hand closed imperatively on my knee—again only for an instant—and as I leaned indignantly toward him, he shut his eyes and crossed himself once more. I glanced quickly at the stage. The curtains of the frame were parting.

The Roman scene was on. She was following the act through without omitting a detail. In this scene, two gladiators with swords and shields—very light swords and shields!—had charged and counter-charged, threatened and fled about the stage. Never again would there be two! That thought stabbed me through like steel, but I bit my lips until I could taste the blood, and kept silent. If this was the price of sanity for her, this play-acting that wrenched my very heartstrings because of its suggestion of other days, then I must pay the price. I did not even hide my eyes, like Bertolli. I watched her dance through the whole of the complicated scene, exactly as she had done in the days irrevocably gone, when Sally danced opposite. But now, no one danced opposite.

The mock duel ended, as had the previous scene, in the picture frame. This dance depicted a fight to the death—the "Dying Gladiator" story. Norma, the one who was to die, pressed both hands to her breast at last, and slowly sank to the miniature stage. As her hand drooped and the closing curtains hid her, I thought poignantly of another figure in armor, sword held aloft and face exulting in victory, whose presence should have completed the picture. Was Norma, too, thinking of her? I did not know. I could not understand what strange fancies found place in that bent head.

A shiver went through Bertolli's stout body as the curtains came together. Great blotches of sweat stood out on his forehead.

"*Dio mio*, grant that it may be over!" he groaned, thickly. "I can not stand it longer. It is too much! Oh, my friend, let us go while we may!" But before I could find words to calm his strange agitation, he pulled himself together, with an attempt at a smile. "What foolishness is this I say? We can not go. We will not go. It is her mind that is at stake. We do our part if we look and are silent. Ah! God in heaven, it comes again!"

HE was trembling, and, with the last words, his teeth chattered. The strength, the self-control, seemed to have passed to me.

"Steady, Bertolli!" I urged, unconsciously using the very word with which he had held me together, a few minutes before. But he continued to quiver and to mutter to himself throughout the last dance. My eyes quickly left him. I was watching, with a heavy heart, the graceful figure of my little girl. This last scene had been a love passage of "Old New York." Sally (swain) had pressed her advances, at first timidly then with greater assurance as the climax of the act was reached, on Norma, the slender old-fashioned girl in flounced skirt and bonnet. So alike were they that the roles could have been reversed, and I am sure none of the audience would have known.

I watched my old-fashioned girl now trip through the graceful movements, advancing, retreating, running away with laughing face over her shoulder—yielding at last. In that finale—again staged within the broad picture frame—she was to lean backward, supported by her sister's arms. I wondered how Norma would do this. Some of the other movements had seemed almost impossible for one dancer alone, yet she had not varied them from the standard of the act.

Ah, how I knew that act! If she had changed it in the slightest, I could have detected the difference. She had changed nothing, yet now she would have to do so. Not even her flexible muscles could take that position unsupported. I waited. She leaned backward—backward—farther—yet farther, a smile on her face. I cried out, and tried to rise, but Bertolli's iron hand held me down.

Then my eyes were opened, and I saw. There were two dancers. My little girl was supported by a ghost figure—*the figure of Sally!*

With staring eyes and pounding heart I looked at them—but only for the space of a breath—then the curtains of the frame closed. A moment later, Norma, still in the dress of "Old New York," stepped down to the stage, looked about her wonderingly, then flung herself weeping upon the hard boards—and I forgot my fear—forgot everything except that she needed me.

I ran faster to her than Bertolli; but I heard him exclaiming, as he lumbered after me:

"She has found tears! To the good God give thanks! She has found tears, and her mind—it is saved!"

Not until she was calmer, and softly weeping in my arms, did I know that the past hour was gone from her. The curtain of her memory had been rung down when something had passed to her from her dying sister's eyes. It did not rise again until she found herself, bitterly weeping, upon Bertolli's stage. What she had done that night was to be a blank, forever.

TWO years later, Norma and I came to Bertolli's with another act. I myself was her dancing partner, but I had little to do. For in that short time, she had become the greatest of them all. Palvini—Premier Danseuse of the age! You will recognize the name, I know. It is the one she took when she began to dance alone. To me, however, she is not the great Palvini, but my Norma.

On the first night of this engagement, Bertolli and I sat in his little office at the theater, and talked of the days that were gone. It is a good place in which to recall such things, this dingy room of Bertolli's, yellow with age and mellowed with tobacco smoke, for the walls are covered from floor to ceiling with pictures out of the past. I think anyone of note who has ever trod that stage has something there: a photograph, perhaps, or a letter in faded ink; or, it may be, only a sere and torn scrap of a program, with a name on it. Our picture hangs directly over Bertolli's desk, the girls in their page costumes, I behind them, one hand on the shoulder of each.

That night, Bertolli leaned back in his chair, and a shadow crossed his wrinkled face as he looked through the clouds of his own tobacco smoke, at the picture.

"In a long life filled with many wonderful experiences, that was the most wonderful," he said, solemnly.

I knew what he was thinking of. The memory of that dance came back to me, and I looked away for a moment, with a lump in my throat.

"Did she ever remember it?" he asked, gently.

I shook my head.

"Yet she was completely cured? There was no—what shall I call it?—no breakdown of the mind?"

I could answer him emphatically on that point.

"She showed normal grief—nothing more," I assured him. Then the feeling of what I owed the man came to me. "Bertolli, you were right. If we had not remained silent and let her do as she wished that night, her mind would have broken. I am sure of it."

He smiled at me—a grave, inscrutable smile.

"I have spent many hours, my friend, thinking about that night. I have tried to explain it to myself."

I must have stared at him, perplexed, for he went on, slowly:

"Those two—they were twins. They were very close to each other—much closer than most sisters. Was that not so?"

He had opened a long-pent well of emotion. I told him of my girls. There had been a bond between them, indeed. All through their lives, though they had

been two in body, they had seemed one in soul. I rambled on and told him stories of their childhood, and of the years afterward, when again and again, as I had seen, they knew each other's thoughts without words. I told him, too, of that long, strange look between them at the last. He did not interrupt me, but nodded from time to time, with his same odd smile.

"Norma dances even better than she used to do," he observed, irrelevantly, when I had finished.

"Twice as well!"

"Listen, my friend." He leaned forward, and his eyes held me. "All my life it has been given me to know and to see certain things which many people do not—you understand?—the things of the spirit. That night, you, too, saw something."

"Two dancers—both my girls—at the last," I answered him, finding the words slowly. It was hard for me to speak of that, even then.

"But only at the last?" he persisted. I nodded.

"I knew it would be so. From the beginning of the dance that night, the two were there, but I feared to show the other to you. I feared for your reason, my friend. I was careful not to touch you, when that other was visible, for with the touch my power of sight would pass to you, also. But at the last, the strain was too great. I forgot, for one moment. And when I put my hand on your knee, you saw."

I COULD not reply to him at once. In the presence of this old man, whose eyes beheld the soul, I had become very humble. He smiled at me, and waited, for the question which I think he knew was coming.

"You said that you could explain——" I ventured, at last; but he shook his head, gently.

"I am not so sure of these things, my friend. I said only that I had *tried* to explain it, to myself. Now that you have told me of the last message which passed between them—the message of one soul speaking to another through the eyes—perhaps I am surer. When their eyes met, she who was about to pass into the world of spirits took control of her who was to linger in this world. It was a wise and loving control. It steadied a mind that was about to break. They were so close, these two, that when the one was taken the other could not remain sane without help, until the critical moments were over.

And, help was forthcoming. Sally waited to give it, before she passed on. I think, too, my friend, that in the final dance she conferred upon her sister her portion of the genius they had in common. You see? For the first time, then, your Norma was complete—if I may call it that. They had been mutually dependent; now she depended on no one. The cord was cut which held her back from greatness. That is how I explain it, but it is only my surmise. I am not certain."

"She was *my* daughter," I cried, with a sharpening of the old grief I had thought long buried. "Why could I not see her from the first? Why was she hidden from my eyes until you touched me?"

The old man shrugged his shoulders, and smiled.

"Who shall answer that, my friend? Who shall say why so few of us ever see into the reality of the great mystery of life that surrounds us? And why are they who have sight given a glimpse of it so seldom?"

I shook my head. I was thrown into deep thought.

"No one knows," said the old man "—no one can answer that question. It is one of the things we leave with God."

The Man Who Died Twice

(*Continued from page* 48)

He was a thin, emaciated ghost, but he could make himself felt. Nothing but vengeance remained to him, and he did not intend to forgive his wife. It was not in his nature to forgive. He would force a confession from her, and if necessary he would choke the breath from her abominable body. He advanced and seized her by the throat.

He was pressing with all his might upon the delicate white throat of his wife. He was pressing with lean, bony fingers; his victim seemed sunk into a kind of stupor. Her eyes were half-shut and she was leaning against the wall.

THE stranger watched her with growing horror. When she began to cough he ran into the kitchen and returned with a glass of water. When he handed it to her she drained it at a gulp. It seemed to restore her slightly. "I can't explain it," she murmured. "But I feel as if a band were encircling my throat. It is hot in here. Please open the windows!"

The stranger obeyed. It occurred to Hazlitt that the man really loved his wife. "Worse luck to him!" he growled, and his ghostly voice cracked with emotion. The woman was choking and gasping now and gradually he forced her to her knees.

"Confess," he commanded. "Tell this fool how you get rid of your husbands. Warn him in advance, and he will thank you and clear out. If you love him you won't want him to suffer."

Hazlitt's wife made no sign that she had heard him. "You're doing no good at all by acting like this!" he shouted. "If you don't tell him everything now I'll kill you! I'll make you a ghost!"

The tall stranger turned pale. He could not see or hear Hazlitt but it was obvious that he suspected the presence of more than two people in the room. He took Hazlitt's wife firmly by the wrists and endeavored to raise her.

"In heaven's name what ails you?" he asked fearfully. You act as if someone were hurting you. Is there nothing that I can do?"

There was something infinitely pathetic in the woman's helplessness. She was no longer able to speak, but her eyes cried out in pain. . . . The stranger at length succeeded in aiding her. He got her to her feet, but Hazlitt refused to be discouraged. The stranger's opposition exasperated him and he redoubled his efforts. But soon he realized that he could not choke her. He had expended all his strength and still the woman breathed. A convulsion of baffled rage distorted his angular frame. He knew that he would be obliged to go away and leave the woman to her lover. A ghost is a futile thing at best and cannot work vengeance. Hazlitt groaned.

The woman beneath his hands took courage. Her eyes sought those of the tall stranger. "It is going away; it is leaving me," she whimpered. "I can breathe more easily now. It is you who have given me courage, my darling."

The stranger was bewildered and horrified. "I can't understand what's got into you," he murmured. "I don't see anything. You are becoming hysterical. Your nerves are all shattered to pieces."

Hazlitt's wife shook her head and color returned to her cheeks. "It was awful, dearest. You cannot know how I suffered. You will perhaps think me insane, but I know *he* was back of it. Kiss me darling; help me to forget." She threw her arms about the stranger's neck and kissed him passionately upon the lips.

Hazlitt covered his eyes with his hand and turned away with horror. Despair clutched at his heart. "A futile ghost," he groaned. "A futile, weak ghost! I couldn't punish a fly. Why in heaven's name am I earthbound?"

He was near the window now, and suddenly he looked out. A night of stars attracted him. "I shall climb to heaven," he thought. "I shall go floating through the air, and wander among the stars. I am decidedly out of place here."

IT was a tired ghost that climbed out of the window, and started to propel itself through the air. But unfortunately a man must overcome gravitation to climb to the stars, and Hazlitt did not ascend. He was still earthbound.

He picked himself up and looked about him. Men and women were passing rapidly up and down the street but no one had apparently seen him fall.

"I'm invisible, that's sure," he reflected. "Neither Upcher, nor the directors nor my wife saw me. But my wife felt me. And yet I'm not satisfied. I didn't accomplish what I set out to do. My wife is laughing up her sleeve at me now. My wife? She has probably married that ninny, and I hope she lives to regret it. She didn't even wait for the grass to cover my grave. I won't trust a woman again if I can help it."

A woman walking on the street passed through him. "Horrible!" he groaned.

"Can he really play?" a girl whispered. "Heavens, no!" Arthur exclaimed. "He never played a note in his life."

They Laughed When I Sat Down At the Piano But When I Started to Play!—

ARTHUR had just played "The Rosary." The room rang with applause. I decided that this would be a dramatic moment for me to make my debut. To the amazement of all my friends, I strode confidently over to the piano and sat down.

"Jack is up to his old tricks," somebody chuckled. The crowd laughed. They were all certain that I couldn't play a single note.

"Can he really play?" I heard a girl whisper to Arthur.

"Heavens, no!" Arthur exclaimed. "He never played a note in all his life . . . But just you watch him. This is going to be good."

I decided to make the most of the situation. With mock dignity I drew out a silk handkerchief and lightly dusted off the piano keys. Then I rose and gave the revolving piano stool a quarter of a turn, just as I had seen an imitator of Paderewski do in a vaudeville sketch.

"What do you think of his execution?" called a voice from the rear.

"We're in favor of it!" came back the answer, and the crowd rocked with laughter.

Then I Started to Play

Instantly a tense silence fell on the guests. The laughter died on their lips as if by magic. I played through the first bars of Beethoven's immortal Moonlight Sonata. I heard gasps of amazement. My friends sat breathless—spellbound!

I played on and as I played I forgot the people around me. I forgot the hour, the place, the breathless listeners. The little world I lived in seemed to fade—seemed to grow dim—unreal. Only the music was real. Only the music and the visions it brought me. Visions as beautiful and as changing as the wind blown clouds and drifting moonlight, that long ago inspired the master composer. It seemed as if the master musician himself were speaking to me—speaking through the medium of music—not in words but in chords. Not in sentences, but in exquisite melodies.

A Complete Triumph

As the last notes of the Moonlight Sonata died away, the room resounded with a sudden roar of applause. I found myself surrounded by excited faces. How my friends carried on! Men shook my hand—wildly congratulated me—pounded me on the back in their enthusiasm! Everybody was exclaiming with delight—plying me with rapid questions. . . "Jack! Why didn't you tell us you could play like that? . . . "Where *did* you learn?"—"How long have you studied?"—"Who *was* your teacher?"

"I have never even *seen* my teacher," I replied. "And just a short while ago I couldn't play a note."

"Quit your kidding," laughed Arthur, himself an accomplished pianist. "You've been studying for years. I can tell."

"I have been studying only a short while," I insisted. "I decided to keep it a secret so that I could surprise all the folks."

Then I told them the whole story.

"Have you ever heard of the U. S. School of Music?" I asked.

A few of my friends nodded. "That's a correspondence school, isn't it?" they exclaimed.

"Exactly," I replied. "They have a new simplified method that can teach you to play any instrument by mail in just a few months."

How I Learned to Play Without a Teacher

And then I explained how for years I had longed to play the piano.

"It seems only a few months ago," I continued, "that I saw an interesting ad of the U. S. School of Music mentioning a new method of learning to play which only cost a few cents a day! The ad told how a woman had mastered the piano in her spare time at home—and *without a teacher!* Best of all, the wonderful new method she used, required no laborious scales—no heartless exercises—no tiresome practising. It sounded so convincing that I filled out the coupon requesting the Free Demonstration Lesson.

"The free book arrived promptly and I started in that very night to study the Demonstration Lesson. I was amazed to see how easy it was to play this new way. Then I sent for the course.

"When the course arrived I found it was just as the ad said—as easy as A. B. C.! And as the lessons continued they got easier and easier. Before I knew it I was playing all the pieces I liked best. Nothing stopped me. I could play ballads or classical numbers or jazz, all with equal ease. And I never did have any special talent for music."

* * * *

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"There isn't any thing to me at all! I'm worse than a jellyfish!"

An entire procession of men and women were now passing through his invisible body. He scarcely felt them, but a few succeeded in tickling him. One or two of the pedestrians apparently felt him: they shivered as if they had suddenly stepped into a cold shower.

"The streets are ghostly at night," someone said at his left elbow, "I think it's safer to ride."

Hazlitt determined to walk. He was miserable, but he had no desire to stand and mope. He started down the street. He was hatless and his hair streamed in the wind. He was a defiant ghost, but a miserable sense of futility gripped him. He was an outcast. He did not know where he would spend the night. He had no plans and no one to confide in. He couldn't go to a hotel because he hadn't even the ghost of money in his pockets, and of course no one could see him anyway.

Suddenly he saw a child standing in the very center of the street, and apparently unaware of the screaming traffic about him. An automobile driven by a young woman was almost on top of the boy before Hazlitt made up his mind to act.

He left the sidewalk in a bound and ran directly towards the automobile. He reached it a second before it touched the child, and with a great shove he sent the near-victim sprawling into a zone of safety. But he could not save himself. The fender of the car struck him violently in the chest; he was thrown forward, and the rear wheels passed over his body.

For a moment he suffered exquisite pain; a great weight pressed the breath from his thin body. He clenched his hands, and closed his eyes. The pain of this second death astonished him; it seemed interminable. But at length consciousness left him; his pain dissolved in a healing oblivion.

THE child picked himself up and began to cry. "Someone pushed me," he moaned. "I was looking at the lights and someone pushed me from behind."

The woman in the car was very pale. "I think I ran over someone," she said weakly. "I saw him for a moment when I tried to turn to the left. He was very thin and worn." She turned to those who had gathered near. "Where did you carry him to?" she asked.

They shook their heads. "We didn't see anyone, madam! You nearly got the kid though. Drivers like you should be hanged!"

A policeman roughly elbowed his way through the crowd that was fast gathering. "What's all this about?" he asked. "Is anyone run over?"

The woman shook her head. "I don't know. I think I ran over a tramp. . . . a poor, thin man he was. . . . the look in his eyes was terrible. . . . and very beautiful. I. . . . I saw him for a moment just before the car struck him. I think he wanted to die."

She turned again to the crowd. "Which of you carried him away?" she asked tremulously.

"She's batty," said the policeman. "Get out of here you!" He advanced on the crowd and began dispersing them with his club.

The woman in the car leaned over and looked at the sidewalk, a puzzled, mystified expression on her pale features.

"No blood or anything," she moaned. "I can't understand it!"

Johnny Kelly's Christmas Ghost

(*Continued from page* 13)

when I was four years old. In those days Murray Hill still retained its pristine glory as Manhattan's mid-town social centre. Only a scattering of shops had encroached. And the tall, grim loft buildings had not yet appeared to shut out the air and sunshine. Refinement, culture and quiet had not yet yielded to the demands of manufacture and trade, the kind which always brought squalor, dingy tenements, and rumbling trucks in its wake.

IN that period the tenement in which Johnny and his mother lived was a proud, old house of ornate design, five stories in height and with a scrolled balcony of iron, stretching across its parlor floor.

And there had lived the Huntingtons, the universally beloved Archer Huntington, and his beautiful wife, Dolly. Archer had been a great shipping master and a financial power in The Street; a man of enormous wealth for those days. But, with all their material prosperity, the Huntington home had lacked the one thing to make it complete—a child.

One had come—a little boy. But he had been taken away before a year had passed. There had been no other. However, though childless, Archer and his wife had loved children with a passion which surpassed all other interests for them. Their home always was the playground for the little ones of their relatives and friends. And Dolly, despite the frail, little body which made her almost an invalid, went about daily into the homes along the waterfront looking after the needs of the children of the poorer families.

Archer backed her splendidly in these efforts. But his big days came with Christmas, when he could gather children about him to his heart's content. The day before Christmas, in an old hall far down in the Bowery, he held open house for the youngsters of the city's poor, where there was a gigantic tree ablaze with colored candles and long tables, heaped high with goodies; and ice cream and candy to follow.

However, it was after the feast when old Archer was truly in his element. For then, clad in scarlet cap and fur-trimmed coat, with shining boots that reached almost to his hips, he played Santa Claus, heaping toys into the arms of each eager child as it filed past him. And he looked the part. For he was short and stout, with a waistline that stretched the belt about his gaily colored doublet. And framing his laughing eyes and ruddy cheeks was a mass of snowy whiskers that made artificial disguise unnecessary.

In the evening, in his great stone mansion just off the avenue, there would be another celebration—a splendid Christmas Eve party, to which would flock the children of his friends. And again he would play Saint Nick, and help happy Dolly distribute the creams and favors and pass about the presents, taken from a glittering tree, with each little one's name written upon the wrapper.

And it was at Santa Claus Huntington's that I attended my first Christmas party. I was an excited, wide-eyed little miss whose great hope was fulfilled when Santa Claus Huntington himself gave me a big doll with flaxen hair that could say "mamma."

HOWEVER, that was my only party there. For, the following summer Archer and his wife steamed away in a yacht for ports in the South Seas, where it was hoped the warmer breezes would restore the roses to Dolly's cheeks. But the yacht never reached its destination. And though my father, Archer's life-long friend and business associate, conducted a world-wide search for it, neither the boat nor its passengers were ever heard of again.

My father, as well as others of Archer's intimates, knew that, somewhere in the house, he always kept a considerable store of ready cash for emergencies—such as his own and Dolly's charities, or to aid less prosperous friends in need of loans, for which no papers would be signed or interest exacted. This hiding place, known only to him, was hunted for repeatedly, but never uncovered.

Then followed long years in which the old house remained closed and its windows boarded up. The neighborhood changed. Ugly business structures elbowed their way in. Workmen descended upon the old houses that remained, altering them inside and out, dividing the great rooms into smaller ones—making them over into beehives for humans. And into these tenements moved those who were compelled to count their pennies—the overflow of the poor from Five Points, Hell's Kitchen and Mulberry Bend.

Finally the Huntington estate was disposed of. My father purchased the old house, hoping, for sentimental reasons, to rent it as it stood, thereby preserving its outward appearance at least. But he had failed in that objective. No one wanted a whole house in that teeming tenement district. So, though my father continued his ownership, he permitted it, like its neighbors, to be rebuilt into small flats.

In those years my mother had died, leaving only me to care for Dad. But,

though his hair became thin and frosted, though the old fire in his eyes was reduced to smouldering embers and he laughed only when he and I were alone in the great library at night, the blow of losing the woman who had stood by him through his early struggles did not sour him.

In Archer's time, Dad always had assisted him in carrying out his plans to make children happy, though he always kept in the background. After his partner disappeared, he continued to carry on the labor of love, but in his own way. His nature would not permit him to play Santa Claus. But on each day before Christmas, with his pockets bulging with bills and a car loaded with toys, he visited the homes of every employee of his bank and personally distributed his gifts to the children and left money for their entertainment at a theatre or elsewhere on the holiday.

Today, as usual, he must have been out among his little friends. I hoped he wasn't very tired. For Dad was getting older. The spring in his step——

THE raucous shout of the train guard roused me from my reverie. Although I did not catch his jumbled words, I knew instinctively I had reached the station nearest my home. And, joining the jostling crowd, I left the train, climbed the sodden steps and again headed out into the storm which had increased in intensity.

But, still buoyed up with thoughts of what I had planned to do for Johnny that night, I made speed over the few blocks which brought me to where I knew Dad would be waiting—probably anxious because I was returning later than customary.

As Judson swung wide the front doors, I tossed my dripping coat and hat upon a chair and burst into the library with a cry of, "Dad, Dad, where are you?"

But I was sorry I had been so precipitate. For he had been dozing, in his big chair before the fire-place, one hand shading his eyes. And I noted those eyes were tired—very, as with "Tony, you little gadabout, where have you been until this unearthly hour?" he came to his feet, arms outstretched, a great smile driving the wrinkles of fatigue from his features.

"Sit down, Dad,"—after the first big hug and kiss. I forced him gently back into his chair, and drew another beside him. "You're all worn out tonight. Have you been overdoing things?"

"Nothing of the kind, Tony girl," and he slipped a hand over, and held, one of mine. "Besides," and he chuckled, "it was in a good cause—and only once a year, you know. But tell me—where have you been?"

"Oh, doing the same as on every December twenty-fourth, only a little more so. There seemed to be so much to talk about everywhere and—well, I stayed longer in places than I expected."

"Never mind, if you didn't get wet feet. Let me see. No. Fine! Now I'll order some coffee and we'll have a nice, comfy chat until the chimes——"

"You're a dear, Dad. But—I can't do more than drink one cup. Then I must be off again——"

"You must—— What do you mean?"

"Dad, I'm really ashamed of myself. But you remember the Kellys——"

"You mean Bridget and little Johnny?" He nodded.

"Yes. And, would you believe it, I all but forgot them?"

Then, as his eyes opened wide in thoughtful interest, I told him how I had recollected my lapse, my subway trip on my last nickel and what the thought of the Kelly tenement had recalled—my first Christmas Eve party, and Archer Huntington playing Santa Claus.

"That's strange, Tony," he interrupted, his brows coming down into a pucker. "It seems as if I've been thinking of good, old Archer most of the day myself. Sometimes I felt almost as if he were near me, particularly when I was with the children. Maybe, Tony girl, he was closer than I knew. We can't tell."

"Do you know, Dad, recalling Archer made me think of the money still hidden away somewhere in that old building. And I also thought—if only the Kellys had found it—what a glorious Christmas present it would be for them."

"It certainly would." He smiled. "But that money is gone—at least until the wreckers tear down the house. Now let us get right down to the practical side of your predicament. I suppose you want some money to make good to little Johnny?"

"Yes, Dad, heaps of it. I'm going to give him the best Christmas he ever had. I'm going to try to atone for my forgetfulness, Dad—make good to the memory of Santa Claus Huntington for that first splendid Christmas he gave me."

Dad's hand went into his pocket and came out clutching a roll of bills which he thrust into my fingers.

"Make it the kind of a Christmas for Johnny you've been thinking about—then add a little more for Archer."

"Oh, Dad, I'll do it. And I'll thank you more tomorrow, when I have time. A big kiss and I'm off."

"But, Tony, it's a bad night. I think I'd better go with you and——"

"No, Dad. I'll dress warmly and——"

"But——"

"No 'buts,' Dad." I sat upon the arm of his chair, drew his head about until I looked full into his eyes, and brushed a strand of gray from his forehead. "I know you're game to go, if I say the word. But you're tired—far more than you realize.

"Besides, this is my job. I overlooked a real duty. Now I must make good. It won't take as long as you think. If you want to wait and doze and smoke here, we'll say, 'Merry Christmas' together, maybe with the chimes. I'll use the big car this time. No more being caught with but a nickel carfare. If you'd rather go to bed, I won't mind. For I want you fresh and rosy tomorrow, when you must be Santa Claus for me."

"ALL right, Tony. I'll telephone to Jim and Reddy to bring the machine around while you're getting ready. You'll need both of them with you to help carry the bundles and—well, if you should have a blowout on such a night——"

"Nothing like that is going to happen," I cried, giving him a final hug and kiss and dashing away. But he followed me into the hallway, shouting, "Good luck," over and over again as I hurried to my room, my precious roll of bills clutched tightly in my hand.

While changing to a heavier dress and directing Minnie to strap on a pair of arctics as a further protection against the drifts through which I must wade while making my purchases, I thought of Mrs. Kelly and the probably meager covering she possessed to shield her against weather such as the night had brought.

In a closet was a heavy coat, with cuffs and collar of fur, which I had bought for the housekeeper. She and Mrs. Kelly were about of a size. It would meet the emergency splendidly. The widow should have the coat and I would give the housekeeper money to get another.

It hung over one arm and my purse with the money for the Kellys' Christmas gifts was over the other when I again headed out into the snow.

"Where to, Miss?" queried Jim, while Reddy helped me into the car and tucked a big, warm robe about me.

"Hurry over to upper Broadway—some place where the shops are certain to be open. I must get a lot of toys and candy and—things. Then we're going over to Murray Hill. You know, where the Kelly family lives."

Another moment and we had turned the corner and were lurching ahead, horn rasping, our lights penetrating but little through the blanket of whirling flakes in front. But we reached the avenue safely. And the shops still were open, caring for last minute purchasers like myself.

WITH Reddy at my elbow, I plunged in and out of several, making my purchases quickly, while bill after bill disappeared from the roll of yellow and green backs. I bought toys and candy and more toys and fruit—until Reddy informed me the car was pretty well filled. But I only laughed. There must be room for a few more parcels. I had promised myself that Johnny's Christmas was to be a bumper one. And I was determined he should fare as splendidly as any boy in all New York.

My final errand was to a neighborhood department store, where the weary clerks already were preparing to close. "I am going to leave all choice to you," I said to a man behind the nearest counter. "I want a number of things for a five-year-old boy, of slight build and about so high——two pairs of shoes, rubbers, two suits, an overcoat, a fur cap, gloves and a box of wool stockings. Don't show them to me, but give me the best. And please hurry."

I don't believe I ever was happier in my life; not even at my first Christmas party, as the car zig-zagged its way across town and down toward Murray Hill. Even Archer Huntington, if he were looking down upon me, must have smiled at my effort to follow in his footsteps. For, somehow, I seemed to feel that he was responsible for the joy of giving, which I always had known at Christmas time. When we finally drew up before the ramshackle old build-

ing which housed the Kellys, with only a lighted window here and there to relieve its dull front, I caught the echo of chimes from some nearby church, hushed and muffled by the storm till they sounded like some wayside angelus bells.

Christmas had come. It was the midnight hour when Santa Claus must start upon his all important journey.

I laughed happily as I stepped from the car, while Reddy closed the door behind me. "Merry Christmas, boys. Wait here until I come back. I want to make certain Johnny is asleep. Then we can take the gifts to his mother." I carried only the coat, which was to be my personal gift to Bridget Kelly.

As I entered the hallway I encountered the janitress, reaching aloft to turn the sputtering gas flame to a mere speck, the customary illumination for those of the tenements who returned home after midnight.

She pushed her spectacles closer to her eyes, then, "And can it be yourself, Miss Gregory? And on such a night and so late? I'll be certain 'tis the Kellys you came to see. But she isn't home."

"Why, she can't be working so late."

"No. But one of the neighbors down the block's been taken sick. She's gone to help. I'm lookin' in on Johnny while she's away. But he's asleep now. I just came from up there. The door's open if you'd care to go up."

"Thanks. I've some Christmas things for them. I'll just make certain Johnny's still asleep. Then I'll have them put in Mrs. Kelly's kitchen. You can tell her they're there when she returns."

"Bless you, Miss, they'll sure be appreciated this year. Bridget hasn't been able to work much lately and the doctors cost a lot o' money. I fear she couldn't get much for the laddie for Christmas and——"

"Yes?"

"Well, don't says as I said so, but I guess they been a eatin' pretty poorly for the last week."

I DREW another bill, a twenty, from my almost depleted roll, then went to the door and told Reddy to go to the store around the corner and get a big turkey and all the trimmings.

When I reached the fourth floor, where the Kellys lived, in the rear. I listened. No sound came from within. And but the tiniest chink of light shown beneath the second door, which I knew opened directly upon the kitchen and living room. Johnny slept there. For it kept him near the big stove, which supplied all the heat for the diminutive flat.

On tip-toe I moved to the other door, the one to the narrow inner hallway. I turned the knob gently, entered without sound and closed it behind me. The place was fearsomely still. But, as I listened. I caught the faint, regular breathing of a child. Johnny was asleep. I moved to the doorway of the kitchen. A lamp burned upon a table, placed so that its rays fell upon the boy's bed, probably to give him courage to remain alone while his mother was absent upon her errand of mercy.

Then my eyes wandered about and across the shadows, to the stove and the old mantel behind it. A lump came into my throat as I noted the little stocking hanging there. Johnny's stocking, waiting to be filled by Santa Claus.

Poor little laddie. And I had almost forgotten him. No Santa would come to the Kelly flat. But there would be gifts aplenty—more than Johnny possibly could have dreamed of possessing.

No need to wait for the return of Mrs. Kelly. Reddy and I would bring the gifts and leave them. Johnny was too sound asleep to awaken. And we would move quietly.

I was about to turn back into the hallway when suddenly, with a gasp of fright, Johnny sat straight up in bed and stared before him, toward the stove, with wide eyes, his mouth agape.

I TURNED and looked, where he was gazing. And my whole body went numb and I leaned against the casement, half dazed, at what I saw.

For, standing atop the stove—stood Santa Claus—as I had seen him pictured—thousands of times—smiling, eyes shining, a wide belt holding his fur trimmed jacket close to his fat, round stomach and high boots coming far up over his short legs. Only his pack of toys was missing.

But, as I gazed, as speechless as Johnny, the feeling of fear slipped from me. Then I noted that the figure appeared shadowy, in some indescribable way—unlike the body of a person one could reach out and touch.

And his features—somehow they appeared familiar. There was something about the look in his eyes, his jolly grin, his long, flowing white whiskers, which I seemed to remember.

"Merry Christmas, Johnny, Merry Christmas!" The voice seemed to crackle with good nature and merriment.

"Merry Chr——" Johnny's greeting died away in an awed whisper.

"Come, come, Johnny. You're not afraid of Santa Claus, are you?"

"N—no, sir." The lad's tone was more confident.

"That's better. I see you expected me, and hung up your stocking here." His rolling chuckle brought a grin to the boy's face.

"Now, Johnny, tell me. Have you been a good boy all year?"

"I—I guess so. Mother says so."

"That's fine." Then he winked. "Mothers always know, don't they?"

Johnny nodded solemnly.

"And, since you've been a good boy, I suppose you expect a lot of presents?"

"No, sir. Not this year."

A momentary shadow flitted across the old fellow's face. He hopped from the stove, stepped to Johnny's bed, and leaned over familiarly, resting his elbows upon the footboard.

"Do you mean you don't expect presents because I haven't my pack with me?"

"No, sir. Not 'zactly. But——"

"Of course not. You wouldn't expect Santa Claus to show little boys what he's going to leave for them, now would you?"

Johnny hesitated, as if lost for words. Then, "I—I guess I don't know—quite—Mister. But Mother's been sick, a whole lot. And she said when there's sickness you don't leave much until they're well again——"

"WAIT a minute, Johnny." The old fellow raised a hand that trembled, and he held it before his eyes. "Listen, my boy. Mothers are right—almost always. But—well, never mind. Now here's a secret, just between you and me. I'm going to surprise Mother this time. I'm going to make it a real Merry Christmas for you both."

"Oh, good!"

"Yes, Johnny. There's going to be toys for you, heaps of them—and new clothes and candy and a big dinner with turkey and red cranberry jelly and——"

"Gee!"

"And listen—stoop closer. There's going to be a new coat for Mother—a long, warm one, with a big fur collar and—a big surprise for you both.

The lad was astonished into complete silence.

"But, Johnny, Santa Claus can't leave things while little boys are awake. You must close your eyes, tight, and go to sleep. Then all the fine presents will be left——"

"And we can have them in the morning?"

"You surely can. And if you're a good boy next year, there'll be more presents. Now good night and a Merry Christmas!"

With a flash like that of a darting shadow, the little man hopped to the stove, then to the mantel—and disappeared into nothingness.

But, as he disappeared, there came a crash—one which startled me and brought a cry from Johnny, crouching in his bed, his eyes wide, staring after his departed visitor. Then he dropped back upon his pillow, his tiny mouth held in a smile as his lids closed and he again drifted into slumberland.

However, the crash meant more to me than it had to the boy, too excited because of his talk with Santa Claus to pay more than passing heed to other things. Waiting only until I noted his regular breathing, I tip-toed to the stove. Beside it lay a little pile of glass, caused by a vase from the mantel having fallen and broken.

But it was the appearance of the mantel which caught and held me. A piece of the top, fully a foot in length, had dropped and was hanging. I stepped closer. The piece was held by a hinge, cunningly set into the wall. And the exposed top of the upright showed an opening. I plunged my hand into it—drew out a small tin box. This I carried nearer the light. It was unlocked. I raised the lid—exposing a heap of coins, mostly gold. In a flash the truth came to me. The hidden cache of treasure finally was exposed. Instantly I determined it should be added to the Christmas gifts of Bridget and Johnny.

And, as I turned away to go below and tell Reddy and Jim to bring the presents I had brought, I knew, beyond all question, that the Santa Claus I had seen was the phantom of Archer Huntington—that it was Archer Huntington's Christmas ghost who had touched the spring that had uncovered the long hidden treasure—to gladden the heart of little Johnny Kelly!

$10,000 for Ghosts

WE believe we are on the brink of amazing discoveries in the field popularly known as "Psychic Phenomena"—discoveries that can be established and passed to posterity as scientific fact. To this end the publishers of GHOST STORIES Magazine are offering $10,000 in awards, as follows:

1 $8000 award will be paid to the person who produces a visible, disembodied apparition, which can be identified to the satisfaction of the Commission judging the award, as the apparition of a deceased person.

2 $500 shall be given for that physical demonstration, such as spirit photography, levitation, or any other physical manifestation of an unknown force, most convincing to the Commission.

3 $500 shall be given for that mental demonstration such as clairaudience, clairvoyance, telepathy, automatic writing or any other mental manifestation of an unknown force, most convincing to the Commission.

4 $500 shall be given to the person who satisfies the Commission that a house is haunted.

5 $500 shall be paid to that person demonstrating phenomena in the field known popularly as "psychic phenomena" most convincing to the Commission, not covered in the first four classifications.

Investigation and payments of awards are entrusted to THE UNBIASED COMMISSION FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH, consisting of a group of men, each an outstanding figure in his chosen profession, including: the Reverend Ralph Welles Keeler, D.D., Chairman; Bernarr Macfadden, noted physical culturist and publisher; Arthur Garfield Hays, distinguished counsellor at law; Howard Thurston, magician; Fulton Oursler, novelist and playwright; Emanuel de Marnay Baruch, M.D.; George Sylvester Viereck, poet and novelist; Joseph Schultz, attorney; H. A. Keller, editor, GHOST STORIES Magazine, Executive Secretary for the Commission.

These awards are open to all—Medium, Psychic Healer, Spiritualist, non-believer and layman.

THE UNBIASED COMMISSION FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH is sincerely, honestly endeavoring to establish proof of certain so-called psychic phenomena; the Commission is ambitiously trying in a sober, serious, scientific manner to establish new facts and gather first-hand information in the field of Psychic Research.

This offer expires September 30th, 1927.

The Commission reserves the right to extend itself as to membership.

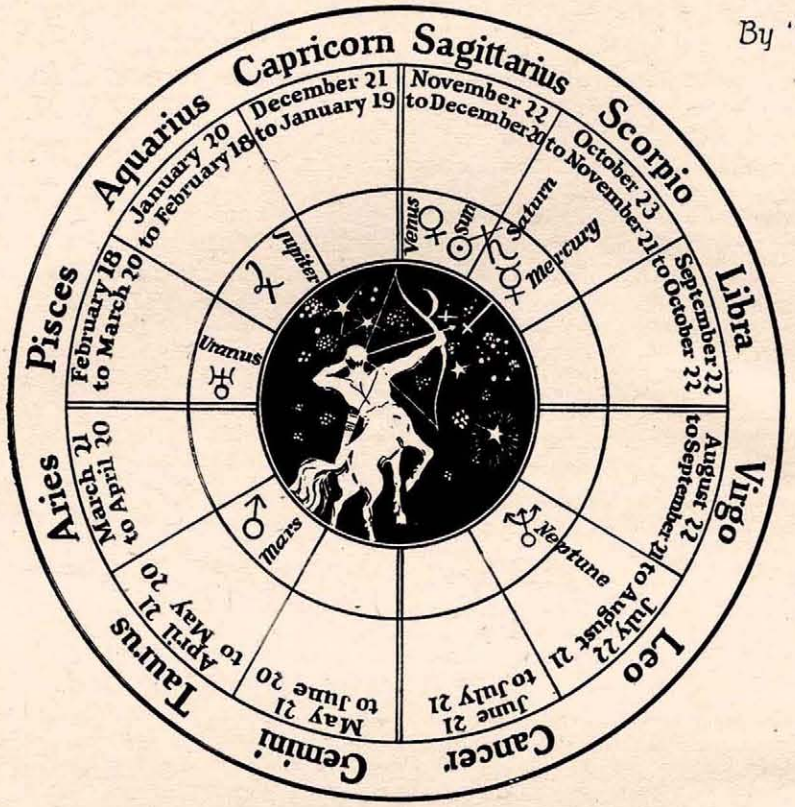
Have you ever seen a ghost? Are you in communication with the dead? Have you any justification for your claim that you can materialize a being from another world? Write—THE UNBIASED COMMISSION FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y., H. A. Keller, Executive Secretary, and due consideration will be given your claim. You have your opportunity through

GHOST STORIES Magazine

Were You Born in December?

Let the Stars Determine Your Fate

By "Stella"



THE CHART TO GUIDE YOU TO YOUR DESTINY

DURING these long winter nights that are clear, and there is the sharp tang of frost in the air—the stars seem to shine with unusual brilliance. They have a language all their own, and it is a language you can easily come to understand—and profit by the knowledge.

Do you know that the position of the stars at the time of your birth has a tremendous influence upon your life? Have you ever thought of this—in relation to your future?

If you were born between November 22nd and December 20th, you respond to the Sagittarian vibrations—just as your radio responds to the wave-length vibrations to which it is attuned. Your "Star of Destiny" then, is the great Jupiter—the most powerful and benevolent of all the planets.

December should be a happy month for you because the beautiful goddess of LOVE is now in your sign, and is influencing your life. The Venusian rays pouring down upon you will bring out all the love and sympathy that is in your nature and will help you to see the good that is in other people.

This benign influence will lighten your worries and anxieties because you will be less inclined than usual to brood over them. Your intuition and foresight—qualities which are characteristic of all Sagittarians—will be especially keen. I would advise you strongly to respond as fully to this good influence as you can. It will make you feel happier and more contented than you have been for some time.

Remember, it is quite possible that you may fall desperately in love, and you might even meet that most elusive person—your affinity. I hope you will think of this seriously.

If you are single, it is a good time for you to marry because Venus and Jupiter are the planets of Love and Success. If you are married, this should be a period of domestic happiness and general prosperity, for Venus has much to do with finance as well as with the emotions and affections. It is quite lucky that this happens to be the case.

In business, you should now take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself. This is a favorable time to undertake new enterprises with the pleasant assurance that all will be well, for Venus and Jupiter are both exerting themselves in your favor.

If you will let yourself be influenced by this spirit of harmony and generosity, you will find that you will attract those who have the same spirit. Approach the joyous festival of Christmas with contentment and love for others, and you will find that prosperity will be yours.

It is not only the Sagittarians who now enjoy the favor of Venus and Jupiter. Those born during the first two weeks of February, June, or October, are also under this influence and may expect a happy and successful month of December.

THOSE born under this influence, who are now in financial difficulties, have promise of better times. Jupiter exerts a constant influence toward helping people out of trouble. He is the ruler of religion, law, philosophy, teaching, athletics and out-door life. He brings success in all these things.

Should your birthday fall about the 18th of December, March, June, or September, you are now under the influence of the (*Continued on page 96*)

Can the Spirits of the Dead Be Photographed?

(*Continued from page 25*)

photographer has nothing to do with these things until the time pictures are to be taken. The committee in charge does all the preliminary work.)

2—The picture of a dead man must appear on the picture.

3—It must look like the dead man, but be different from any picture taken of him while he was alive.

Accordingly the following steps were pursued:

Mr. Robert Thomas Hardy, Mr. W. H. Van der Weyde, a well-known New York photographer, and myself went to Willoughby's photography shop on West Thirty-second Street and purchased a set of camera plates sealed in their original package.

Across the seal of these plates we wrote our names so that any disturbance of that paper would be instantly manifest in the broken pencil lines.

These plates remained in my possession under lock and key until the night of the séance.

An interesting group of people were gathered in the laboratory of Dr. Bowers on West End Avenue on the night which gave birth to this astonishing and baffling mystery. Present in the room as guests of Dr. Bowers were Major and Mrs. Scott, Major Ramus, Mr. Geiger, Mr. Hardy, Miss Eleanor Ramos, a novelist of distinction; her sister, Miss Marie Haviland, a trained nurse; Miss Ashfield, Mr. W. Adolphe Roberts, a poet; Mr. Van der Weyde and his camera, and myself.

THE astonishing proposal by means of which we meant to obtain, if possible, a spirit photograph, struck the company with surprise. It was our intention to hypnotize someone and send that person into a trance, deeper and deeper upon the astral plane, and then, while the spirit might be leaving the prostrate and unconscious body, Mr. Van der Weyde would explode a flashlight—and we would see what we would see. It was our hope that, since Hyslop had ruled our first séance, we might photograph him at the second.

With great courage, Miss Haviland agreed to be the subject, yielding herself to the mesmeric passes and hypnotic suggestions of Dr. Bowers, who is an old and practiced heirophant in the hypnotic mysteries.

Before this was done, however, I insisted that the most rigid control be obtained over the photographic apparatus. Mr. Van der Weyde, as the photographer, was barred from any direct handling of the plates which I had brought to the meeting. They were introduced into the holders under the observation of Major Scott. The camera was minutely examined.

When all was in readiness, the lights were dimmed. Miss Haviland lay down on a couch and Dr. Bowers, standing over her, began making magic passes in front of her eyes and down her young form, speaking softly, almost inaudibly, murmuring invitations to sleep. A great sigh escaped her. Her eyelids fluttered and closed. Her body seemed to grow rigid—then suddenly out of her mouth issued a stream of jargon in strange, guttural intonations, with fugitive snatches of some wild and barbaric melody.

"She is talking Roumanian!" cried one.

"No! No!" cried another excitedly. "It's a gypsy dialect spoken in the south of Spain."

BEFORE the matter could be decided, the jargon ceased. The girl lay utterly still, and Dr. Bowers lifted his hand and whispered to her:

"You will not be startled at anything that happens."

He lowered his hand, which was the signal to Mr. Van der Weyde. The room was rocked with an explosion of the flashlight cartridge, and a great plume of white smoke curled toward the ceiling, as if it were itself a ghost.

Not an eyelid of the entranced girl fluttered, nor was her pulse accelerated by so much as a fraction. She lay apparently dead to the world. Dr. Bowers slowly withdrew the influence which had seemed to paralyze her, and she woke up dazed but otherwise undisturbed.

There were other experiments that evening. Miss Ramos was hypnotized, and while in a trance cried out some exceedingly dramatic accusations. If this were a story of hypnosis, the experiences of Miss Ramos would require columns of description, but I have time to tell only of this amazing spirit portrait. It was the picture taken of Miss Haviland at the moment when she was deepest in her slumber that produced this uncanny phenomenon.

The plates remained that night in the possession of Major Scott. The next morning they were developed under his supervision. So apparently every avenue of fraud was closed and barred; every precaution taken to prevent trickery or practical jest; all the rigid conditions demanded by skeptics thoroughly imposed—yet the first print that came out of that dark room contained upon its surface a face that did not belong there, a face that had not been visible to our naked eyes, the staring, bearded, unmistakable countenance of the old Columbia professor who gave his life to a pursuit of phantoms and who died unsatisfied—the face of the man who proclaimed himself through that rapping table; the face of James H. Hyslop!

AND there you have it. What is the solution of such a mystery?

When we showed that picture to Dr. Walter Franklin Prince, at that time principal research officer of the American Society for Psychic Research, he identified it as Hyslop's face. No man in the world is more familiar with fraud as practiced in spirit photography than he. All the old tricks he has been able to detect. But here was one which he could not explain.

"If," said he, "this is a fraud, then it is most excellent, most adroit. None of the old tricks has been employed here, and if it is a real spirit picture, it is the kind of picture that I should think a spirit would really make. When you hold your next meeting, I want to be there and observe your work."

Perhaps Dr. Prince would be able to find the one clue that had hitherto escaped us all. But in this connection let me point out that the one great test which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle declares is the true touchstone to truth in such manifestations is here apparently met.

In one of his letters to me, Sir Arthur said:

"It is when you get pictures of the dead which look like them, but of which no such picture actually exists in the world, that you have a genuine spirit picture!"

So far as we had been able to find, no such picture of Hyslop as we found on this plate had ever been known to exist.

I am an old hand at this game. I have put fraudulent mediums behind the bars. I have attended hundreds of séances.

When the newspaper reporters asked me what I thought of this picture, I replied that I was certain it was a fraud, and this charge appeared in the newspapers the next day.

THIS was a serious accusation. It seemed to imply that someone had a guilty knowledge. I was willing to admit that. It was the most amazing spirit picture mystery of which I have ever heard, but I announced that I should make it my business to find out the truth of this matter and within six months I should either expose the trick or become a convert to genuine spirit photography.

Within three months I gave the following statement to the public:

"It will be recalled that, in connection with the celebrated affair of the spirit portrait which set the press and public by the ears last summer, I stated that the entire affair was a hoax and should not be taken seriously.

"The time has come for me to speak again about this remarkable mystery. I shall do so with all frankness, fearlessly, with a full readiness to accept any consequences. That is the object of this present statement.

"These pictures created the greatest astonishment all over the world. The daily press was full of exclamations of wonder. Real spirit photographs seemed at last to have been produced, under conditions which could not fail to convince. The pictures were reproduced in the art supplements of newspapers and magazines, and the known facts were stated fairly and without exaggeration.

"But at the time I said: 'If you ask me what I think of this picture, I say to you that I am certain it is a fraud.'

"I have not yet become a convert to spirit photography. Nor have I given up in despair. Instead, I have made a most astounding discovery.

"In the last two weeks I have unearthed certain facts which throw an amazing, if not a sinister, light upon this entire case. I am now able to state on definite authority that these so-

called spirit pictures were absolute frauds! They were trick pictures—utter fakes!

"ARMED with the discoveries which I made, I went to the photographer, Mr. Van der Weyde, and faced him with the facts.

"He smiled, without embarrassment, and said: 'Mr. Frikell, I congratulate you. You are right. The pictures were frauds. I made them myself. I hoodwinked you all, under your very eyes!'

"'Why did you do it?' I demanded.

"'Because I had something to prove—and I proved it!' he declared. 'I am an absolute skeptic about all such matters. I do not believe there is such a thing as a genuine spirit photograph in existence. They are all frauds. I wanted to prove that I could make a spirit photograph under the test conditions which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle laid down. I did it! I deceived America with my spirit face of Hyslop. I could do it again. No one can detect my method!'

"'I will detect it!' I told him.

"'I will pay one hundred dollars to you the day that you do!' he replied.

"There you have Mr. Van der Weyde's statement. And there you have his challenge.

"I have not yet discovered how he produced the spirit photographs. But twenty years in magic and spiritualism have taught me a great deal. I believe I can solve this mystery. And if I do, I am going to claim that one hundred dollars.

"In the interests of justice, I am giving this statement to the public. The doubt which I cast upon the authenticity of those spirit photos—a doubt which opened me to the danger of a personal prosecution for libel—is now justified by the man whom I indirectly accused.

"I am going to find the secret of that trick. And when I do find it, I am going to tell the public how it was done!"

THE above statement, published under my signature, created the greatest amount of interest. Hundreds of people wrote me, asking how the picture was made.

I am now ready to tell the complete truth of the whole amazing episode.

As a matter of fact, the secret of this astounding mystery was simplicity itself, and any magician will tell you that his best tricks are the simplest.

What Mr. Van der Weyde did was this:

In his possession was a photograph of Hyslop, which he had made years ago. Hyslop did not like the picture and refused to buy it, and so the plate remained in Mr. Van der Weyde's files, and no one but Hyslop and himself had ever seen it or knew that it existed. This was the plate he used in perpetrating the spirit hoax.

He then went to a well-known supply house in New York and purchased a set of plates. With the utmost care, he steamed the pasted sides of the package and opened it without destroying any of the paper container or mutilating it in any fashion.

Taking the top plate, he exposed upon it the portrait of Professor Hyslop. He then carefully replaced the plate in its original wrapper and restored it, apparently intact. The box was then sealed, and when the job was done the most expert packer in the Eastman Kodak Company's plant would have been justified in taking oath to the fact that the package had not been disturbed.

The price was then marked on the bottom of the container. This was done to identify it, as the price is never marked on packages of this kind.

IT was then taken back to the supply shop, and Mr. Van der Weyde gravely took one of the young clerks aside and put the package in his hands.

"Now," said he, "when I come in here with two gentlemen and ask you for two plates, you give me this package."

The answer to the whole riddle is that the clerk did give him this package, and thereafter all efforts made to prevent trickery being brought to bear upon the plates were absolutely futile, because the trick was done before the plates were ever sent to the group.

Please note the following letter which I received from Mr. Van der Weyde:

"Your explanation is entirely correct. I enclose you herewith my check for $100."

And there you have it.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said there were three points that must be present in a genuine spirit photograph:

1—The picture must be that of a person who is dead.

2—It must be different from any picture known to have been taken of that person while that person was alive.

3—It must be taken under absolutely scientific test conditions.

All these points were met and answered in this picture.

It *did* look like Professor Hyslop, and *was* identified. It *was* different from any photograph known to have been taken of him while he was alive. The photograph *was* made under actual test conditions.

And yet the picture *was* a fake!

The value of all this hoodwinkery, of course, lay in convincing the public that no matter how carefully the rules may be laid down, as Doyle had laid them down, a clever man will find a way to evade them.

But shortly thereafter I was in for some hoodwinkery, myself.

I had journeyed to Chicago to attend a scientific convention and while there made the acquaintance of an elderly lady who was deeply convinced of the actuality of spirit photographs.

"No matter who else you may have found to be a fake," she told me, "Doctor Rushmore is not a fake!"

"And who," I dared to ask, "is Dr. Rushmore?"

"He is a physician," she explained, "living out on the border of the city, who has discovered in himself the mystic power of mediumship."

"Really?" I asked skeptically.

"Yes."

"Can I bring my own plates?"

"Certainly," and she told me the kind to get. We had made an appointment to call on the doctor that same evening. I went out and found a photograph shop. I was all alone and I satisfied myself that I was not followed. Then I purchased a packet of films—not the kind I had been instructed to get, but another kind of the same size. With these buttoned inside of my vest I repaired to the home of the miracle worker.

He was a very ordinary appearing man, who was something of a joke to his wife, a lady cursed with a most caustic sense of humor. He himself was good-natured, if a bit taciturn and reserved,—a serious, pondering man, slender, tall, bald-headed and peering keenly from behind his nose glasses, as if he saw things back of you that were invisible to you.

"My studio is down in the basement," he explained, and led us down the stairs, into a plainly furnished place. There was a small camera, set on rollers, facing a hanging drop at the back, and beyond that a door that led into the dark room.

I loaded the film pack into his camera, watching carefully that they were not exchanged.

I helped focus the camera.

I posed for several of the pictures and the woman who had brought me there, posed for the others.

I removed the films from the camera and carried them into the dark room.

I developed the films.

I printed the pictures.

We were there for half the night while all this was being accomplished. The result was that on one of the plates we could see the portrait of a beautiful young girl above the head of the woman who was with me.

Here, indeed, was a mystery.

IN vain I tried to remember every step of the way, in order to find the trick. I knew there was a trick to it, but where? Had the doctor ferreted the films out of my possession without my knowing it, double exposed them and tricked me under my very nose? I am a good sleight-of-hand performer myself and I didn't like to think I could be so easily duped. I thought of the weirdest explanations. I fancied a beam of light playing from a concealed stereopticon on to the lens of the camera. I fancied radioactive disks concealed in the hand of the performer as he passed them over the lens. I tried every possible hypothesis, but I still could not explain it.

Yet I was convinced it was not genuine spiritualism. I was convinced that some jugglery, too subtle for my eyes, was responsible for this astonishing result.

At last I came upon the solution. If it is disappointing to the reader that I cannot disclose it here, I am deeply sorry, but I try to be fair in dealing with spirit mediums, no matter how I may suspect them. I cannot swear that my hypothesis is correct. I merely assert that I have found a simple, an exceedingly simple hypothesis which does fit the facts, and by which I can duplicate the surprising portraits made in Doctor Rushmore's studio. And I challenge Doctor Rushmore to give me another sitting. If I cannot detect him, I shall publicly announce my defeat. But if I do detect him, he is to admit publicly that I have found him out. This is a clear cut challenge and I shall be glad to know what he has to say about it.

Meanwhile, since that time I have come upon a number of other interesting spirit-

photograph mysteries that are well worthy of study. There is, for instance, the problem of the moving pictures of Von Schrenk Nortzing.

A FEW months ago, while the present writer was in Paris, he met with a journalist who was interested in the experiments then being conducted in a scientific laboratory there—the Chambre Metaphysique, I think it was called.

"They have spirit moving pictures," he told me.

I smiled.

"Some marvelous fake spirit pictures have been made," I remarked. "Some years ago there was a serial shown in some of the largest picture theaters in America. It was called 'The Mysteries of Myra' and I think Hereward Carrington was one of the authors of the story. In 'The Mysteries of Myra' there were ghosts all over the screen. But it was just fake photography—admittedly so."

"This is not a fake," said the Parisian journalist positively. "These are moving pictures taken in séance chambers—reels of materializing spirits issuing from the side of the medium in the form of milk-white ectoplasm."

"For God's sake let me see them," I pleaded.

Forthwith this promising young journalist agreed to meet me for dinner at Gauclair's that same evening, stating that he would conduct me, after the meal, to a private showing of some of these extraordinary films. I would like to include here a full description of the pictures—with their ghosts and their mediums and all the rest of it. But, alas, I must keep silent for the good and simple reason that I never caught sight of my Parisian journalist again. He vanished over one of the bridges, never again to reappear—and my frantic inquiries helped me not at all, for no one else could be found who would admit that he had ever heard of the Chambre Metaphysique.

However, that started my mind thinking of spirit moving pictures and I turned to one of the greatest authorities in the world on the subject—an Austrian scientist with the wholly extraordinary name of Baron Von Schrenk Nortzing.

All over the world the Baron is held in the deepest respect by scientists. He is a man of the highest attainments. His word is unquestioned. He is a man who may be thoroughly believed, even though his observations, like everyone's else, may occasionally be mistaken.

NOW the Baron has written an immense book in which he details hundreds of experiments with spirit mediums, illustrated with scores of photographs taken of trance sittings in which ectoplasm—a sticky substance which issues from the mouth, ears, or nose of the medium and forms itself into ghosts—is shown by flash-light and by time exposure.

I wondered if there were moving pictures mentioned in Von Schrenk Nortzing's book, and hurried to find out.

There were!

Under the strictest control, according to the royal scientist, these photographs had been made, and the strips of celluloid film showed the ectoplasm flowing

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from the mouth of the medium and forming itself into the shape of a human hand.

These experiments were conducted with a Polish woman and the account the Baron gives of the affair in his book—which by the way is called "Phenomena of Materialization"—with the details of the location of the camera and the medium, the illumination of the room and other essentials, is very convincing.

Reading his story, and looking at his reproductions of this film, one is apt to be convinced.

I then remembered that Houdini had had a séance with one of the Baron's mediums and had found nothing to substantiate the sensational claims made in her behalf. I knew that Houdini was not only the world's handcuff king and champion medium exposer, but that also he was one of the world's most expert magicians and could detect trickery at a glance.

Accordingly one evening I went to the National Theater on Broadway and found him in his dressing room, suffering from a broken leg but still gamely determined to give his performance.

Under my arm was the Baron's bulky book of spirit séances and pictures.

"Houdini," I said, "do you know this book?"

He smiled sadly.

"I know it well," he replied.

"What about the moving pictures in it?" I asked.

"What about the whole book?" he flared.

"You tell me," I requested.

This is what he told me:

"I say the Von Schrenk Nortzing book is filled with a lot of piffle and the pictures are ridiculous to the Nth degree. Either he is being duped or there is somebody in his household making a fool of him. In my séance with Eva (the medium about whom the Baron wrote the bulk of his huge volume) at no time did she display any evidence of being able to produce ectoplasm. Regarding the moving picture of what took place, with the present scientific methods of taking moving pictures in a dark room, I can double-discount them. Men like Von Schrenk Nortzing are never initiated."

Here Houdini paused and chuckled.

"You know," he said quizzically, "if the Baron and I were put together, nailed in a box and thrown overboard, I am the only one who would come up alive. That is because I know how these things are done and the Baron doesn't. A knowledge of magic—of conjuring and sleight-of-hand—is necessary to detect mediums,—just as a knowledge of anatomy is necessary to a surgeon."

NOW, it may very well be objected that such a denunciation as that does not disprove the case against the many reports of spirit moving pictures emanating from Europe, as reported in the newspapers, nor, indeed, the very pictures in the Baron's monumental volume.

The point, is, however, that the experience of Houdini, the most famous magician in America today, if not in the world, and of every other trained magician, has demonstrated that all the mediums of famous scientists turn out to be fakers when they are investigated by a man who knows conjuring tricks.

One of the most recent cases is the famous Margery case in Boston, where a distinguished committee of scientists was ready to declare that the manifestations they had seen were genuine, until Houdini came along and pricked the bubble by discovering the trick.

Another celebrated case was that of Ada Bessinet, of Toledo, Ohio. Two books were written about Bessinet by a Columbia professor, who declared she was one of the greatest mediums in the world. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle held a séance with her and conversed with the specter of his dead son. Then a Macfadden Publications writer, who was also a magician, went to Toledo, sat with Bessinet and published an exposé of her tricks, showing that it was all done by cleverness instead of spirits.

THE same investigator exposed the two mediums who were declared genuine by W. T. Stead, the noted English investigator; and later convicted in the police courts two associate ministers of the First Spiritualist Church of New York for one of the most astounding ghost hoaxes ever offered to the dupes at three dollars a ghost.

Wherever a magician comes in contact with a medium, the trick is shown up. Houdini has exposed hundreds of them. And when Houdini says that the spirit moving pictures are piffle, it is not hard to believe him.

The candid opinion of this writer is that we will wait a long time before we have five reel pictures of actual spirits—and in the meantime we can get along very nicely with Gloria, Dorothy and Lillian, Charlie and Richard and the other glorious living.

The screen is no place for dead ones, anyway.

Meanwhile, should you ask me if spirit photography is ever genuine, I can only shrug my shoulders and ask you——

"When is anything ever wholly genuine?"

It is a matter to speculate over—something for us to think about.

Next!—Within Four Creeping Walls

(*Continued from page 42*)

know, gave me Capri's book, but I haven't read it. I'm not interested in that sort of stuff. I can't explain why I went with you to his lecture, except that tonight I felt a bit fidgetty."

"This is my idea of a restful room," said Walters as he picked up his hat and coat. "Sometimes I positively envy you having this room, old man."

"You do, eh?" answered Tempest with a complacent grin. "Well, my dear Walters, you'll have to be content with upstairs. This tenant has no intention of moving out, I assure you."

"I suppose not," said Walters drily. He paused at the door to add, jestingly: "Watch out you don't fall into Capri's depression."

"Not much!" Tempest assured him. "Upon my word, Walters, if you stick up for that learned ass, I'll have to give you up as a bad job. Leave ghosts alone and stick to your briefs. Good night, old man! I'll have a pipe and turn in."

Walters opened the door and peered ahead of him dubiously, seeming to hesitate. Then he stepped gingerly out and closed the door behind him.

For a moment Tempest stood staring at the door, through which his friend had passed, a thoughtful expression on his rugged features. Then he turned slowly.

"What's the world coming to? A sane, normal fellow like Walters?" he said aloud.

He walked to the table and leisurely filled his pipe.

"Hallucinations! George! I hope he won't end by traveling on—by his own hand. Obstinate fellow! He's quite capable of doing it, though, to prove his point to me. Ah, there he is now, poking his fire upstairs. Damn kind of him to remind me of the fellow who did for himself, over there, eh?—half in, half out of this room! Lucky for me I haven't much imagination. Lots of people would begin to imagine all sorts of things. . . . I've half a mind to launch a counterblast at old Capri—write something to show him up for the self opinionated ass he is. Where's his book?"

He went to the line of bookcases, still muttering to himself.

"Here we are. *A Study of Suicide* by Luigi Capri. Three hundred pages. Good Lord! I'll have a look at this anyway. There may be something in it."

He settled himself in the armchair.

"'The power of suggestion. Prospective suicide's brain, like that of prospective murderer, is peculiarly receptive to imitative impulse. This may be awakened in several ways. For instance, reading account of a suicide. By a coincidence in circumstances—fellow in trouble let us say, reads of the suicide of another, in similar trouble. Attraction too, which certain heights—bridges for instance—have for suicides. A suicide committed from one of the bridges of Paris, is sure to be followed by another at no remote interval—just as one atrocious form of murder is sure to have its imitators.

"'Another cause, more occult——'" He snorted contemptuously, "Occult fiddlesticks!"

He read on: "'Is it not possible, I ask you, that even as the scene of a crime arouses in the subconscious intelligence of one visiting it, an involuntary shrinking, a quiver of horror, so may not the atmosphere of the scene of a suicide still be attainted by, and impregnated with, the horrid impulse, or

premeditated callousness with which the suicide took his life? Indeed, I go further: I suggest that the soul of the wretched taker of his own life, chained to the spot by the elemental passion of self-destruction, may linger there, waiting until another, by his own wilful deed, supplants him in possession of the accursed spot!'"

Tempest closed the book with a slam, and threw it on the table.

"There's madness for you! My God, what an idea! Death like a barber—yes, looking from the victim in the chair to some other poor devil, and politely saying: 'Next!' Damn it, the man's a lunatic! Yet—he finds an audience. There's Walters now—that model of precision and cold logic—ready to meet Capri's theories halfway."

HE sat staring at the fire, then laid down his pipe with an impatient gesture, and rose to his feet. For a minute or so he paced up and down the room.

"Restless! I wonder what makes me so restless? Hope I get a better sleep tonight. Those damned dreams—all night long—yet I can't remember them. I wake up tired as a dog."

He halted in front of his bookcases.

"Books! Books! Ghosts of dead men's thoughts! There's your real ghosts for you. I'm sick of them. Sick of them. I'll sell the whole lot. Lord, what a lot of my life I've wasted with my nose in a book! Men of my age have done things—seen things. I've always wanted to go to Africa, India.

"I'm only forty-five. If I had my life to live over again, I'd do something different from what I've done—drowsing along, reading—a little writing that meant nothing—collecting coins. When I die all that the papers will be able to say about me will be: 'Mr. John Tempest, the numismatist, was a well known figure at auctions. His collection which includes many rare specimens, is willed to the Museum.' Short and sweet. The obituary of a nobody."

He glanced up at the ceiling.

"There's Walters knocking his pipe out. On his way to the bench—Judge Walters. Oh, well, he deserves it! He works day and night. He'll have the power of life and death in his hands. Life's a problem that even death won't solve."

He wheeled around sharply, with a shudder.

"That's queer. What made me say that? Almost as if—as if someone had prompted me—like a voice at my ear."

For a moment he stood still, a puzzled, startled expression stamped on his face. Then his rigid posture relaxed and he shook his shoulders.

"Pshaw! That talk of Walters! What the devil did he mean by reminding me I was living in a suicide's room? 'Pon my word, I can believe he's so set on having this place that he'd not stop at trying to scare me." He laughed softly, "Scare me! Me?"

He resumed his pacing and his muttered musing.

"No reason, eh? The poor devil must have had a reason. Twenty-five they said he was—and to kill himself. Ugh! I wonder—thinking—too much thinking about himself—then all at once the poison—a moment and then—nothing! Oblivion. At twenty-five? Preposterous. At forty-five, maybe—but twenty-five? Rubbish! A fellow with imagination could make quite a story of the business, if anyone wanted to read it."

He looked about him slowly.

"Funny! I used to think this was a cheerful room, but now—God—it's gloomy! All this dark woodwork. The house is too old—too cluttered with memories, with tragedy that——"

He stopped short with a start, listened, then going to the door, opened it and looked out.

"That you Briggs?"

There was no answer from the shadowy corridor. He stood with a perplexed expression, then shut the door quickly.

"Queer! Sounded like some one walking up and down out there."

HE stood by the door listening, then returned to the fire, staring at the mantelpiece, as though enumerating the objects on it—the clock, the two bronze elephants, the vial of blue glass, with its 'Poison' label.

"Quite simple. Nothing simpler—if I were such a fool. An accident. Looks just like that stuff Tallifer gave me. Old fool—as if I needed any of his antiquated prescriptions. A bit tired—that's all that's the matter with me."

He held the bottle in his hand for an instant, then set it back on the mantel shelf.

"No——" He looked round quickly. "Why should I? Just came into my mind. Queer, how you get ideas! Just came into my mind—how easy! John Tempest, my boy, you've got to get out more in the open air. Soon you'll be as bad as Walters, with his hallucinations." His voice dropped to a hushed whisper, "In my ear—like a whisper—someone whispering—— Here! This won't do! It won't!"

He clenched his fist—struck the mantel a blow.

"My coins! Sell them—and go on a trip. Algiers. It will be a wrench, but I'll do it. Go and see the curator of the Museum tomorrow, and see what he'll give me. If he can't meet my price, I'll sell them at auction. Moran would give his eye teeth for my gold stater."

For a moment he seemed transformed. With a brisk air he went to the cabinet and pulling out a tray of coins, carried it over and set it on the table. He looked them over critically, a glow of enthusiasm in his eyes.

"Let me see, let me see. These silver ones need a little rubbing up."

He poured some of the contents of the bottle he had taken from the mantel shelf, into a saucer, then sitting down, he began to polish one of the coins with a rag.

"That gold stater ought to go high. I spent five hundred on it—worth six times that now—good specimen, as clean as when it came from the mint. The desert! I might go so far as to hire a caravan. That woman—Rosita something—got pretty far into the desert. Plucky woman—I can surely do the same. Wasted my life. No love, no fame, no pleasure, no friends but old fogies—except Walters—Judge Walters, eh? He'll be surprised, won't he? God! Forty-five. Thirty lost years! Even as a boy that old aunt of mine and her tight reins! It's a wonder I didn't lose my mind! It's a wonder——"

He paused uncertainly, with a sudden searching stare at the curtains of the archway.

"Eh—did these curtains always hang that way—out at the foot—as if there was something there—lying——"

He laid down the rag abruptly, and put his hand up, to feel his brow. He half rose from his seat, his eyes still upon the curtains. Then he sat down again, and drawing his handkerchief, wiped his forehead.

"I'm cold," he muttered. "Funny—brows wet—cold."

HE leaned forward and poked the dying coals, coaxing them into a blaze. And at the sound, Walters overhead, looked up from his papers, listened a moment, smiled, and resumed his reading.

In the room below, into which a stealthy silence was creeping, broken only by the heavy breathing of the man who stared into the fire—nothing stirred.

Then all at once, moved by a draft coming from some unsuspected crevice, the flame leapt up. There was a rustling behind him, and John Tempest roused from a strange lethargy, sat up swiftly and looked at the one place in the room where he knew he must look.

The curtains of the archway were strained tight—pulled together as though some unseen hand held them.

For an instant Tempest sat as though stupified. Then, with shaking hands, he reached for the decanter and poured out a stiff drink. He carried it to his lips, tossed it down, and hurriedly poured out another which he set upon the table. A cunning look crept into his eyes and he nodded his head.

"Scare me!" he exclaimed, hoarsely. "Scare me with your ghosts, friend Walters—scare me out of my room, eh? Come out—out with you! Let me see you. Eh—you won't? All right, stay where you are!"

He resumed his polishing, his forehead wrinkled with the effort at concentration.

All at once he laid down the rag.

"Supposing I can't sell them. Easy to buy, but when you come to sell—you sell for a song. On and on—year after year—those lost years of my youth! I'm too old to begin again!"

He looked once more at the curtains.

"I wonder," he said softly, "I wonder what you thought of it all? You had a problem—you had—What answer did you get? Eh?"

He bent forward as though to catch the reply.

"Whispering? What are you whispering about?" he scowled impatiently. "What is it? I can't hear you. The room is full of whispering—whispering voices."

He rose to his feet and shook his fist at the curtains. As he did so, his jaw dropped and he recoiled. For a second or two of pulsating time he stood—his face a livid mask of horror, as though that which he feared was lurking behind the swaying curtains, had suddenly been

revealed to him. Then, with groping hands he reached out for the glass of whisky. It was half way to his lips when he stopped, and put out his hand to the vial which stood uncorked upon the table. A swift tilting of its contents into the glass, and, smiling strangely, John Tempest lifted the glass once more to his lips.

CHARLES WALTERS laid his papers down and leaped to his feet. Something had fallen heavily in the room beneath. For a moment he listened carefully. All was silent, below. Then, apprehension assailed him, and he ran to his door.

He came downstairs two steps at a time, and knocked at Tempest's door. There was no answer. He turned the knob and stepped inside.

"Anything wrong? Heard a thud. Anything——"

With horror-stricken eyes, he gazed down at the body of Tempest. It was lying in the archway, half concealed by the trailing curtains.

"Tempest! What on earth? My God!" he cried in horrified tones.

He bent over the body and picked up the glass. He sniffed it.

"Good God!"

Kneeling, he laid his hand on the dead man's heart, then over his mouth. He rose to his feet, a look of utter perplexity on his face.

"Why? No earthly reason!"

Walters stood there, looking down at the body intently for some little time. He seemed to be trying to decide something in his mind. Then he raised his head and stared about him. Into his face there crept a look of appreciation, of eager anticipation.

"I could place my desk——"

He checked himself, with a shocked and self-accusing gesture.

"Poor Tempest!" he said softly, in a contrite tone. "I'm sorry that it had to be." He studied a moment. "I'd better phone the police."

HE walked to the desk in the corner and sat down—almost with a proprietary air. After all it seemed good to be there. He smiled a pleased smile. He had always liked these rooms, and now that——

Walter did not notice that in the doorway, which he had left open, someone stood pointing at him—pointing at him malignantly. Had he had eyes to see, he might have distinguished a staring, white face—but it was not the face of young Halliwell. No, it was an older face—the face of him who had been John Tempest, and his stubby forefinger was raised—as though to say to the tenant who would now occupy those rooms, who had kept constantly saying that he would like to occupy those rooms:

"Next!"

Out of a Gleaming Tomb

(*Continued from page 28*)

I didn't care a hoot about the pictures, but I was in hopes of seeing Ruth again. For perhaps an hour we sat there thumbing over photographs and talking generalities, and I saw that the old boy had taken a fancy to me. Several times I made a move to go, but each time he brought out something else to show me, or opened some new topic of conversation, and I could see he wanted me to stay, that he was enjoying my company. Finally the door opened and Ruth came in, the same inscrutable expression in her eyes.

"Ruth, meet Mr. Evans. My daughter, sir, Miss Higgins."

Miss Higgins? Then she hadn't married! I jumped to my feet and went to meet her with outstretched hand, too happy to hide my joy. Why, perhaps——

But aside from the slight deepening of her color, she gave no sign that she noticed, and replied, quite calmly:

"Mr.—Evans—and I have already met."

"Why, of course, of course. You let him in, didn't you? Now, I was just going to ask him to stay and have supper with us, but perhaps you'd better do it, instead. It's the women-folks' place to do the invitin', isn't it?" And he laughed jovially.

"I'm sure we'll be delighted, if Mr. Evans will stay." She smiled at me now, little imps of mischief dancing behind her eyes. So she had noted my confusion—thought I was some city guy who had fallen in love with her on sight? Well, that was all right too. I'd woo her first, and then tell her who I was.

MRS. Higgins joined us presently and we sat long over the pleasant meal. I found myself talking as I hadn't talked in months, under the skillful questioning of Ruth, and the appreciative attention of the old folks. My life had indeed been colorful—more so than I had realized, I discovered—and I sat there telling them tales of foreign lands and strange adventures until the late summer sun went down and the lights had to be turned on. It brought back old memories.

That seemed to break the spell, and as we left the room to allow the maid of all work to clear the table, Mrs. Higgins suggested tactfully that Ruth take me out on the porch for a breath of air. Same match-making mamma she had always been, I told myself gaily, and thanked my stars that so far her efforts had been in vain. This time, though, please God, they would be successful!

We were out on the porch now, standing uncertainly at the top of the steps. There was no moon, but the night was bright with a multitude of stars, and the crickets and bullfrogs were holding their evening concert. Once more the memories crowded over me, and for a moment I was again that boy of eighteen. She, too, seemed to be feeling the spell of the evening, for she stood as silently, as uncertainly as I. Suddenly, without in the least intending to speak, I heard my voice saying:

"Well, Ruth?"

The next instant she was in my arms, sobbing and laughing all at once, repeating my name over and over again. "Ralph! . . . Ralph!"

When she had become coherent, I whispered: "You knew me, then, dear?"

"Of course! I'd have known you anywhere!"

"And you knew I would come back?" I somehow felt that my coming back to her had been as inevitable as the movements of the stars.

"Yes. . . . I knew you would. But it was so long—so long——" Again she buried her head against my shoulder, and I held her to me hungrily, a fierce pang of remorse tugging at my heart.

"Fifteen years," she continued. "But somehow I knew you would come back some day. There's never been anyone else, Ralph."

What a rotter I was! I tried to tell her, but she placed her soft little hand against my mouth, and would not listen.

"Oh, I know, Ralph. There have been experiences, adventures—other women. I never for a moment pictured you going through life ignoring everything—everybody, but me. Men aren't like that. But I knew love like ours couldn't die."

"And it hasn't, dearest, believe me——"

"I know."

After awhile she suggested that we take a walk, and as we sauntered through the old paths and haunts, I told her of my visit, and what I hoped to achieve, and she told me about my father.

My going, she said, seemed to have opened his eyes to many things. He had tried desperately to find me, but he could learn nothing save the fact that I had shipped on the freighter, "Timbuctoo." At Hong Kong I had left the ship and disappeared completely, and in time, when I failed to write him, he came to fear I had been killed. But he could never quite believe that.

He had known of my love for Ruth, and he and Ruth had spent many hours together, talking about me and speculating about my fate. Time went on and still they had no word, and gradually my father began to age, to lose interest in things. He seemed to feel, and rightly, that my step-mother was responsible for my disappearance, and there were many bitter quarrels between them.

THEN one day my step-mother packed her things and went back West to her old home. Father continued to live in the old house, all by himself. Ruth said she understood he had sent the woman money, from time to time, but he had never actually told her so.

With my step-mother's going, his habits had changed and he had become a recluse. The only people he saw at all were Doctor Nevins and Judge Wyckham, both life-long friends. He avoided all other contacts. Ruth told me that at first she had hunted him up as usual, every so often, but he was silent, morose, almost surly, and one day he had asked her point blank not to come again. "You remind me of—

him," he explained. "I don't want to be reminded of him."

Presently it began to be noised about that old Major Durham must be losing his money, for he was selling his various real estate holdings about town. Then certain of the fine old family furniture and rugs were sold to various antique dealers—in fact he seemed to be turning everything of value he owned into money.

It was commonly believed he had gambled on the stock market, or something of that sort, and lost most of what he owned. Two or three years before, he had suddenly dropped dead of heart failure and he was buried immediately, quietly, without any fuss, as was his wish. His two old friends, Doctor Nevins and Judge Wyckham, took complete charge of everything, and the widow was not notified until after the funeral.

She arrived in town in a fine rage. Why had she not been sent for before the funeral? He had not wished it? What did that matter? She was his widow, wasn't she—his only surviving relative? But the two old men paid little attention to her and at last she calmed down and demanded that the will be read. But there seemed to be no will, and as there was no one to dispute her right, she automatically inherited what property there was—only the house and a small amount of money in the savings bank.

IN order to live she had to rent the house and take the Stoner shack for her own abode, and the catastrophe had been almost too much for her. Never any too pleasant, she had developed into a veritable shrew, and few people would risk association with her. So there she lived, alone, bitter, almost an outcast. Indeed some people even went so far as to say she had become slightly demented.

As Ruth unfolded this story to me, my feelings can well be imagined. If only I had known, how different I might have made things for my father, during his last years! I might at least have communicated with him, I told myself wretchedly, but I had been very bitter, and I had not known he cared.

"You couldn't be expected to know," she said softly. "You mustn't blame yourself too severely."

I took her hand in mine, and for awhile we continued our walk in silence.

"Is he buried here?" I asked. We had reached the old cemetery in which my mother lay sleeping. Ruth nodded. I pushed open the gate and we entered.

I knew the spot well. After mother's death I had come there often, gaining a measure of comfort from the simple rite of decorating her grave with flowers, and in spite of the dark, I was able to lead the way to the family plot. As we approached it, I thought I saw something move, and at the same instant Ruth's grip on my arm tightened.

"Do you see someone?" I whispered.

"Ye—es." She tried to answer bravely, but her voice quavered and I could feel her body trembling as she came closer to me.

"You wait here and I'll investigate," I whispered, but she clung to me in terror and at last we both advanced toward the spot, silently, cautiously.

As we drew near, I could make out the outlines of a white figure flitting about, and for an instant all the stuff I had ever heard about ghosts and grave yards raced crazily through my head. Then reason reasserted itself, and I managed to get myself in hand.

Good Lord! There were no ghosts! I was acting like an idiot! This was a thing of flesh and blood and I must find out who it was and what it was doing here. I loosened Ruth's terrified hold on my arm and whispered, "Stand right here. Don't move. I'm going to take it by surprise," and Ruth, too scared for utterance, did as I told her.

Slowly I advanced on the thing, and suddenly, spying me apparently for the first time, it turned and fled. I followed in full pursuit and finally, sensing that I was gaining on it, it turned and charged back at me, and for a wild moment I fought the impulse to run from it. But something bigger than I, kept me rooted to the spot, and as it came at me, I opened my arms and caught hold of it tightly. There was a moment of fierce struggle, then it crumpled up in my arms and lay there panting and gasping. I lowered it to the ground and quickly struck a match. At that moment Ruth came rushing up to me.

"Ralph! You're all right? Oh, thank God!" Then seeing the figure crumpled at my feet she gave a little gasp. "Oh Ralph—her!"

"Her?"

"Your step-mother!"

So that was the ghost.

I STRUCK a fresh match and peered at the figure more closely. What I saw, filled me with both disgust and pity. It was she all right—a moth-eaten caricature of her former self. Her whole body had shrunk, her hair was tangled and unkempt and gray, her light clothes hung about her in tatters, but the same features were there—the beak of a nose, the cruel mouth, the receding chin.

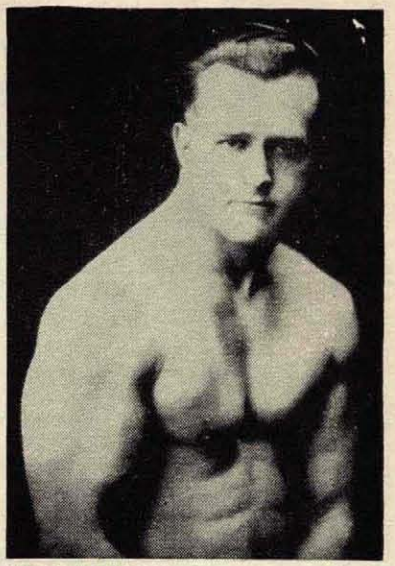
Her eyes were closed and she seemed to be unconscious, as she lay there in a huddled heap. The match flickered and went out. There was a sudden, swift movement in the darkness, and before we could grasp what was happening, she had darted up and away. I made as though to follow her, but Ruth laid a detaining hand on my arm.

"Let her go, Ralph. She's harmless—and probably scared to death."

And of course she was right. Why follow the old woman? I wanted nothing of her. Apparently the gossips who had called her slightly demented were not so far wrong. She certainly looked and acted crazy.

I gave a slight, involuntary shudder, as I turned back toward the grave, and would have left the place at once, had not something stronger than my own inclinations propelled my feet. I found myself in a moment or two once more beside my father's grave, and striking a fresh match I stooped and studied the simple inscription on the headstone.

For a few moments I stood with bowed head, my feelings a mixture of reverence and remorse, while Ruth waited for me a few feet away. Presently I turned



EARLE E. LIEDERMAN—The Muscle Builder

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

If You Were Dying To-Night

and I offered something that would give you ten years more to live, would you take it? You'd grab it. Well, fellows, I've got it, but don't wait till you're dying or it won't do you a bit of good. It will then be too late. Right now is the time. Tomorrow, or any day, some disease will get you and if you have not equipped yourself to fight it off, you're gone. I don't claim to cure disease. I am not a medical doctor, but I'll put you in such condition that the doctor will starve to death waiting for you to take sick. Can you imagine a mosquito trying to bite a brick wall? A fine chance.

A Re-Built Man

I like to get the weak ones. I delight in getting hold of a man who has been turned down as hopeless by others. It's easy enough to finish a task that's more than half done. But give me the weak, sickly chap and watch him grow stronger. That's what I like. It's fun to me because I know I can do it and I like to give the other fellow the laugh. I don't simply give you a veneer of muscle that looks good to others. I work on you both inside and out. I not only put big, massive arms and legs on you, but I build up those inner muscles that surround your vital organs. The kind that give you real pep and energy, the kind that fire you with ambition and the courage to tackle anything set before you.

All I Ask Is Ninety Days

Who says it takes years to get in shape? Show me the man who makes any such claims and I'll make him eat his words. I'll put one full inch on your arm in just 30 days. Yes, and two full inches on your chest in the same length of time. Meanwhile, I'm putting life and pep into your old back-bone. And from then on, just watch 'em grow. At the end of thirty days you won't know yourself. Your whole body will take on an entirely different appearance. But you're only started. Now come the real works. I've only built my foundation. I want just 60 days more (90 in all) and you'll make those friends of yours, who think they're strong, look like something the cat dragged in.

A Real Man

When I'm through with you, you're a real man. The kind that can prove it. You will be able to do things you had thought impossible. And the beauty of it is you keep on going. Your deep, full chest breathes in rich pure air, stimulating your blood and making you just bubble over with vim and vitality. Your huge square shoulders and your massive muscular arms have that craving for exercise of a regular he-man. You have the flash to your eye and the pep to your step that will make you admired and sought after, both in business and social world.

This is no idle prattle, fellows. If you doubt me, make me prove it. Go ahead, I like it. I have already done this for thousands of others and my records are unchallenged. What I have done for them, I will do for you. Come, then, for time flies and every day counts. Let this very day be the beginning of new life to you.

Send for my new 64 page book

"Muscular Development"—It Is Free

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

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN

305 Broadway Dept. 3601 New York City

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Dear Sir: Please send me free without any obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book, "Muscular Development."

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to join her, and as I did so, a sudden icy wind passed swiftly over me. At the same moment a shrill scream broke from Ruth.

"Ralph! Look! Look!" She seemed to have taken leave of her senses as she stood shrieking, pointing a finger at me —or was it over my shoulder.

Swiftly I wheeled about, and for a second my blood seemed to freeze in my veins, as I too, saw it. A shadowy form was rising—rising out of the earth! Then, instantly, a great calm took possession of me, and I found myself moving as one in a dream.

"Father!"

I would have known him anywhere, in spite of the gray hair, the bent shoulders. It seemed quite natural that he should be there, even though I could see through him, even though I realized this thing was unearthly, unbelievable—a mere phantom.

I took a step toward him, then something made me stop, and for a moment we stood regarding each other, as though we would penetrate each other's very souls. Then a beautiful smile spread over his countenance and his fine eyes fairly poured forth love and tenderness.

"Father!" I took another step toward him, and at that instant a strange light came from over my shoulder, lighting up the figure in the weirdest manner, and I saw a luminous, glittering mass, as though a million tiny stars were lodged there. With a sudden, swift motion, he reached inside his coat, then advanced toward me, the luminous substance in his outstretched hand. At that moment the spell was broken by a cry from Ruth, and as I turned toward her, the figure of my father began to dissolve.

FOR the next few moments my attention was centered on Ruth who had fallen to the ground in a quivering heap. It was some time before I could calm her. In sheer desperation I finally told her that she really had been mistaken, that her nerves were badly unstrung, that there had been no ghost, no presence save what her own fevered imagination had pictured. But, when I had taken her home, and had left her with the understanding that on the morrow I would call upon her parents and reveal my identity to them, I found that I too, was unnerved.

This thing was uncanny. Yet, we had both seen the thing, hadn't we? It was really my father—not a doubt about that!

After I got into bed I lay there trying to figure it out. Surely I had been wrong. My step-mother's presence in the graveyard had made us excited. We had imagined the rest. It was with this thought on my mind that I finally dropped off to sleep.

"MY son!"

I sat up in bed and peered into the darkness. Had a voice actually called me, or was it a dream? At first nothing was visible; then I felt again that unearthly, icy wind, and heard a slight rustling sound.

"Father?" The word came from me almost unconsciously, and I had no sooner uttered it than he stood before me, quite bright in the darkness, with that strange glitter over his heart more radiant, more dazzling than before.

For a long moment he stood gazing at me, then slowly he raised his arm and beckoned, and, like one in a dream, I arose and followed. Down the length of the room he led me. Then, as he reached my old book-case beside the window, he seemed to vanish straight through the wall. I was left standing in the darkness, dazed, baffled, and shaken.

What could it mean? I continued to stand there for some time in a sort of stupor, then slowly I made my way back to the bed. What did it all mean? He was evidently trying to tell me something—but what?

I must have fallen asleep again, for, once more I awakened with the distinct impression that my name had been called. Yes—there he was again! He looked distressed, this time, and he beckoned me more emphatically than before. Again I arose and followed him to the book-case. This time he pointed at it meaningly, and again he vanished through the wall.

I felt around for the electric switch—turned it on. This thing was queer. I would get to the bottom of this! I went over and carefully examined the old book-case. It was empty of all save a few books, relics of my school days that no one had seen fit to remove. One by one I took them out, thumbed over their pages and shook out any loose papers they contained. Nothing of importance. Only bits of scratch paper—notes made at school. Then, suddenly, in a flash, I remembered.

The sliding panel . . . how could I have forgotten!

Quickly I pulled the book-case from the wall and groped about for the spring. Yes, it was still there! I pressed it and with beating heart watched, for perhaps the hundredth time, the noiseless sliding back of the panel, the disclosure of that yawning cavity beyond. Built by the original owner of the house, probably to lodge a safe or something of the sort, this place of concealment had always fired my youthful imagination with its thrilling possibilities. Many a time, as a kid, I had hidden my most cherished possessions there, away from prying eyes. That anyone else knew of its existence, I never for a moment dreamed, but I realized now that father must have known of it from the start.

I struck a match and thrust it inside the opening and in the flickering light I saw that the space was empty save for a flat package that lay on the bottom beneath a heavy coating of dust. I lifted this out eagerly, my heart pounding with excitement. It was a thick envelope, bearing Judge Wyckham's name in one corner and addressed to me in my father's well-known writing.

I opened it, and with trembling fingers I drew out a long legal document—my father's last will and testament. Swiftly my eye scanned the closely written sheet, then I started at the beginning. What I read there astounded me! Especially so, in view of what had happened this night.

Apparently my father was determined that my step-mother should have none of his money. He wanted me to have it, but in the event that I never returned, it was to just disappear from the earth. He had conceived the strange idea of turning everything he owned into cash, and then converting that cash into —diamonds! Judge Wyckham, who was appointed his executor, was instructed to conceal these diamonds in a secret, inside pocket of father's coat, over his heart, just before his burial—and to make sure they were buried with him.

In the event of my return, I was to get the necessary court order to have the body dug up, and claim my fortune. If I never appeared, the stones were to remain forever buried with him.

There followed a description of the secret cupboard in my room, in which the judge was instructed to place the will against my return. A truly remarkable document. Apparently the judge had carried out his instructions to the letter, for I had not the slightest doubt that the glittering mass apparent over the heart of my father's ghost, was actually the fortune in diamonds.

The whole thing was so uncanny, so weird, that for a little while I sat there as one stupified. This thing defied all physical laws, and yet—it had happened. I examined the signatures of the witnesses. Dr. Nevins was one and the other was Samuel Higgins, Ruth's father! He, then, had known of this will, too, and had never told Ruth—or, probably, anyone else.

IT was broad daylight now and I began to dress. Since I had planned to tell Ruth's parents that morning, who I really was, I decided to go right over there and take the will with me. Mr. Higgins would advise me what steps to take. Accordingly, immediately after breakfast I walked over to Ruth's house. I found Mr. Higgins out watering the lawn. He greeted me cordially.

"Well, Mr. Evans, and how are you this morning? Slept well, I hope."

"Yes, thanks. And you?"

"Never better."

"Mr. Higgins—I wonder if I might see you alone for a few moments?"

"Why—certainly. Wait 'til I shut this off and I'll be right with you."

He turned off the faucet and led the way into his library.

"Now, sir, what can I do for you?"

I took the will from my pocket and laid it on the table before him.

"You've seen this before, Mr. Higgins?"

He picked it up and glanced at it curiously, then recognizing it, his whole attitude stiffened to attention.

"Major Durham's will! What does this mean, sir?" He regarded me intently.

"I found it—where my father had it hidden."

His face paled. "Then you are not——"

"George Evans? No—I'm Ralph Durham."

He scrutinized my face closely. I could see that he was trying to reconcile my present personality with that of the boy he had last seen fifteen years before. At last I saw by his face that he was convinced, but he pretended to be skeptical for awhile longer.

"Can you prove that?"

"Of course. I have plenty of credentials." Then I grinned. "You might ask Ruth. She recognized me immediately last night."

His face softened and he came around the table with outstretched hand.

"Ruth *would* know," he said huskily.

For a moment we stood, hands clasped, searching each other's faces, and each seemed satisfied with what he saw.

"You've kept her waiting a long time, young fellow," he said finally. "But it was either you, or no one, with Ruth."

"I know. She's a wonderful girl, Mr. Higgins—much too good for me. If I don't do everything in my power to make up to her for those years of waiting, from now on, I hope you'll come gunning for me."

"I promise you I will." We both laughed a bit shakily, coughed, blew our noses, and then settled down to discuss the will.

HE told me of being called in to witness it, a short time before father's death. "Mainly, I think," he said, "because I was Ruth's father. He was mighty fond of Ruth, the Major, and it was the dream of his life that some day you would return and marry her. He didn't want to raise any false hopes, so he asked me to say nothing to her about this will—and I never have.

"In fact," he added, "I don't suppose anyone but just those actually concerned in drawing it up, knows about the matter. It'll be a nine days wonder in this town when the truth becomes known!" We sat there in silence for awhile, then he continued.

"Dr. Nevins died shortly after your father. The judge is still on circuit, but he ought to be blowing in here one of these days pretty soon. You'd better stick around 'til he gets home, and he'll fix everything up for you in short order. Always fond of you, the judge was. By the way, when do you and Ruth figure to get married?"

"We haven't talked about a date. As soon as possible, if she's willing."

As a matter of fact, we were married within the month. Judge Wyckham returned sooner than we expected and set in motion the legal machinery necessary to secure me my fortune. As Mr. Higgins predicted, my return was the talk of the town for many days, and they haven't stopped talking yet of the eccentric Major Durham and his diamonds.

My step-mother, who was out of her mind, we took care of until her death, which occurred a short time after our marriage. Little Mrs. Southwick, who took the credit for bringing the Higgins family and me together again, has been made happy beyond her fondest dreams. I gave her the old homestead as a present.

I've never told Ruth or anyone else the true story of how I found my father's will. Who would believe a thing so improbable?

Yet it happened, and one other visitation I received from my father, since then. It was on the day of my marriage to Ruth. The minister was pronouncing us man and wife, there in a little church we had attended as children, and, as I glanced up at the bank of lillies about us, once more I saw it, faintly, but distinctly—that kind old face of my father, now smiling and happy. I knew then that he was content.

I might add that Ruth and I have found great happiness since that day.

They Hanged a Phantom For Murder

(*Continued from page* 31)

them together—and also to prevent any fraudulent phenomena.

The two young people began passing out the slates at random to various persons in the hall. It seemed almost a coincidence that the doctor and I should each receive a pair. The doctor's slate had one piece of white chalk on it.

I took the pair of slates given me, and examined them. They were one of the pair the doctor had brought for us, and had the three screws, which were screwed down as firmly as when we had placed them on the table. My pair contained no chalk and I was greatly disappointed as I was afraid I would receive no message.

AFTER looking them over carefully, and wiping them a few times with my handkerchief to make sure they were absolutely clean, I then laid them on the floor and placed my foot on them.

In the meantime the medium had gone into a trance, or coma. Presently various persons began to feel as though something was writing inside of their slates, and very soon several of them held up their slates, completely filled with writing. One slate was in the Morse Code, written to a telegraph agent, while several were written in foreign languages—especially one, which finally had to be read by a Chinaman.

All at once I heard something scratching inside of Dr. Ralston's slates and presently he opened them to find this message:

> "You won't accomplish your desire tonight, and in the other world you will also be thwarted, as justice cannot be cheated.
>
> (Signed) Your cousin,
>
> JOE WAKEFIELD."

The doctor seemed very much displeased and disturbed by this message.

Almost instantly I began to feel something vibrating and scratching between my slates. After the scratching had ceased, I opened my slates and found this weird and uncanny message:

> "You will be face to face with Death this evening, and you will escape him, only to meet him later. Who knows what the outcome will be? I see a hangman's noose coil and drop around your neck. You also will seem to lose something of great value."
>
> (Signed) Your uncle,
>
> DAVID LENARD WOODS."

The cold sweat stood out on my forehead. I trembled as though stricken with a siege of ague. But I hid my discomfort as best I could, and kept Dr. Ralston from looking at my message.

After almost everyone had received a message, either by slate or independent answers to their questions, the medium said he was in the right condition to give a few demonstrations of materializing—which amounts to having the dead return with seemingly their earthly bodies, and converse with the living. The medium then selected three men, of whom I happened to be one, to come up behind a screen placed for the occasion, and strip him from head to foot to see that he had no paraphernalia from which he might produce, or imitate, fraudulent spooks.

After we were all satisfied that he had nothing to produce spooks with, we gave him some silk pajamas to put on, then we placed him in the cabinet. It was a three sided affair, built for the purpose, resembling a screen. After he was seated inside this, we placed his feet in a pan of meal.

We also had a man, one of the three of us, sit in the cabinet and hold his hands all during the séance. This second séance was conducted in semi-darkness, yet it was quite light enough to distinguish different objects in the room.

THE medium went into a trance, and, after a short wait, a white-like substance that reminded me of a spider web, began to flow from his mouth. Soon faces began to take form out of this substance. Sometimes an arm would appear, or a foot. Finally, to my astonishment, a voice in the cabinet which came from the medium's mouth, but which I would have known anywhere as my father's, called out: "Doctor Grey, come up to the cabinet. Your father is here!"

I walked up close, my nerves tingling. I could hardly believe my eyes. There stood my father! He was exactly as I had known him in life, just before he died, except that he looked far more radiant, and younger. Yet his face wore a worried expression, as if he had been having a great deal of trouble.

"Charley, my boy," he said in quiet tones, "you are in terrible danger, and I see much evil around you. I am afraid. . . . But have courage—I will do all I can to protect you. Give my love to Nadine." Nadine is my wife's name.

He smiled at me and began melting away, or dematerializing, until just his head remained above the floor. His radiant features gradually drew down to an almost dazzling flash of light, then he was gone completely.

Believe me, if you think the slate message unnerved me, you should have seen me at that moment. By turns I became icy cold and burning hot. I don't think

there was a dry thread on me. The doctor was greatly upset and now my belief, which I had held from the first, that he was a magician, grew stronger. I fully believe that this was the first time Dr. Ralston had been brought face to face with the genuine goods. I had better state, for those of you that may be skeptical, that twelve forms in all, appeared at this materialization. Some were children, of whom several were not recognized, although most of the spirits were. Many people went away firm believers, while the skeptics went away, as they came, saying it was the work of the devil.

After the meeting the doctor and I both secured our slates by each paying the sum of one dollar. I would gladly have given a thousand dollars, or even more, for the experience of seeing and conversing with my father.

On the way home the doctor started in making insinuating remarks about Miss Turner and myself. This kept up until I could endure his vile tongue no longer. My blood boiled. I told him in suppressed tones, about seeing him make love to my wife. I was driving the car at the time and as we were approaching a bridge at the bottom of a steep hill, with almost cat-like agility, he grabbed the steering wheel out of my hands and headed the car for the side of the bridge.

To late I saw this fiend's plan for getting me to come to the meeting with him. Now I realized why he didn't ask my wife to come along, for he intended murdering me and having it appear as accidental. Before I could check him he headed the car straight through the side of the bridge. There was a deep, rock-strewn ravine below.

JUST before the car hit the bridge, the doctor gave me a mocking laugh and jumped, intending to land on the bank ahead of the bridge. But he must have lost his footing, or the car gaining speed altered his calculations, for he gave forth the most fiendish cry of mortal terror I have ever heard. It reminded me of a rat that is cornered and knows that it is going to die. I jumped just as the crash came and managed to land on my hands and knees on the bank ahead of the bridge. The car went crashing down below, to be smashed into complete wreckage.

Outside of a few cuts and bruises, I was none the worse for the affair, although my nerves were playing havoc with me. I picked my way very cautiously until at last I reached the bottom of the ravine. Here I found what was left of the car—and Dr. Ralston. He was not dead when I arrived, but kept moaning. I brought some water from the stream and drenched him, which seemed to brighten him up. At last he opened his eyes to stare at me.

As soon as he recognized me, he started cursing me, and saying: "You win now, but damn you, I'll win her yet! And I will come back and haunt you with hate then, as I am hating you now!"

After that outburst of passion the blood started flowing faster. A tremor rocked his whole body. His eyes began to glaze and roll upward. With his last death rattle he wheezed out: "Damn you, Grey!"

The car was a total wreck. But among the wreckage I found my slate. It was unscathed, save for a few blurs. Dr. Ralston's slate was demolished almost beyond recognition.

I walked about a mile down the road until I came to a ranch. I told them that we had had an accident and that my companion, Dr. Ralston, was killed. I had them summon an ambulance from one of the undertakers in Los Angeles, and also a taxi to pick me up.

My wife was greatly shocked when she learned the news of the doctor's death and how nearly I had come to being killed. She seemed greatly worried about my slate when she read about the hangman's noose. She said she had been having some messages coming to her from her guides, that seemed to speak of foreboding evil, but they always came in symbols she couldn't understand. I tried to laugh it off, to keep her from worrying. But I can't say I wasn't glad when Dr. Ralston was put away for keeps, into the cold, cold ground.

Shortly before the doctor's death he had started rumors around the town to the effect that Miss Turner and I had been carrying on an illicit love affair. The scandal was started, and my patients began leaving me in such numbers that I became frantic.

ABOUT this time a wisdom tooth became ulcerated and I was obliged to call in a dentist. After the dentist examined me he found another tooth that was diseased and advised me to take gas while he extracted them.

I did not want this, but I finally consented to take the anesthetic, and soon I was under its influence. It seemed as though I was floating in space and my soul was freed from its encasement of flesh. I felt so restful and calm, better than I had felt for months, for the passing events had proven a terrible strain on me.

I seemed to be able to look down at the dentist who was working on my body. At times it seemed as though I saw forms and faces flit by me, and I seemed to catch fragments of thought vibrations, part of which I couldn't understand. Then almost at once, I was jerked back into my body and I could faintly hear the dentist saying to my assistant: "He is coming out of it O. K." Then he began pumping oxygen into me. I felt almost angry at the dentist for bringing me back to this world of worry and strife.

A few days later, I seemed to hear Dr. Ralston's voice calling to me and saying: "Why don't you administer yourself some gas and rest in peace and contentment?"

I tried to shake this feeling off, but at last I couldn't stand it any longer, and after telling my assistant that I was through for the day and that she could go, I locked the door and made ready to take another peaceful soul flight and explore the mysteries of the unknown.

I was soon experiencing the same ecstasies I had experienced on the previous occasion. Here was contentment, peace and rest, and for a while I just floated in the ether. I soon learned, by a kind of mental vibration, that these faces I had encountered were the souls of men who once had lived on earth, but through some laws that they had broken, were doomed to be earth-bound. Some of them were doomed to float about the earth plane for centuries before they would be able to work out their salvation. I expected to see Dr. Ralston among them. For, did he not have the heart and soul of a murderer? But I didn't see anything of him. It seemed as though I had been in this world of spirits a long time, when in reality it was but a few moments. I was gradually pulled back into my earthly body, and soon I gained consciousness again.

I kept this secret practice up for several months until it was beginning to tell on me. Even my old friends who had stuck to me while the scandal was raging full blast, began winking and tapping their heads as though they thought I was losing my mind.

At last came the day that I'll never forget—the day that brings this narrative to a climax. The wife for several days had been complaining of several teeth that were almost driving her frantic. She had insisted that I pull them, but already, "My Lady of the Gas" had fastened her tentacles on me, and I didn't want to be cheated out of the enjoyment I derived from my new-found revelation.

I sent my asssistant away as usual, which had become of late almost a daily custom, and soon I had the mask over my face and was thrilling from head to foot with expectancy. At last I was freed of my earthly carcass, but in giving the gas I must have been in too big a hurry. Heretofore an elastic-like silken cord held my soul to the body of flesh. Now I felt it snap, and I shot up into a void which I can't describe as space, as I seemed to be beyond the control of gravity.

AS I shot upward I looked back. I saw my earthly body topple from the dentist chair and slump down in a heap. Almost at once I heard a fiendish laugh. I knew it to be Dr. Ralston's, and too late I realized his horrible purpose!

In a second, it seemed to me, I saw my earthly body squirming around on the floor, stretching first one arm out, then another, and gradually get to its feet. Then I saw my own face, distorted with passion and lust, grinning at me in a fashion that would put the devil himself to shame.

I next saw my wife enter the room. At first this puzzled me, but I remembered I hadn't locked the door as usual. Dr. Ralston, in my body, walked up to my wife and smiled, in my usual way. He patted her on the back sympathetically. What was going to happen next?

He placed her in the chair and made ready to extract her teeth. He adjusted the mask over her face and began pumping. I was frozen with horror. Wouldn't the fiend ever stop pumping? Then it dawned on me that he was murdering her. I couldn't utter a word of warning and if I could have, I knew it would never be understood because only thought telepathy is effective on the astral plane. My brain was paralyzed from the sheer horror of the situation.

At last my wife's body slumped down

in the chair and began getting rigid. Then I saw her coming toward me with her arms outstretched, and just as I was going to hold her to me, I heard that fiendish laughter I knew so well. The next thing I knew Dr. Ralston had grabbed my wife out from my grasp, and the two of them floated upward clear through the ceiling of the office, and away to where I knew not.

I spent what was to me years of agony in search of my wife, but never a trace of her. At last, worn out and heart broken, I found myself back beside my old body and by sheer will power, I pried my way back into it. I had been out of my earthly body only a few minutes, yet it was long enough for the doctor, allied with his band of black artisans, to accomplish his fiendish deed.

I came to earthly consciousness slowly, hoping against hope that this was only the fantasy of a tired, deranged brain, but alas, I found my wife stretched out on the floor just as I had looked down upon her while in the astral plane. I gathered her in my arms tenderly and tried to bring her to life, but to no avail. Finally I went for help, and what was my surprise and anger when two officers of the law placed me under arrest for the murder of my wife. The irony of it! The treasure I valued above all else. And to think the world brands me as her murderer!

No wonder I pace back and forth in my cell like some untamed animal. It is not the fear to die, but the irony of justice, as man knows it. For months I was silent only to the extent that I plead "not guilty," which as God Almighty is my judge, is the truth. I find little consolation in the Bible, although I have read it through three times. If it were not for the knowledge of another world and of spiritual truths and phenomena, that I have proven, I wouldn't be consoled. But I know that out in that Great Beyond, my beloved wife is anxiously waiting for me, with all the tenderness known to woman.

AFTER several months of grilling and third-degreeing which I look back on with horror, I at last confided in my attorney these facts, which I have here given to you. He laughed at me and said I was crazy. God knows, sometimes, I think I am, with all the sorrow and torment I have gone through. I wouldn't consent to be examined by an alienist but, needless to say, I was placed in the hands of three of the greatest alienists in America and Europe and they all agreed that I was sane. At any rate, sane enough not to be excused from paying the death penalty.

The infallible finger print system used in this country, if nothing else, doomed me, for did not the police find my finger prints all over my wife's body, also over the gas mask and pumping mechanism?

Well, I was judged guilty of murder in the first degree and now I wait the coming of the day, at ten o'clock in the morning, when I, an innocent man, will pay the price by hanging by the neck until dead. I await, not in fear, but with rejoicing. For, will I not meet my beloved wife? And, possibly justice will not be cheated. It may be that it will be Dr. Ralston who will pay the price—not I.

(Signed) DOCTOR GREY.

P. S.—This is the night before my execution. I feel well—and happy. I know that all will be well with me.

Afterward: I, Madelyn Sharpe, the

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, of GHOST STORIES, published monthly at Dunellen, N. J., for October 1, 1926.

State of New York } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Harry A. Keller, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of the GHOST STORIES, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Constructive Publishing Corporation, 1926 Broadway, New York City; Editor Harry A. Keller, 3 Riverside Drive, New York City; Managing Editor, Joseph M. Roth, 541 Nepperhan Ave., Yonkers, N. Y. Business Managers none.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) Constructive Publishing Corporation, 1926 Broadway, New York City. Stockholder: Macfadden Publications, Inc., 1926 Broadway, New York City. Stockholders in Macfadden Publications, Inc., Bernarr Macfadden, West Nyack, New York; O. J. Elder, 276 Harrison St., East Orange, N. J.

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5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is ---------- (This information is required from daily publications only.)

(Signed) HARRY A. KELLER, *Editor*

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only living relative of Dr. Grey, must state that although all of Doctor Grey's wealth was spent along with what I had, in the legal fight to save the doctor's life, we could do nothing. He was hanged by the neck until dead.

But let no one dare say that he did not go to the gallows like the brave man that he was. He knew that he was in the right.

Also, I would like to state that a medium in Europe, on the very afternoon Doctor Grey was supposed to have murdered his wife, received a slate message describing in full the details as Doctor Grey gave them to the public, but the jury refused to credit it. A coincidence, some will say. But let the skeptic laugh. That is life.

They hanged him? No, it was his phantom they hanged, not the Doctor Grey that had lived on earth. It was his spirit they hanged. They could not harm that!

Under The Spell of The Red Circle

(*Continued from page* 45)

down, and placed her hands on her hips.

"Ah lak fer t' know how yo' is gwine to heah noises when yo' make so much noise yo'self that——"

SHE turned bulging eyes suddenly upon the offending wall, holding up her hand. A faint thumping sound was heard by everyone, lasting but a moment.

"Water pipe," suggested Dr. Grover. "Togo is probably using an outside faucet."

"N—no, suh," Sam ventured; "de watah pipe am undah de flo', suh."

But the sound began again, this time a trifle fainter; a curious bumping or pounding noise, muffled, as though coming from a great distance.

"Dere yo' is!" cried Mammy Jane triumphantly. "Dere's yo' noises. I'se no fool!"

The sounds ceased abruptly.

"What's on the other side?" asked Travers.

"Mammy's room," said Evelyn.

"Ah gets it comin' an' goin'!" cried Mammy Jane. "If I'm heah, I heahs it, an' if I'm dere ah heahs it. But ah allows I'm done t'rough heahin' it from now on. Ah packs up today!"

"Now, Mammy," said Dr. Grover, "you've been packing up ever since you've been here. Just calm yourself and——"

"Clam mahself nuthin'!"

"Probably rats," ventured Evelyn, if——"

Suddenly there was a loud crash in the dining-room, and the group rushed in to find a large painting on the floor, lying in the center of the carpet, right at the edge of the table. Fragments of glass were scattered around it.

"The wire broke," said the doctor, picking it up. "Strange that it fell so far from the wall."

"But—the wire isn't broken!" cried Robert, "and look—the nail is still in the wall!"

"D-d-d-dis h-house am ha'nted!" gasped Mammy Jane, seizing Sam, who recoiled as if he had been shot.

"Don't skeer me dat way, woman!" he cried, trembling.

The doctor glanced at the painting, and then at the wall.

"A distance of ten feet," he said, puzzled. "This frame is too heavy to roll. The nail is still there, the wire is as good as ever; there's no wind——"

A sudden sound arrested their attention, coming from the living-room. It was a weird, mocking laugh, that rose to a shrill, unearthly crescendo!

Evelyn screamed and tottered, and Travers rushed forward to catch her just as a large black object bounded from the living-room into their midst; jumped to the table, glaring at them with eyes of fire, and jumped to the floor. Dr. Grover whipped out his automatic and fired at it.

"The cat!" gasped Travers, supporting the limp form of Evelyn.

"Missed him," grunted the doctor savagely, as the animal escaped through the kitchen door. "I'll get him."

He ran out, and they heard him gasp: "Gone! How did the devil get out? The back door's closed!"

Evelyn was moaning, trembling violently in Travers' arms, as the doctor rushed into the room again.

"Evelyn!" he cried; "Evelyn——"

Her eyes fluttered and opened as they carried her hastily to a chair. Her lips trembled, and she stared at them with a crazed, terrified expression, struggling violently.

"Let me go!" she screamed in a shrill voice. Then she saw Travers, and smiled, rising.

"Anthony!" she cried joyously, extending her arms toward him. "Save me, Anthony!"

He held out his arms impulsively, and the doctor and Mrs. Grover released her, staring as she crept close to Travers and kissed him upon the lips.

"Evelyn——" cried Robert, taking a step toward them. The doctor placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Wait, Bob," he cautioned, as Travers forced her away from him and held her at arms length.

"Don't you know me?" cried Evelyn in a quaint, high voice. "I am Marie, your wife—Marie Jacques."

"What?" cried Travers, aghast. "Your father is—is Captain Jacques——"

He stared at the doctor.

"Yes, Anthony," cried the girl, holding his face between her slim hands; "my father—your uncle, Anthony—where is he?"

"Good God!" gasped Travers weakly. He took a deep breath and glanced at the others grimly.

"Let us face this here and now," he said, his face pale, eyes flashing. "Doctor?"

"Yes," cried Dr. Grover, nodding, "go ahead, Professor."

He motioned for the others to sit down.

"Marie," said Travers softly, putting an arm about her, "what has happened?"

She was about to answer when a low, wailing sound came from somewhere in the house. She swayed and fell, gasping: "Father!"

Dr. Grover rushed forward and he and Travers caught her.

"Fainted!" grunted the doctor. "Mammy—water; quick!"

Then, as from a great distance, they heard once again that diabolical, mocking laugh!

"SHE'S coming to," said the doctor, handing back the glass of water to the trembling negress.

Evelyn opened her eyes.

"Oh—Daddy!" she cried. "I must have fainted."

"You did," her father answered grimly, glancing at Travers, who had started from the room.

"Where are you going, Professor?"

"I'm going to explore the house," said Travers. "That weird laugh—that moaning; it must come from somewhere."

He strode into the living-room, and Evelyn rose from the floor weakly.

"I'll be all right, Daddy. What—what has happened?"

"Wh-wh-what has happened?" gasped Sam, suddenly finding his voice; "—de house am ha'nted. Mammy's right, dis——"

"Silence, Sam," said the doctor sternly. "You and Mammy pull yourselves together, and clear up the dishes."

"It—it's all right, dis pullin' togedder bizness," gasped Sam, "but when ah heahs dat knockin' and groanin' an' dat debblish laff, ah knows I'll done fall apaht ag'in!"

Mrs. Grover comforted the terrified negro woman.

"Sam, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" she said. "You're more frightened than Mammy Jane, and you're a man."

Mrs. Grover was far from being calm herself, and Robert was trembling visibly. As for Mammy, she was speechless and gray with fright.

"Come," said the doctor. "Let us go to the living-room. Sam, pick up that picture and hang it up again. And quit shaking."

"Y-y-yes, suh."

THE kitchen door opened, and Togo, the gardener, came in, pausing as he saw that the dining-room door was open, and the family staring at him.

"Ah, Togo!" said the doctor. "I expect he wants his dinner, Mammy Jane."

The negress stirred feebly, and went into the kitchen.

"Did you see the cat, Togo?" asked the doctor.

"Me no see cat," the Japanese replied.

"Where were you?"

"Sweep out garage—just now lock up."

"Have you kept your eyes open all

day, for any strange occurrences——"

"Yes, Doctor," the Oriental affirmed, nodding. "Me hear shot while ago. Yes?"

The doctor laughed grimly.

"Yes, I fired at that confounded cat. Have your supper, Togo, and when you get through, report to me in the living-room."

"Yes sir."

The doctor put his arms around Evelyn, and Mrs. Grover and Robert followed them into the next room.

"I'm going to put on a guard," Dr. Grover said, as they seated themselves before the fireplace.

"A guard?" exclaimed Mrs. Grover.

"Yes; every night. The professor, myself, Togo and Sam. Can you stay tonight, Robert?"

"Why," exclaimed Briton, paling, "I—I could——"

"But you'd rather not, eh?" said the doctor, grinning. "Well, I don't want you to, against your will. Do you believe that the house is haunted, Bob?"

"I don't know what to believe," said Robert. "Those odd noises; that picture falling, in the center of the room, too; that strange laugh, and that big black cat——"

"I know, it's all a puzzle. But surely, you don't think it is all due to supernatural causes?"

"No—I don't believe in spirits; that's all tommyrot."

Evelyn forced a wan smile.

"Neither do I, Bobby," she said.

"Of course it's absurd," began the doctor. . . .

A step was heard on the stairs, and they started, and glanced up. It was Travers, who descended rapidly and came towards them.

"Doctor Grover," he said gravely, "how do you get into the attic?"

"Why—there are two attics, Professor. This is the old section of the house we're in now. The attic to this is reached through the closet upstairs. You'd have to take a step-ladder, and raise a square trap-door in the ceiling. I expect it's pretty dusty."

Travers took a seat.

"Has it been opened recently?"

"Not for years. When we had the house wired, is the last time; that's been twenty years ago or more. Before Evelyn was born."

"Nothing is stored there, then?"

"No, not in either attic. We use the cellar for that. It's quite large. The other attic is entered through a trap-door in the same manner, placed in the ceiling of the hall."

"Well—do both upper sections connect?"

"Yes; through the hall upstairs. The door in the end leads in to it, but we keep it closed because the four guest rooms in that section are seldom used. But why do you ask about the attics?"

Travers shrugged.

"I was wondering if they were used. Judging from the outside, they are quite commodious."

The doctor nodded.

"But too inaccessible."

THEY talked at some length about the general construction of the house. An odd feature was brought to light: the inner walls of the downstairs portion of the old building were of brick, plastered over, and Travers suggested the possibility of a secret passage.

"Very improbable," said the doctor. "The outside walls are three feet thick, being built to withstand attack, and the rest of the old section conforms to sturdiness throughout. The inner walls are only two feet thick, and even allowing a single wall of bricks on each side, the space would hardly be large enough for a passage. The original shutters were massive things, with loop-holes so that occupants could fire on an enemy from within."

Travers wondered if the walls were all solid, and the doctor mentioned the difficulty the electricians and plumbers had in drilling through them at various points.

Togo and Sam entered, and the doctor explained his plan of guard duty, Travers nodding approval. The family would retire at nine, and Sam could take the first shift, from nine to twelve. The old negro was quite dubious, however, and wanted to know if the lights could be left on.

"Why, Sam," laughed the doctor, "if it was dark, and a burglar should come, he couldn't see you."

"Ah duno, suh," exclaimed the old negro. "Ah'm not so skeered 'bout bugglers, suh, as ghosts, and ghosts is skeered ob light."

Travers put him at ease by stating that he would work on the ancient code in the library until twelve, when he would relieve Sam and patrol the house until two-thirty. It was finally decided that the doctor would take the next shift, from two-thirty to four-thirty, after which Togo would officiate.

"Now that that's settled," exclaimed Evelyn, "let's go to the music-room and liven up this old house a bit. It's enough to give one the creeps without continually talking about it."

EVELYN played the piano for them, and Travers was agreeably surprised by her deft artistry. He had studied music himself when a boy, and had composed an opera when he was twenty-one that had been praised highly but had never been produced.

"She had two years at a conservatory in Boston," Mrs. Grover said, "and was doing remarkably well up until her accident. When she becomes stronger, she must resume her studies."

"By all means," exclaimed Travers. He requested a few numbers, and listened with rapt attention to a delicate rendition of Rachmaninoff's *Prelude*, followed by Brahm's eccentric Hungarian dance *Number Five*.

She turned and beamed upon them.

"It seems so good to be up and about," she said. "And this old house needs music to enliven it."

"Evelyn doesn't play ragtime," remarked Robert, as if this was a pardonable defect.

"Neither do I," laughed Travers. "Somehow, I can't accept the mood. It seems—barbaric."

"Oh; do you play?" exclaimed Evelyn, rising. "Please let us hear you."

Travers shook his head.

"I'm all out of practice; besides, I would be apt to reflect the mood of this old manse."

He glanced up at the massive, darkened beams. Evelyn laughed, and came over and seized him by the hand.

"Please!" she pleaded. "If you want to, you can start off with the *Ghost Dance!*"

He laughed, and rose.

"Go as far as you like, Professor!" said the doctor.

"I might ask you to turn off the lights," warned Travers, smiling, as he seated himself at the piano.

He played the *Ghost Dance*, falling into the mood and weirdly improvising, sweeping into the crashing staccato chords with powerful, nimble fingers; then on into *Peer Gynt*, transcribing the ominous portent of the ancient house in improvisation.

"Oh!" exclaimed Evelyn, as he finished, "that was creepy! Ugh! I could see grinning skeletons and hideous ogres peeking at us!"

"I'll say it was creepy!" exclaimed Robert. "You certainly can play, Professor."

At Evelyn's request Travers played Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody Number Two*, from memory. It had been two years since he had played it, but it was one of his favorites, and he played with a facile, expressive adroitness that held Evelyn in rapt ecstacy. Robert, however, stirred uneasily during the slow opening portion, wondering what people could see in classical music.

He recalled Evelyn's impulsive caress, bestowed upon Travers while in her strange lapse of identity. He glanced sullenly at the professor. Travers had not evaded the kiss, he had noted; it seemed rather that he had responded affectionately—too affectionately.

Evelyn was mad, perhaps. He was engaged to a crazy person. For some reason, the doctor and Mrs. Grover had kept the truth from him. He resented this; their explaining that Evelyn's attacks were hallucinations. But why should they encourage a stranger like Travers to become amorously attentive toward her? Evelyn hadn't known what she was doing when she kissed Travers.

THE professor swept into the finale of the rhapsody unaware of the brooding resentment of young Briton, though Evelyn was conscious of Robert's unusual solemnity, attributing it, however, to the disquieting occurrences of the day.

"Bobby looks positively bored!" she laughed, as Travers rose. "That was splendid, Professor."

"Oh," exclaimed Robert, flushing, "I suppose I'm sleepy."

"Why," said the doctor, glancing at the clock in the living-room; "it's only eight o'clock."

Robert rose.

"I really must get back to Richmond, and it's a long drive."

The doctor suggested that he remain over night.

"Not by a jug-full!" Robert said emphatically. "I've had enough excitement for one day. This place gets under my skin. That strange laugh, and those noises are too much for me."

The doctor shrugged.

"They're too much for us, too," he said grimly. "I confess that I am completely at a loss to account for the disturbances."

Evelyn saw Robert off in the car, while the others gravely forced themselves to face the mysterious facts. Mrs. Grover was the most cheerfully disposed, attributing the noises to natural causes that would be later explained. The doctor and Travers were both thankful for her placid scepticism.

Evelyn returned, frowning, and Mrs. Grover gave her a startled glance.

"Why, dear, you look cross about something!"

Evelyn shrugged.

"Oh, it's Bob. We—we quarreled," she said briefly. "I—I think I'll turn in, if you don't mind."

There was an embarrassing silence. Mrs. Grover rose, and glanced at her husband.

"I think I'll stay with Evelyn tonight, John. You'll excuse us, Professor?"

"Of course."

"I'll be up later, Ann. Good night."

"Good night," she said, smiling upon the professor, who bowed, and she and Evelyn turned toward the stairs.

THE doctor rang for Sam, and the aged negro appeared timidly and approached them.

"Sam," said Dr. Grover, "the professor and I are going in to the library. Fix us some mint juleps and bring them in."

"Yes, suh."

The old servant started off with alacrity.

"And Sam."

"Yes, suh?"

"You can fix one for yourself. You might need it."

"Y-y-yes, suh."

The doctor grinned at Travers, and led the way into the library, where they sat down and lit cigars.

"Sam's in a bad way," remarked Travers.

"I can't say as I blame him," replied the doctor, stroking his beard thoughtfully. "Those noises; that picture falling—that laugh. Of course, all negroes are superstitious. But, we've never been troubled before like this. It's so damned uncanny. Of course Mammy Jane has thought she heard noises in the kitchen before, but we all laughed at her. But, confound it, we all heard them tonight. And then a heavy picture, weighing all of forty pounds, jumps from the wall and lands in the center of the room. The wire is unbroken, the nail still in the wall. And a weird, sardonic laugh, coming from nowhere——"

He threw up his hands helplessly.

"What can you make of it?" he said. "And poor Evelyn; she called you 'Anthony,' didn't she? Said she was—your wife!"

Travers was lost in thought.

"Yes," he said at length. "Doctor; I want you to tell me some more about your dealings with that human devil, Tracy."

Dr. Grover frowned.

"There isn't much more that I can tell. He's dead now, and I suppose his organization is scattered."

"The *Red Circle*," said Travers. "I mean, what took place between you and Tracy when he had the audacity to visit you?"

"Well," said the doctor, "as I told you, Tracy and his confounded *Red Circle* wanted this house. The first attempt was made by letter from a real estate man in Williamsburg, stating that a client desired this estate, and wanted to know my terms. I wrote stating that the place was not for sale. About two weeks later, I received another letter from the same agent, making a cash offer of fifty thousand dollars. I have enough money to get along comfortably, and the offer was nothing startling. I refused."

He flicked the ash from his cigar. Sam appeared with the mint juleps, and served them with a proud deference.

"Sam's a past master at making juleps," said the doctor. "He even has a bed of selected mint that he grows himself."

"Real southern hospitality," smiled Travers, sipping the delectable beverage.

"That will do, Sam. And when nine o'clock strikes, report to me for orders."

The butler bowed resignedly, and ambled out.

"Well," said the doctor, "after refusing to sell the second time, I considered the matter settled. However, I received another offer, this time of seventy-five thousand dollars. Someone evidently wanted the old place pretty badly. But I refused, writing that it was not for sale at any price.

"A month passed, and I got a letter, postmarked Richmond, warning me to evacuate the premises within two weeks, or I would be sorry. It was typewritten, and without signature."

"Hm!" Travers looked thoughtful.

"I turned the letter over to the authorities, along with the others. The agent was arrested on suspicion, and explained that a woman of about forty years of age, fashionably dressed, had requested him to buy the place for her. The police looked up her address at a hotel in Richmond, and found that she had moved, leaving no trace. The agent was no doubt innocent, and was released. But the police could not trace the warning letter.

"Four days later I received a second warning. This time Togo happened to be behind a hedge, and saw a man sneak into the driveway and deposit the letter in the mail box, and hastily depart. The Jap was suspicious, and ran in and informed me. We got out my car, and started in pursuit. The man was in the act of stepping in a car when we turned into the highway, and saw us, hastily starting his machine and speeding away.

"My Locomobile can do eighty miles an hour when pressed, and Togo gave chase, gradually gaining on the man, whom we saw was alone. I keep a revolver in the car, and I got it out and as we drew alongside I ordered the fellow to stop his machine. He saw that I meant business, and did so. He was a pale, emaciated man of about thirty-five, and professed indignation at being detained, denying that he had delivered the letter. We made him get into the car, and drove back to the house, and while Togo and Sam guarded him, I examined the letter. Sure enough, it was another warning, unsigned, as usual, and I was informed that I had ten more days to get out."

Dr. Grover laughed.

"To leave my own house!" he said. "I phoned the police. They took the fellow in custody, and while on the way to the police station, he made an attempt to escape, jumping from the car. They fired at him, and he dropped. The bullet had pierced his lung. They brought him back to me for professional attention, but the poor devil was past all help. He was rather sickly anyway, and the end came fast. But before he died, Travers, he grew hysterical, gasping out 'the *Red Circle*—I am damned!' I questioned him pitilessly. 'Ronald Tracy,' he gasped, and mumbled an address, which we took down, and then he passed out."

He paused, blowing a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

"The rendezvous of Tracy's *Red Circle* cult was found at the address given, in Richmond, and the place raided. The chief himself escaped. Travers, we found men and women and children, virtual prisoners in this terrible place, most of them stark mad. One of the women confessed, as you will no doubt recollect from the newspaper headlines, exposing the diabolical practises.

"Tracy, however, could not be located. And seven days later I received the third warning, by mail, postmarked Richmond—but, Professor, this time there was a signature. It was a circle, drawn in red ink!"

"Ah! the masquerading was over. They decided to come from under cover, eh?"

"Exactly. The police sent a detail of two picked men to guard this house. On the third day they were here, the day I was supposed to pack up and get out, a man was seen creeping across the lower end of the estate. The detectives gave chase, and they had no sooner disappeared when a car swept into the driveway, and a tall man dressed in black stepped out and approached the house, leaving the chauffeur waiting in the car. I saw him approach the house from this window," he said, indicating a window that faced the front, "and Sam answered his ring, bringing me this card."

HE took a bill fold from his pocket and handed Travers a calling card, upon which was the neat engraved inscription:

DR. RONALD TRACY

"The nerve of the man!" exclaimed Travers.

"I told Sam to send him in. The man entered. He was tall and thin, with a positively satanic cast of countenance; pale, with piercing black eyes deeply set, and thin lips that bore a peculiar, sarcastic smile. He bowed, and extended his bony hand.

"'Good morning, Dr. Grover,' he said; 'you are no doubt surprised to see me.' I ignored his hand, and he grinned.

"'You know that you are wanted by the police?' I asked him. 'Oh, that!' he laughed, leering at me. 'You and the bungling police have slightly annoyed me,' he said, still with that sarcastic

smile and leer that made me furious.

"'What is your business here?' I demanded. 'You are quite a capable surgeon, Doctor,' he said. 'I have always wanted to look into the brain of a surgeon.'

"The way he said it is hard to describe. It chilled me to the bone.

"'Come to the point!' I retorted; 'what is your mission?'

"He grinned at me in his cool, calculating way.

"'Briefly, Doctor,' he said, 'I want this house. It is indispensable in my work. I mean to have it.'

"'Is that so!' I exclaimed. 'That is interesting, I must say. As the house is mine, and I intend to remain, I am afraid that you will be disappointed.' 'Hardly disappointed, Doctor,' he said; 'you can remain, if you wish.' He laughed again. 'And now,' he grinned, 'I want you to come and consult with me on an operation I am going to perform.'"

Travers shuddered.

"'I am sorry, Tracy,' I said, 'but I'll have to hold you until the detectives return.' He was not the least disturbed. 'They will *never* return!' he laughed. 'I've fixed that.' Travers, he seemed to actually gloat over me, if you can understand. 'Are you coming with me?' he asked, 'or must I use force?' All the time he stood, placidly eyeing me. It was diabolical.

"I told him that we would both remain, and that I would send for the Williamsburg police. I was about to rise when suddenly I was seized from behind by powerful arms and a gag placed over my mouth. It was incredible; I was facing the door, and no one could have entered without me seeing them. The windows were open, but screened. Yet, two of Tracy's accomplices were binding my wrists! They must have gotten into the house and remained hidden behind that Japanese screen. There I was, gagged, bound, and helpless, in my own house; under a police guard, with Togo and Sam somewhere about, and Mammy Jane and my wife upstairs!

"Then a surprising thing happened: Tracy suddenly fell to the floor in a fit, and the men bent over him. He became rigid, his eyes seeming the only animate part of him. His emaciated face was bathed in perspiration. The automobile horn sounded a warning, and the men hastily lifted Tracy and started to carry him out. Can you guess what happened next?"

Travers shook his head.

"Most anything, I imagine."

"Sam saved the day! Unknown to me, he had suspected my mysterious caller, and armed with a double-barreled shotgun, he appeared suddenly and pointed it at them.

"'Jes' freeze to d' floor!' he told them. 'Ah's pow'ful nervous, an' dis heah gun speaks mighty easy!'"

Travers uttered an exclamation.

"Hooray for Sam! I wouldn't have thought it possible."

"Well, sir, old Sam called Mammy Jane and my wife, and they released me. I rang for the police, telling them of the disappearance of the detectives, and my capture of Tracy and his confederates. Sam and Mammy stood guard over the lot, while I turned my attention to Tracy, who lay on the floor without power of speech or motion. It looked like a case of traumatic neurosis, but of course there was no wound. His pulse was a trifle high, his temperature around a hundred and five. It was nothing more or less than a sort of trance. He remained in that condition until the police arrived. The rest you probably know—his conviction, and sentence to prison."

Travers nodded.

"Also his escape. I hadn't heard of his death, though, until you told me. So, then, up until recently, you haven't been troubled by the *Red Circle?*"

"Not a bit. Only by Evelyn's unfortunate obsessions."

They were silent. The heavy silence of the ancient house hung like a brooding omnipotence about them, broken only by the distant booming of the living-room clock as it struck the hour of nine.

Then footsteps sounded faintly on the stairs.

TRAVERS peeped cautiously out the door, and laughed.

"Only Sam," he said, grinning at Dr. Grover. "My nerves must be on edge."

The old negro entered respectfully.

"Yes, suh; it's nine o'clock, suh."

"All right, Sam," said the doctor. "You will go on patrol right away. Have you got that automatic handy?"

"Yes, suh."

The doctor explained that he was to go slowly and quietly through all parts of the house every half hour, and to report any suspicious noise or occurrence.

"You'd better do your roaming in your stockings, Sam," the doctor suggested, "because we don't want to awaken Mrs. Grover and Evelyn. We'll leave the lights on, if you wish. You seem to be afraid of the dark. The old section of the house is all we'll bother with tonight. The hall door upstairs is locked from this side, and we'll lock the rest of the doors leading to the new portion——"

"I'd patrol the entire house," said Travers, "and unlock and re-lock the doors. Each window should be examined, with only a few opened at the top for air, and the rest locked. Suppose we all go around together the first time?"

THIS was effected, each outside door being discovered locked. The windows were examined, some being dropped a few inches at the top to admit air. One globe in each room was left burning. Both attics were entered by Travers, and found to be empty and terribly dusty. And finally, the cellar was explored, and its only entrance, on the outside of the building, securely locked. Mrs. Grover had retired with Evelyn, and had locked their door from the inside. The door of the hallway leading from the old section to the new was locked, and the trio returned to the library.

"All's well," said the doctor. "Now, Sam, every half hour you can repeat the excursion. Mr. Travers will relieve you at twelve."

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"Yes suh," replied Sam, somewhat weakly.

"And now, I think I'll turn in. Are you coming up, too, Professor?"

"No," said Travers; "I think I'll stay up, as I want to go over this code."

He took the ancient diary from his pocket, and drew up a chair to the doctor's writing desk, and Dr. Grover bid him good night, and departed, with a parting remark to Sam to keep a careful watch. The old negro followed the doctor into the living-room.

"D—dat laugh we heerd, suh——"

"Yes?" the doctor asked, sharply. "Are you afraid, Sam?"

"Well, suh, ah's not 'fraid ob bugglers. But when ghosts is concerned, ah——"

"Don't be foolish!" snapped the doctor, irritably. "You darkies seem to be a superstitious lot. The lights will all be on in every room, and the professor will be in the library until it is his turn to relieve you. Forget it. I'm going to bed."

Travers found the mysterious cipher an enigma. The long deceased Andrew Brainard might possibly have written it in either French or English; that was what made it doubly difficult of solution. No doubt it was a simple code: letter for letter. The first page occupied his labors for two hours, during which time Sam made the rounds of the house four times, yet he was no nearer a solution than when he started. All of the letters were run together, and comparative elimination was difficult.

Sam made another round of the house, and at eleven-fifteen Travers told him that he could retire, much to the old negro's relief.

He went through the house slowly, trying every door and window, stopping in his room to put on a pair of felt slippers, and to obtain his revolver and a flashlight. The upstairs rooms in the new section were given a careful scrutiny, Travers making sure that the windows were all locked. He then switched off the lights, and closed the hall door and locked it, putting the key in his pocket. The rest of the upper part of the house, containing his own room, Evelyn's, and the Grovers', seemed in peaceful order. He heard the deep breathing of the doctor coming through the partly opened door of his room. Mrs. Grover and Evelyn were no doubt peacefully sleeping behind the locked door of Evelyn's room. He left the hall light burning.

Downstairs, Travers closed the windows and locked the doors of the rooms not in use, and retired to the library to study the old diary with its baffling cipher. The way the letters were all run together in unbroken lines across the page tried his patience, until suddenly he found a single instance where a line was broken, at the bottom of a page. Possibly it was a signature:

TQSOIB JOTXQTOS

"Can it be that of Andrew Brainard?" he exclaimed. Then he gave a start of excitement. The number of letters were identical. Moreover, certain letters were repeated. It was, without a doubt, the code signature of Brainard, made in a careless moment.

"At last!" Travers muttered.

He made out a chart, starting with the letters gained:

A	:	T	N	:	Q
B	:	J	O	:	
C	:		P	:	
D	:	S	Q	:	
E	:	I	R	:	O
F	:		S	:	
G	:		T	:	
H	:		U	:	
I	:	X	V	:	
J	:		W	:	B
K	:		X	:	
L	:		Y	:	
M	:		Z	:	

Well, he had eight letters! He wrote out the first line of the diary that appeared in code, marking the known letters underneath:

XNXDILPIZNISFYGINRTNXOIZIXMI
I I E E ED E A IRE EI E

Travers pocketed the book, and made the rounds of the house again. His flashlight cut through the shrouds of shadows that seemed to crouch menacingly at every turn. Not a sound could be heard. The staccato ticking of the living-room clock was the only audible sign of life, mechanical or otherwise.

HE returned to the library and for some time studied the line he had written. One thing was probable: the line ended and began with a word. Could the last seven letters spell the word "receive"? He filled it in:

XNXDILPIZNISFYGINRTNXOIZIXMI
I I E EC ED E A IRECEIVE

Further filling in, following the key to the code, rewarded his efforts with:

XNXDILPIZNISFYGINRTNXOIZIXMI
ITISEXPECTEDOFMETHATIRECEIVE

"Ah!" cried Travers, "viewing the lower line with satisfaction—so far, so good. Now I should be able to proceed——"

In twenty minutes he had the following deciphered notation:

"It is expected of me that I receive an Anthony Jacques, Ambassador of the Commune in Paris, and afford him my assistance and the refuge of my home. Louis XVI and the Queen have been beheaded, as have many others, and France is in the hands of the people. Certain royal jewels are to be sold, and Anthony Jacques is coming here for that purpose. His uncle, Captain Jacques, is an old scoundrel. There seems to be no love for his nephew. I will not tell him that the young man is coming."

Travers sat in stupefied silence. Evelyn, in her trance, had called him Anthony! Moreover, she had said that she, "Marie," was his wife—that Captain Jacques was his uncle. This, then, was what Doctor Grover termed a hallucination. Was it possible that the spirit of Marie Jacques haunted the old manse, speaking through Evelyn?

"What else can I believe?" he muttered defiantly. "Here is positive proof. I suppose the doctor will be skeptical, but he cannot change the fact, however."

Evelyn had kissed him while obsessed with the personality of the long departed Marie. Travers clenched his hands involuntarily. He had not been under any delusions that he was this Anthony, yet he had impulsively taken her in his arms and returned her caress. Was he in love with this girl? Had he not been overstepping the bounds of hospitality under the guise of humoring her while in the trance?

He wondered what the doctor, and Mrs. Grover thought. They were probably concerned primarily with Evelyn's condition, however. But then—Evelyn and Robert Briton had quarreled—about that kiss, no doubt. Briton had seemed rather sulky. . . .

What connection had the late Tracy with all of this? Why had he and his diabolical cult, the *Red Circle*, wanted this house? There must have been a reason. And the occurrences of that day. Travers forced himself to consider them.

A black cat with poisoned claws. Mysterious noises in the wall, hinting of a secret passage. The heavy picture leaping from the wall. And that weird, uncanny laugh, coming from nowhere.

An old house, generations old; Andrew Brainard; Captain Jacques; Marie Jacques; Anthony Jacques. The Commune in Paris; royal jewels; intrigue—and Ronald Tracy, now dead—the noises, that laugh. . . .

"God, what an enigma!" he exclaimed. "I——"

Suddenly Travers heard a shrill scream that pierced the heavy silence, coming from above. Followed, a hoarse cry—the slamming of a door. Then the lights went out abruptly—plunging the house in darkness.

"Damn! who turned off those lights?"

Travers groped for his flashlight; found it, and whipping out his revolver, darted up the stairs. He flashed the light on the empty hallway, now quiet.

"Doctor!" he cried.

The doctor did not answer, nor was he in his room. With racing pulses, Travers halted outside the door of Evelyn's room. It was still locked. He knocked on the door.

"Mrs. Grover—it is I; Travers——"

"Thank God!" came Mrs. Grover's voice.

There was a fumbling with the lock, the door was swung open, and he saw the doctor's wife and Evelyn standing in the glare of his flashlight, pale, and terrified.

"What happened—who screamed?"

"Evelyn did. Some one was picking at the door," Mrs. Grover cried, distraught. "We were so frightened! Where is John?"

"I—I don't know! He's not in his room."

THEY heard excited voices below, and footsteps ascending the stairs. Travers darted into the hall and turned his light upon Sam and Togo.

"Wh-who's dat?" gasped Sam, stopping.

"It's me—Travers," said the professor. "Have you seen the doctor, Sam?"

"Good Lawd, suh; is he gone, suh?"

"Yes. Who in hell turned out these

lights? Togo, take Sam's flashlight, and go to the switch at the meter. If it's turned off, put it on again. Hurry."

The gardener hurried off, and the old negro advanced.

"Oh, where is Daddy!" cried Evelyn. She raised her voice:

"Daddy—Daddy!"

Silence and darkness—no answer.

"Where could he have gone?" gasped Travers. "Not down stairs, or I would have seen him—ah, there are the lights!"

The hallway was illuminated again. Travers ran to the door communicating with the new section, but it was locked, as he had left it. A search of all of the rooms revealed nothing. Mrs. Grover and Evelyn were hysterical with terror.

Togo ran up the stairs.

"Light turned off at switch all right," he said. "No find Doctor?"

"No?" Travers said grimly. "Where is the switch? Take me to it."

The switch was on the outside of the building, near the kitchen door. Some one had been on the grounds, and at a signal, had simply pulled the switch.

"Sam, turn on every light in the house. And Mrs. Grover, you and Evelyn and Togo had better go to the living-room. Where is Mammy Jane?"

Mammy appeared at that moment in a white nightgown, nearly startling Sam out of his wits.

"Here ah is—what's happened—who——?"

Travers told the trembling negress the brief particulars, and as they all turned back into the house, he commenced a survey of the outside of the building. His flashlight pierced the gloom cast by the lofty trees. After examining the grass beneath the meter-box, he ran around the building, flashing the light in among the trees and bushes.

"Doctor!" he called loudly.

There was no answer—save the rustle of leaves overhead. Somewhere along the river came the hoot of an owl.

He returned to the kitchen door, and finding a bit of wire, wrapped it around the meter-box, securing the door with several turns.

He found the others in the living room, excitedly talking about the strange disappearance of Doctor Grover. Mammy Jane was doing her best to comfort Mrs. Grover and Evelyn.

"It's all right—it's all right," was all she could say.

Sam and Togo stood to one side, silent—staring at Travers helplessly. The latter glanced at Evelyn, finding that, oddly enough, the excitement had not brought on another trance.

"Oh, Professor!" cried Mrs. Grover. "We must do something. John *must* be somewhere in the house."

"He should be," said Travers gloomily. "Have you been in every room, Sam?"

"Yes suh."

"Well, I'm going around again. Sam, you may as well call up the police, and tell them the circumstances. I'll be back soon."

HE made the rounds of the house, examining every door and window. Everything was just as he had left it. In his own room, he had left the door unlocked, but nothing had been disturbed. In the doctor's room, however, he saw something that had escaped his notice before: a white slip of paper, pinned to the inside of the door. He took it down, unfolding it.

In the center of the paper was a red circle!

All the windows and doors were locked—yet Doctor Grover had disappeared! Threats were made—and ignored. Tracy's dreaded devil cult, "The Red Circle," is taking revenge. Who will be the next victim?—the beautiful Evelyn? Read the thrilling developments of this absorbing story in February issue of GHOST STORIES *Magazine, on the news stands December 23d. You will find these new developments of tense interest.*

The Doll That Came To Life

(*Continued from page* 37)

on the walls. And the side of the room farthest from the window contained a table on which the child's toys had been set out—everything she had had since babyhood that had survived unbroken.

Against the wall was a stand on which was an enormous doll, propped up beneath three lighted candles. An enlarged photograph of little Doris hung on the wall near by, and some fresh-cut flowers were in a tall vase, standing beside the doll.

"So you have put everything back again where it was?" asked Martinus curtly, of Mr. Craven. "The whole epitome of the child's life. May I ask why?"

"Well, you see," replied the fake spiritualist, "I came to the conclusion that the poor earth-bound spirit would continue to haunt this room until things were restored. My deductions had been wrong, but perfectly justifiable."

"And these manifestations have ceased, now that you have pieced together the broken fragments of the vase?" Martinus asked. "You suppose that everything is again—as it was?"

HE was, of course, speaking metaphorically, but before Craven could reply there came a sudden crash in the corner of the room. We sprang back—looked around us. A shower of broken glass lay on the carpet. Upon the stand beside the doll, the flowers lay scattered, and water was splashed over the table that contained the toys.

"My God!" whimpered Craven, his teeth chattering. "Who threw that vase?"

"If we knew that," replied Martinus, "we should have gone some distance toward the solution of this problem."

My teeth were chattering. At that moment I was under the singular illusion that the doll's large, blue eyes had taken on an expression of intelligence!

Human eyes? I forced myself to look again. No, of course it had been the way the light had played upon them. They were just a doll's glass eyes.

I was surprised at Martinus's sudden cordiality toward Craven. I had been afraid he would withdraw from the case. Instead, he had cordially welcomed the pseudo spiritualist's cooperation. He had told Mrs. Temple that he proposed to hold a séance at an early date, and suggested that they might all form a circle. On the way back Martinus was silent for a long time—evidently pondering over the case. Then suddenly he began to chuckle.

"You're wondering why I wanted Craven, Branscombe?" he asked me.

"I was surprised," I confessed.

"I have an idea," chuckled the doctor again, "that Craven's presence will prove a powerful attraction to whatever spirit it is that has usurped the child's place in that room. The fool thinks he can tear down the shrine and reconstruct it, just as if nothing had happened, as if no consecration was necessary, as if the reassemblage of the physical elements will call back the spirit. As well sew the head on a decapitated man, and expect him to awake to life! A fool like that should prove a powerful drawing-card to the kind of spirit I fancy has come into that room."

"I thought the poltergeist, when not merely an extension of the astral form at maturity, was always an elemental factor," I suggested.

"More or less right, Branscombe. It is a spirit of the lowest order, though it may or may not once have been incarnate. But you must remember I am always urging upon you that these manifestations of the discarnate—throwing of vases, breaking of crockery, and so forth—are merely expressions of energy. It is not to be supposed that the spirit is actually conscious of what it is doing. It lets loose energy in the room, and this energy takes certain forms.

"For instance, a very dear friend of mine once promised his sister he would try to communicate with her after death. He supposed he had merely established communication by taps and rappings. He was heartbroken to learn that he had been pulling down pictures and wrecking the furniture!"

"THEN it may be the child after all?" I suggested.

"Impossible, Branscombe. No child could throw a vase across a room. Remember that before maturity no human being is more than one-tenth incarnate. Little Doris Temple's earthly residence was the merest episode in the life of her spirit. All that remains of her is the happy dream and the memories so rude-

ly shattered when the furniture of that room was shifted. No, Branscombe, it all comes back to Craven's asinine question, 'Who threw that vase?"

I told Martinus of the expression I had fancied I had seen in the eyes of the doll. He nodded abstractedly, but made no comment.

It was two days later, and before Martinus had had time to go further into the case, that we had a visit from Mrs. Temple again. She appeared in the greatest distress.

"I don't know what I'm going to do, Doctor Martinus," she sobbed, "—and dear Mr. Craven admits that he is at his wits' end. He was so sure that dear little Doris would be satisfied when things were put back as they were, but it's growing worse all the time, and it's not only in that room now—it's all over the house. My maid has left me."

"WHAT particular manifestations have occurred?" asked Martinus.

"Footsteps up and down the stairs at night—a man's heavy footsteps. Doors opening and slamming. Pictures falling from the wall. And last night, as I lay in bed, I could have sworn I felt fingers about my throat. My maid was pinched black and blue, too. Oh, Doctor, it can't be Doris!"

"No, it's not your little girl," said Martinus. "Have you been dreaming?"

"Dreadful dreams, but I can't remember anything about them, except that——" she hesitated.

"That?" queried the doctor.

"That I had murdered somebody and was going to be executed. But I don't know who it was, or how I was to die." She broke into hysterical weeping.

Martinus made her sit down and mixed some bromide for her. After a little while she grew calmer.

"I am sorry to be so hysterical," she apologized, "but I've gone through so much. What with my little girl and my husband——"

"Tell me about your husband," said the doctor gently.

"Why, it was just at the time Doris lay dying. He was in Texas, and hadn't heard anything about her illness, because he was off with a posse. He sent me some clippings, and that alone would have scared me nearly to death."

"A posse, you say?"

"Yes, Doctor. You remember reading about that man who escaped from the penitentiary, and shot his way clear across three States—James O'Connor?"

The doctor shook his head. But I remembered the affair. O'Connor had been serving a life term for murder. He had broken loose, after killing three guards, and had escaped. At least a dozen of his pursuers had been killed and wounded before the posse surrounded him in his stronghold. There had been summary vengeance taken. The bandit's body was left swinging from a tree, riddled with bullets. I recalled the circumstances.

"My husband was with that posse," said Mrs. Temple. "And he had written me about being summoned by the sheriff, and that—with Doris dying—nearly killed me! I was afraid I should lose both of them. Jim and I have always been devoted to each other, and his absence is unbearable now. He's coming home for good soon, and I'm trying to hold out till then. But after what's been happening——"

Martinus patted her arm sympathetically. "I think we shall be able to remedy things, Mrs. Temple," he said. "Suppose we come up to your house to-night. Can Mr. Craven provide a reliable medium for a séance?"

"Oh, yes, there's Mrs. Jimpson. She's wonderful," said Mrs. Temple. "Why, she described my father perfectly, and gave me his name and everything."

"Get her to your house to-night, about nine, then," said Martinus. He turned to me when she had gone. "We can't use any of my mediums on a case like this," he said. "I imagine this Mrs. Jimpson is one of Craven's crowd, and just the kind likely to attract the interest of the late James O'Connor."

"You mean—you think it's O'Connor manifesting in the house?" I exclaimed.

"It's a perfectly good working theory, and decidedly a probability," he answered.

"You see," he explained, as we started for Mrs. Temple's house, "if Jim Temple took a prominent part in the lynching of this bandit, it is probable that the fellow passed out with feelings of intense malignancy against him and the rest. When a murderer is hurried into eternity, as you know, he can hardly be said to be dead, in the sense that ordinary people die. Cut off in the full vigor of bodily prowess and activity, he is simply a disembodied entity, just as much attached to the earth life, perpetually rehearsing his crime and the circumstances of his death, and utilizing every opportunity to use other physical mediums for the gratification of his earthly desires and for revenge."

"But why should he have succeeded in molesting Mrs. Temple?" I asked.

"THE fact that Jim Temple's little girl passed out almost at the same time as himself established a *rapport*. There are *rapports* of hate as well as of love. I have no doubt that, in an obscure way, James O'Connor discovered this means of at once getting into touch with earth life and of obtaining revenge. The emotional condition under which Mrs. Temple was laboring, the fact that her husband had her constantly in his mind—you heard her say they were devoted to each other—established the links in the chain.

"But he found the house occupied. The little spirit of Doris guarded it, and, as love is stronger than hate, he was powerless—'till that fool Craven took the toys away, turned the furniture about, and played havoc generally.

"Then, when Craven re-established the shrine—well, he had re-established a road that was easy following for James O'Connor. But if that Mrs. Jimpson is any good at all we ought to learn something. One word—" he cautioned me. "It would be as well not to allude to our suspicions as to the identity of the poltergeist. If they think it is the child Doris, our friend O'Connor will play up to them, and incidentally play into our hands."

Mrs. Jimpson was awaiting our arrival with Craven when we reached the house. The interior was brilliantly lit with electric bulbs of great power. It was easy to see that Mrs. Temple was afraid of the dark. The child's room, in which the séance was to be held, had been arranged under Craven's instructions. It contained the usual curtain of dark cloth strung across a corner, to form a cabinet, and the half circle of chairs extending from this to the further end of the table that held the toys.

Mrs. Jimpson was a common sort of woman, but manifestly mediumistic. There is something about a genuine medium's eyes that identify her. She went into the cabinet, and passed into trance with the facility of long experience. I imagined that the late James O'Connor would manifest through her, much more readily than the child.

Before Mrs. Jimpson had settled herself, Martinus took the doll from the stand and examined it. It was one of those large "Mamma" dolls, with movable arms and legs, about the size of a three months' child. The doctor handed it to Mrs. Temple.

"Please hold this on your lap and under no circumstances loose your hold of it during the séance," he told her.

"DOCTOR, do you think this will bring my darling Doris back like she was before?" she asked.

"I think it vital that you should associate yourself with this doll," replied Martinus, in his curt manner.

"What Doctor Martinus means," put in Craven blandly—I could see he did not relish taking a secondary part in the proceedings—"is that the influence of the mother-love will pass into the doll, creating a fetish."

"That's one way of putting it," said the doctor ironically. "Any way, please remember my instructions, Mrs. Temple. And, of course, you understand that the circle is under no circumstances to be broken. Are you ready, Mrs. Jimpson?" He snapped off the electric light.

I heard the medium breathing stertorously within the cabinet. She stirred restlessly. Sighs came from her lips. I felt the tenseness emanating from Mrs. Temple next to me. In the faint light that came through the window I saw the outlines of the large doll she held in her arms. Was it only imagination, or did the thing actually resemble more and more a living child? The stiff body seemed to be growing limp, the head to fall back into the fold of the woman's arm.

Suddenly a whimper broke from Mrs. Temple's lips:

"It—it's moving! It—oh, Doctor Martinus!"

"Hold it!" I heard the doctor whisper in her ear.

"I felt it move. It's too—too horrible!"

"Hold it, as you value your security and your little girl's peace," came back the answer.

She began breathing almost as harshly as the medium, who was keeping up a low moaning sound inside the cabinet. I felt that cold wind that always accompanies such conditions, chilling my fingers. I thought the curtains before the cabinet seemed to bulge outward.

Then I confess my nerves almost gave way as I heard the sudden tiny, piping

voice from within the cabinet clearly:

"Mamma!" it cried—just like the "Mamma" doll, but it did not come from the doll—"Mamma!"

I had thought Mrs. Temple a hysterical person, but she kept herself in admirable control.

"Is that you, Doris, my darling?" she whispered, with a quick intake of her breath.

"Mamma, where are you?" the voice piped. "I can't find you. I've been looking for you. I'm all alone."

"Here is your mother, Doris," came the doctor's voice. Then, to Mrs. Temple, "You're not afraid of your own child?"

"No, no! Shall I see her?"

"Not now," the voice piped back. "But I can feel you, Mamma."

A dreadful pause. What was occurring in the darkness? How still it all was! Even the medium had ceased to moan.

"How do you like your baby sister, Doris?" said Martinus softly. I knew, by some sixth instinct, that he was gripping Mrs. Temple's arm to keep her quiet. "Come, don't be afraid, my child. Come and see Mother and her little new baby."

Again that dreadful silence. My hair felt almost as if standing on end. Something was moving near me in the darkness. Suddenly a scream of uncontrollable terror burst from Mrs. Temple's lips.

"That's all!" shouted Martinus. In a moment the room was flooded with the electric light. Mrs. Temple was lying back in her chair in a dead faint, but still gripping the child's doll. And it was just a doll, nothing more.

"Dear little Doris always wanted a baby sister," said Mrs. Temple later. "But why was it necessary to deceive her, Doctor? It seems so dreadful that she should not have recognized the doll she was so fond of."

She had taken quite a little while to recover from the shock. Martinus had insisted on assuming the role of physician, and on Craven's withdrawing. The faker had taken it with a bad grace, and there had been something like a passage at arms between the two men before he withdrew with Mrs. Jimpson.

"My dear Mrs. Temple, if the deception comforted you, surely it was justified," said the doctor glibly.

"But why did she not recognize the doll?"

"Because she had been lost so long. You must remember time does not pass on the other side as it does with us. It is measured by the intensity of emotion—and for your little Doris years had passed since she visited the shrine you made for her."

I KNEW Martinus was offering explanations that concealed some truth he was unwilling to expound to her. But Mrs. Temple appeared satisfied.

"And you say I must keep the electric light burning there night and day?" she asked.

"Yes, Mrs. Temple. Close to the figure, so that the little spirit may never stray again."

"What a beautiful idea, Doctor!" she exclaimed. "It is like a candle before a shrine—a perpetual candle."

"A good simile," answered the doctor. "So long as the light burns, I do not think you will be troubled with any more manifestations. But—once in a while fuses blow out! We must take no chance of that. To-morrow purchase some large candles of the kind they use in churches, and keep two perpetually burning in place of the electric light. After a year, it will be only a matter of sentiment. Until a year, at least, has passed, it will be essential to your child's happiness. And"—he rose—"let me beg of you not to let Mr. Craven, or any of your friends, turn you from your purpose."

"Nothing shall turn me from it," she answered solemnly.

DOCTOR MARTINUS usually explained his methods to me soon after such a case, but it was not until the following evening that he came to me in the little study off his own, where I was preparing his manuscripts.

"Well, Branscombe, you understood, I suppose, just what happened last evening?" he asked me.

"I must confess I was completely baffled," I answered. "I understood it was O'Connor you expected to manifest, not the child."

"*That was O'Connor*," he answered, in tones that chilled my blood with horror.

"That voice?" I stammered.

"O'Connor masquerading as the child—of whose existence he had become aware. And that was no easy feat in the land beyond death, where matter is so plastic, Branscombe, that it may almost be said, 'wishes are things.' That is the real hell, Branscombe, for souls like O'Connor's—the inability to distinguish reality from the shapes that their desires assume.

"Yet O'Connor had pierced to reality by the force of his will, and that convinced me that we had a subtle and powerful enemy to deal with, bent upon revenge for being hurried out of life by the hangman's noose. He masqueraded as the child, and it was only when I tripped him up by making him think the doll was Doris's sister that I was myself convinced it was O'Connor."

I was thinking of the ghastly horror of the discarnate life, when a doll may be mistaken for a child. What fools these ghosts are, and how true the old race-legends that substantiate this! Martinus read my thoughts.

"You must remember, Branscombe," he said gently, "that the dead can only sense us through the force of emotion. They have not eyes to see, or ears to hear. If the dead man mistook the doll for a child, it was because I had turned his expectations in that direction."

"Well, but—why?" I asked.

Martinus drew up a chair and sat down beside me. "Branscombe," he said, "you are advanced enough to know that the fetish is not a mere block of stone or wood, but actually contains the power ascribed to it, whether from an external source or as the creation of the united aspirations of the worshippers. As our friend Craven said—I did create a fetish. But let us rather call it a 'Luck.' You know Longfellow's poem, *The Luck of Edenhall?*" he continued impatiently,

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"—how the fortunes of the house were bound up with the existence of the crystal goblet? The drunken heir shatters the goblet, and the foe rush in and put them to the sword."

Yes, I recalled it. "But is that more than a legend?" I asked.

"My dear Branscombe, did you never know any one who kept a queer little manikin on his desk, which he called his mascot?"

I laughed, as he indicated the Billiken on my own desk.

"Just why do you keep that, Branscombe?"

"Oh, just for luck," I answered.

"What you have actually done, Branscombe, is to shut up, in that Billiken of yours, all the little bothers and perplexities and *gaucheries* that you want to rid yourself of—the Russian demon who always reverses your slippers, the little imp who makes you grouchy in the morning, the one that makes you shave too high up on one side of your face, and so on. Well, *O'Connor is in that doll!*"

I uttered an exclamation of incredulity.

"The practice of burning lights before the images of saints, Branscombe," continued Martinus, "may or may not have been designed to keep them from leaving their habitations. But it is a safe guess that O'Connor will remain immobilized and powerless within the child's doll, just so long as there is a light in front of it. It is just as safe a guess as that you will remain immobilized in your bed to-night, until there is the light of a new day within the room."

"But if this will of his is strong enough to cross that light?" I asked. "Is that impossible?"

"Not impossible, Branscombe," chuckled Martinus, "but—he thinks he is inhabiting the body of Mrs. Temple's youngest child, and he will remain there, waiting for it to grow—until he finds that his opportunity has slipped by. After a year or so—a year and a day, according to the conceptions of folk-lore, though there is, of course, no exact period—his power for evil will have dissipated itself, and James O'Connor will be resolved into that limbo where he will expiate his crimes on earth before he gets his new chance in a new body."

I HAVE recorded this case thus far from the notes I took at the time. Martinus had engaged me to keep a record of his cases, and this was one of the many that I attended in his company. The sequel was a telephone call from Mrs. Temple about a week later. She announced that there had been a complete cessation of the hauntings, the candles were burned religiously in front of "dear little Doris's doll," as she termed it, and she did not think it would be necessary to trouble us again.

About two months later I was seated beside Martinus, reading proof for him, when the telephone rang. He picked up the instrument. I recognized Mrs. Temple's voice but I could not hear what she was saying. The doctor listened impatiently, his face showing evidence of extreme displeasure.

"Mrs. Temple, since you have chosen to put yourself in the hands of Mr. Craven again, I feel it is impossible for me to handle the case," I heard him say.

There followed the tones of Mrs. Temple's voice. Martinus frowned and shook his head. "No, it is impossible," he repeated. More colloquy, then a shrug of his shoulders. The doctor capitulated.

"We'll come right up," he said, as he hung up the receiver. He turned to me.

"That woman's a type of the eternal feminine," he said. "Her husband's coming home next week, and she doesn't know what to do. It appears that Craven persuaded her once again that the child had become 'earth-bound,' and about a month ago she ceased burning the candles and locked the door. It's been locked ever since. Now Jim Temple's returning, and she doesn't know how she's going to explain things to him. Craven has persuaded her to let him hold a séance with Mrs. Jimpson in that room to-night, but at the last moment her courage has failed and she is begging us to come."

"Have there been any manifestations since she ceased to burn the candles?" I asked.

"Nothing at all. She told me that the first thing. That's what makes me afraid that fool Craven and Mrs. Jimpson are going to set loose forces that will prove absolutely uncontrollable. If that devil can break through to-night—God help Mrs. Temple! Branscombe, I've seen—but never mind what I've seen. We've got to hurry!"

"Doctor," I asked, as we started, "suppose that doll had been thrown into the Harlem River?"

"Then, Branscombe, O'Connor would have had full play for his devilish impulses. To-night he must be sent back where he comes from—if we can do it."

THE séance was just beginning when we arrived. Mrs. Temple did not seem to want to open the door for us. It was clear enough that, in spite of the moment of reaction from Craven's influence, during which she had telephoned the doctor, she had fallen entirely under the faker's control. She announced, with a nervous laugh, that there was to be no séance after all—denied that Craven and Mrs. Jimpson were in the house, until his voice came booming down the stairs, inquiring whether it was us. The doctor simply strode past Mrs. Temple and went upstairs. I followed him, and she came up behind, still protesting.

The room was lighted, but there was no light before the doll, and everything was covered with dust. Mrs. Jimpson was just settling herself in the cabinet. Craven tried to bar our way.

"This is an outrage, Doctor Martinus!" he shouted.

"We are here by Mrs. Temple's invitation," answered the doctor quietly. "We intend to remain."

Mrs. Temple weakened. "I don't know what to do," she fretted. "One advises me one thing, and one another. I only want my darling little girl to be happy."

"Doctor, if you had the most elementary knowledge of psychic matters, you would know that every effort to attach the spirit to earth draws it from its heavenly reward," Craven exclaimed. "It was on my advice that Mrs. Temple let those candles burn themselves out a month ago. There have been no manifestations since, proving that the child no longer haunts this house. To-night we propose to hold a séance to determine that all is well with her, after which we shall leave the pure spirit to enjoy its well-earned rest."

"Go ahead," said Martinus. "There will be no interference from either of us. But we propose to be present as spectators. You may be glad of it before the séance ends, Mr. Craven."

"If Doctor Martinus and Mr. Branscombe will pledge themselves not to interfere, I am sure you will not object to their staying, Mr. Craven?" asked Mrs. Temple.

Craven sulkily agreed.

AGAIN we took our seats, and the light was turned off. The medium began to struggle and moan. And this time I was conscious of a presence, indescribably evil, in that room. It was like physical contact with something too loathsome to have human form. I shuddered, I felt nauseated; it was all I could do to keep my place in the half-circle. I wondered if the others felt the same. All the while, too, it seemed as if I was resisting some physical pressure, bent on crowding me out. I strained against the chair—heard myself breathing hurriedly—felt the surge of the blood through my body.

It came: "Mamma! Mamma!" piping out of the cabinet.

"Doris? Darling little Doris, Mother is here. Are you happy, Doris?"

I heard the Doctor catch at his breath, as if about to speak—then he seemed to think better of it. I saw him outlined tensely against the faint light of the window-square.

"Daddy! I want my Daddy!" came the baby voice.

"Daddy is here," boomed Craven.

Now what induced the man to utter that lie is more than either Martinus or I could figure afterward. There followed a tense silence. Then that evil power within the room seemed to dominate, to overwhelm me. My brain reeled. I was choking for breath.

A peal of maniacal laughter rang through the silence. And I knew there was a body there—some vast, inchoate, evil thing that seemed to fill the room.

A chair fell over. The *thing* laughed again, and mingled with it came Mrs. Temple's scream, and a sound from Craven's throat that I cannot possibly describe. It was a cry, but a cry that seemed the embodiment of utter despair—the cry of dissolution.

Then—a heavy body toppling to the floor, and threshing it with its heels.

"The light, the light, Branscombe, for God's sake!" I heard Martinus calling, but as if from far away.

We were both groping for the button. We struck our heads together in the dark, fumbled in the dark, and at last, somehow, got the light turned on.

The medium was stirring in the cabinet. Mrs. Temple was seated rigid in her chair, staring in front of her, and muttering. The light of reason was gone from her eyes. On the floor lay Craven, apparently hugging to his heart

the "Mamma" doll, with frantic grip.

But as we bent over him I saw that the little porcelain fingers were fixed in his throat like steel hooks, so deep that the swelling flesh was already closing over the arms.

Craven was *dead*. The fingers of the doll had stopped the circulation in the carotids completely. Death had been a matter of perhaps fifteen seconds.

THE rest is happier than either of us had hoped. Thanks to Martinus's care, and certain suggestions made when Mrs. Temple was in a condition of hypnosis, and before she had recovered her reason, she awakened with no recollection of that final scene in the drama. Had she remembered, Martinus told me, reason would never have returned.

She was told that Craven had collapsed and died of heart disease at the beginning of the séance, and this was believed by Mrs. Jimpson, who was still in trance at the time of Craven's death. It was a comparatively simple matter for Martinus to issue a death certificate to this effect, and so hush up the facts.

Jim Temple returned to a house, swept and garnished, but this time without a devil in possession. The impulse that had enabled the dead bandit to wreak his revenge upon the living had been exhausted by that act, and James O'Connor was carried far beyond the sphere of earthly passions. The Doctor burned the doll in his fireplace when we got home that night.

"But the child—Doris?" I asked him. "Where was she while O'Connor was masquerading in her place?"

"Don't let us worry about her, Branscombe," answered Martinus. "It's a safe bet that there is provision on the other side to protect the Dorises against the James O'Connors."

Then I added: "In any case, you and I have done our part."

Pawn of the Unseen

(*Continued from page* 34)

seems to her necessary in the circumstances."

He paused to permit this to sink in. The faces of both Marius and Blood were absolutely imperturbable, though Marius knew that Terry's statement about his betrothal to Lenore was not entirely true, and Blood probably had good reason to suspect this. It was a happy stroke, however, because it gave Terry a standing in this house which he did not otherwise have, and under the circumstances this was vitally necessary, in order that he might be able to pursue his investigations.

"I have heard nothing about your engagement to Miss Lenore, sir," said the butler. "I am quite willing, if that is so, to give over to you, charge of the affairs here. But I will have to have my authority to do this, from Miss Lenore, who is at present the person to whom I am responsible."

"Well, if you can find Miss Lenore," said Terry grimly, "it might solve one or two things besides that. That's the reason I'm up here now—to see just what it is that has happened to her. And that's what I want to know from you, Blood. I know you never liked her——"

"You are wrong, sir," broke in the calm voice of the butler. "I never——"

"I know you never liked her," repeated Terry. "Don't you suppose I could tell by your attitude? I suppose her appearance rather broke up plans of your own—plans which you could not carry out so well with a third party around. I heard about what happened here the night Miss Lenore decided to move——"

"HOW did you know that, sir?" For the first time a flicker of emotion shaded its way across the impassive countenance of Blood, or was it just Terry's imagination? He was sure that for a fleeting instant there had been a sudden fear in the eyes of the butler, but if that was so, it was gone equally quickly.

"Never mind how I knew that?" went on Terry. "It is enough that I know it—along with a great deal else that it might surprise you to have me know. I know how pleased you were when she decided to move, and I know, also, how pleased you would be to have her out of the way."

"I don't see how you can say that, sir," said the butler, impassively.

TERRY looked at him significantly for a long moment before replying. Then he spoke.

"It happens that I know that the entire estate of Martin Grimm goes to Miss Lenore, by his will . . . if she is alive." He paused for another moment, and the air seemed to quiver in expectation of his next words.

"If she is not alive, Blood, the estate goes, one half to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the other half to . . . To whom do you suppose?" He smiled mockingly, but the other kept silent.

"Why, it goes to one Stephen Blood—of course! Didn't you know that, Blood? How naive of you!"

For an instant the face of Blood lost its impassive character, and became livid.

"How did you know that?" he shrieked.

There was a silence. A long pause.

The man who called himself Stephen Blood, had resumed his mien of quiet and calm. His face was imperturbable, as though a mask that he held before him, having slipped for a brief instant, was now once more in place. In the silence his icy voice dripped its way through to the two men who faced him.

"I don't know that is so," he said quietly. "And if it is so, I can hardly see what affair it is of yours." He turned to leave the room.

"And now," he continued, "if you don't mind, I think I'll go back to bed."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said Terry. "You'll stay right here and help us find out a few things that we haven't been able to unravel—yet."

"Very well, sir," said the butler, calmly.

Marius and Terry turned to an inspection of the room. It was a large room, covering practically the length and the width of the entire top floor of the old private house, and it was almost bare of furniture. Terry, torn between anxiety for Lenore and desire to find out the mystery of old Martin Grimm, examined it swiftly.

Leaning against the old walls were a few canvases in various stages of completion, and a glance at these showed that they had not been worked on for a long time—years, perhaps. In the center of the floor was a great easel, and in one corner was a board dais, covered with royal red velvet—a stand such as is used by painters in portrait work, for their sitters. Two or three pictures hung on the walls, and in one corner was a rude bookcase, painted scarlet and filled with books of another generation.

It was the work of an instant for Terry and Marius to up-end the portrait dais. It was nothing but a wooden box, as they could see, and was absolutely empty. There was nothing underneath it, and Marius replaced it with a sigh. It was the first thing that had occupied his eye when he had glanced about the room.

On the scrubbed wooded floor the blood spot, rapidly drying, glowed a dark red, and it was becoming momentarily darker as it dried into the wood.

THE light in this room came from a large window overlooking the street, and from a skylight, the north light, demanded by all painters. They could see that the skylight had not been opened in years. The iron joints were red with rust, and the rope that guided the pane hung down rotted and unused. Marius pulled at it, and it broke in his hand. The room was high, and it would not have been an easy matter for any one to reach the skylight, much less to enter or leave by it, though Terry and Marius considered this possibility.

"Do you think it's possible?" inquired Terry.

Marius shook his head.

"No, I don't," he replied. "And there was no time for such an acrobatic feat anyway. You couldn't possibly reach it without a ladder, and the ladder would have to be so long and so heavy that it would be quite a stunt to draw it up after you. I don't think that's the way it was done."

"Yet They—or It—were in this room. I am certain of that. And there's the blood," mused Terry.

"Well, if they were, then it's a triumph

of the spirit over matter, because I don't see how they could have got out—especially if one of them wasn't willing to go. And judging from that scream, I don't think that Miss Lenore was any too anxious."

There were several old trunks in the room, littered with ancient paraphernalia, and these trunks they examined carefully, dumping their contents out on the floor, in the hope that thereby they might obtain some sort of clue to the shady undertakings that they believed Martin Grimm had been engaged on.

THERE was nothing upon which they could build even the flimsiest sort of theory. Four or five suits of old clothes were there, clothes of the style that hadn't been worn by men for thirty years, boxes of dried up paints, several ancient blankets, a rusty hammer and saw, a box containing nails and screws and clips, and a book of newspaper clippings. These clippings were from western newspapers, they ascertained quickly, and contained notices of artistic exhibitions in which Martin Grimm's paintings had been featured. They also found the uniform of a Civil War drummer boy, evidently the one worn by Martin Grimm. It was full of moth holes, and had a suspicious stain of red on it.

Of evidence that could be of any assistance to them, there was absolutely nothing, and after another cursory glance about the great bare room, Terry turned to the butler, Blood, who had been standing impassively by.

"Your late master was both deaf and dumb, was he not?" he asked Blood.

"Yes, sir," replied Blood.

"But the footsteps, here in this house—he used to hear them, didn't he, when he was alive—according to what he said?"

"I never heard them. And, I don't think he did, either," replied the butler quietly. "I think it was an hallucination of his."

"Then how do you account for his being at the telephone as if talking and listening, when he died?" persisted his inquisitor, looking at him with significance.

"I don't account for it, sir," replied Blood.

"But you must have formed some theory about the matter. Surely it must have seemed strange to you, to have a man whom you always thought to be deaf and dumb—if you did really think that—talking and hearing."

"It was not within my province to form theories. I did not question the doings of Mr. Grimm. I was the butler here. I am not a private detective." Blood spoke without rancor, and without the impertinence that the words would seem to indicate. It was a simple statement of a fact.

"Just what did Martin Grimm do for a living?" asked Terry, though he knew the answer to that.

"Nothing. You know that, sir. He lived on his income," came back the unhurried reply.

"Always—since you have known him?"

"Always—since I have known him."

"And how long has that been?" persisted Terry, feeling the futility of trying to get any information of value from this man, who probably had so much to disclose, that he was careful to disclose nothing!

"Twenty years, sir," replied Blood.

"You came with him from the Coast, didn't you?" inquired his inquisitor.

"Yes, sir."

"Has he always been deaf and dumb—to your knowledge? And has he always been without a business?"

"Yes, sir, both—to my knowledge, sir," replied Blood calmly, walking to the window and glancing out at the already lightening sky in the east.

"Have you any idea who 'The Seven' is—or are?" asked Terry.

The butler shook his head. "Not the slightest," he replied.

"Have you the slightest idea as to just what Martin Grimm's connection with—ah—'them' was? Just in what way he was involved in that quarter?"

The butler shook his head again. "Not the slightest idea," he said again.

"I know that Mr. Grimm spent quite a little time up here in this room," went on Terry. "Just what was it that he was doing here?"

Once more the butler shook his head. "Painting, I always supposed. You see," he explained, "nobody else was ever allowed up here. I, myself, came in here to this room very, very seldom."

"He was painting, you say?" said Terry. "There doesn't seem to be much evidence of it. He left no amount of work at all, so far as I can see."

The butler nodded. "I imagine Mr. Grimm was a very slow worker."

THERE was a silence, then Terry spoke. He looked Blood in the eye, and his tone was low, but his words cut through like knife blades.

"I know that your late master was involved in some illegal operations," he said. "I know, too, that you also were involved in it—that you had knowledge of these operations. Never mind how I know," he hastened to add, as it seemed that Blood was about to protest his innocence.

"You see," he went on, "I know more than you thought possible. The wording of the will of Martin Grimm is not the only thing I know that you thought I knew nothing of. Now, I am going to give you a chance to tell me what you know. And if I find your information of value, I will not call in the police." He paused to give this statement its proper significance.

"And if you don't. . . ?" Blood interposed calmly, giving Terry look for look, his dark eyes like those of a serpent, without expression.

"And if I don't," ended Terry, "I will call in the police, tell them what I know, and let justice take its course. They are aware of the fact that everything is not as it should be in this house. It would take very little for them to renew their interest in the strange case of the death of Martin Grimm. Understand me; I am not interested in the police," he put in a little more kindly. "What I am interested in at this time is the whereabouts of Miss Lenore. I want to know just what has happened and is happening to her. And, I intend to let nothing stand in the way of my finding out. I regard it as a plain duty."

For a space there was a silence between them.

Blood strolled quietly over to the spot of blood on the floor in front of the door and inspected it critically. No one spoke as he did this. Finally he looked up at Terry.

"If I were to tell you what I know about this case," asked Blood, "—conceding, which I don't, sir, that I know anything further about it than you already know—then what?" He paused, and looked enquiringly at Terry.

"If you will tell me all that you know about this case, and I am convinced that you are telling the truth, I will say nothing to the police. That is, provided of course, that I manage to get in touch with Miss Lenore immediately."

"And if I tell you once more, sir, that I know nothing in addition to what I have already told you?" Blood looked Terry directly in the eye.

"Are you trying to say that you refuse to tell me anything more?" said Terry.

"Yes, sir—begging your pardon, sir."

His tone was respectful, but there was an inscrutably mocking gleam in his eyes. Terry knew that there was more to be told. He thought of Lenore, and the tortured scream which had been the last news he had heard of the woman he loved, and anger overcame him. He would shake the information out of this man's throat.

IN a fury, he took a step forward to the man. The last he saw of him was the cold laughter in his mocking eyes, for Blood's hand came up with the swiftness and quietness of a snake, and in an instant he had switched the light out.

There was the hurried banging of a door, as both Marius and Terry plunged for the disappearing butler, missing his exit by perhaps a fraction of an inch.

"Damn!" ejaculated Terry, angered that he should have been duped in such a simple, childish way.

Something winged its way past Terry's head and thudded in the wall above them. They both started, violently. Marius recovered himself first. He reached for the switch.

He snapped the light on. There, quivering in the wall, was an arrow, pierced through a fluttering paper. Obviously it was a message. Of what? Where had it come from?

They looked around the room hastily. The window was closed, and so was the skylight. The arrow quivered in the wall above the door, so it could not have come through the doorway. And, as they both remembered, the door had been slammed shut after the hasty exit of Blood.

"It must have come from somewhere inside this room," said Terry, mystified.

"I don't see where else it could come from," replied Marius. "Whoever it is, is here now—and watching our every movement."

They examined the room, and were utterly at a loss to account for the entrance of the winged messenger, but both were conscious of a strange feeling of being watched by an unseen eye—of having their every action noted.

"That arrow," said Terry, "could have pierced one of us, as easily as not.

Listen! There comes that laugh again!"

There came again that strange, far-away laughter—that ghoulish glee that seemed to belong to another world. It was somewhere in the house. Where?—they could not know. It seemed to be around them, over them, under them. It seemed to be without place—a laugh without a body to emit it. It was a disembodied, flat, fiendish, inhuman sound. Terry and Marius shivered, and stood rooted to the floor.

Then Marius went pale. "I don't like that," he said. "You are right. They do see us. And, they hear us. Let's get out of this room!"

"Wait," said Terry. "Let's see first what they say. I always answer my mail."

HE reached up and detached the arrow from the wall, where it was firmly embedded, as though a man of giant strength had bent the bow. He took off the paper, taking care not to tear it, and there came to his nostrils the same pungent odor, the same unforgettable oriental perfume he had smelled when he examined the strange message that had come to Martin Grimm on the night of his death—the message, in fact, that had presaged his death.

A premonition came to Terry. It was a feeling, like a warning, that he would be better out of this mess. But he shook this off as the thought of Lenore came to him.

The paper on which the message came, was scarlet, as had been that which had told poor Martin Grimm where he was to go. It was printed with a brush, in heavy strokes, the ink having crinkled the thin paper. The odor of the perfume was strong and seemed to envelop both men as they stood there, Terry holding the paper in his hand and Marius looking over his shoulder.

The printing on the paper was sinister:

> Mind your own business, if you want to live another night. This is the last warning. Remember!
>
> THE SEVEN.

Terry said nothing for a moment. Marius finally broke the silence.

"Smells like a Chinese laundry ticket."

'What do you say, Marius?" asked Terry.

"About what?"

"About this case. After all, this is none of your affair. I see no particular reason why you should risk your life in it."

"Are you trying to sneak away from me again, and go it alone—like you did when you told me you were going to bed, and instead came up here by yourself?" Marius had a dignified, injured air.

"Permit me to point out," remarked Terry, "that you did exactly the same thing yourself—and a few minutes earlier than me, too."

"That's different," replied Marius. "I simply had a scientific interest in the psychic phenomena that appeared to be manifesting itself in this house."

"That may be, though I doubt it," said Terry drily. "However, now that our lives are threatened——"

"I don't think we had better discuss the matter any further," broke in Marius. "As for continuing our investigation, in view of the fact that we seem to be observed by—ah—something——" He looked around him warily, but could make out no suspicious element. "In view of the fact that we have very little privacy here, I suggest that we decide elsewhere, on just what our course of action is to be."

Terry nodded. They turned to the door.

"Let's go downstairs and see Blood," he said.

He was answered by the low, mocking, unearthly laughter that moved somewhere in the house—disembodied, cruel, not of human origin. They started, looking around them for the source or the direction, but could not make it out. It was distant, yet somehow seemed close. It was far, yet it was all around them . . . at their elbow . . . behind their back . . . fiendish, hard. Past them it floated, and all around them, and somewhere in the reaches of the house it died down and away.

In spite of themselves, Terry and Marius felt a prickly sensation at the roots of their hair. This was not something that they could control. They could reason it away, in retrospect. But when it was happening it was subject to no logic, no reasoning. A wave of fear of the unknown swept over them—an emotion they denied and refused to give way to, yet it was there. What was this cold laughter?—the dead mirth of some forgotten spirit? Was it the mocking cacchination of some phantom?

THEY turned to each other, as they had many times in the last few hours.

"Now, just what do you suppose that can be?" asked Marius. "We've heard it often enough this night—not that I'm getting at all used to it."

"Whoever it is, certainly has a sense of humor," said Terry drily. "He always seems to see the funny side of things—though I don't see anything to laugh at, myself. It's the most uncanny laughing I have ever heard in my life. I wonder what kind of a spirit it is, that keeps making itself——"

"It is not a spirit," said Marius. "There is no such thing. It is a human being—a living human being——"

"Well, call it anything you like," assented Terry. "But I never heard any human thing laugh like that. It didn't sound to me as though it ever started in any throat. It sounded to me like something that was made up of all the elements that go to produce speech—put together by some outside power or influence——" He was silent for a moment, as something struck his mind, some newspaper article he had read somewhere recently, and forgotten. Or rather, not forgotten, as nothing is ever entirely forgotten—but stored away in some pigeon hole of his brain, ready to be pulled out and inspected when needed. He turned inquiringly to Marius.

"Some time ago I remember reading an article about one of the big electric companies that stated that there was a man in their laboratory who was working on what they called 'synthetic speech.' It was a collection of delicate machine parts, run by electricity, that produced a replica of human speech. It

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LESSONS GIVEN AWAY

was not like the phonograph, which duplicates speech that had been sounded by some human throat. It was different, in that it spoke words that had never been uttered. It was partly explained, but not entirely, as it was not yet perfected. Do you remember the article?"

Marius shook his head. "No, I didn't read it, but what has that got to do with this?"

"Nothing, except that it might give us the physical explanation which we are looking for. This laughing, now, sounded as though it might be like that —speech that has never been uttered——"

Marius nodded. "In that case, then, there is somebody actuating the machinery. Is that what you mean?"

"I don't mean anything in particular," confessed Terry. "I am merely casting about for some sort of logical explanation of a perfectly illogical manifestation. In any event, we are not alone in the house. Somebody is doing that."

"I knew we weren't alone, anyway," said Marius. "There is Martin Grimm —and his paid mourner."

"I mean, in addition to them," said Terry. "If we can locate the place that laugh comes from——"

"It seems to come from every place— from almost any place. We heard it inside the studio upstairs, before, didn't we?" asked Marius.

"Well, maybe we'll come across it yet," said Terry. "Let's go on with the search."

THEY searched systematically, but could find nothing. It was now broad daylight. When they had finished with Blood's room, and had had to admit to each other that they had happened on not the slightest clue, they decided to work their way down through the rest of the house.

This they did, without result, until they found themselves in the lower hall, just inside of the main entrance to the house.

"Well," said Terry, "it doesn't look as though we have had much luck, does it?"

"No, it doesn't," replied Marius. "What now? What is our next step?"

"Of course, we still have the basement and the cellar to go through——"

"But before that, I think we ought to search one more room," said Marius significantly.

"You mean——" began Terry, motioning with his head to the door behind which rested the body of Martin Grimm and the professional watcher.

"Yes, I do," said Marius. "I think it's very important—more important than any other room in the house. I know it hardly seems ethical to disturb the sleep of the dead, but——"

"The dead are not disturbed," said Terry. "It is only the living who can be disturbed. The dead are beyond our reach." He paused for a moment. "But, we don't seem to be beyond theirs, if——"

THEY listened at the door for a moment, but could hear nothing. The weird chant of the paid watcher had not been heard for a long time now. It had evidently died away with the coming of the day, or a little before. They pictured him, alone there through the long night with his dead, plying his grisly and forbidding trade. Terry permitted himself a slight shiver, which passed unnoticed, Marius either not seeing, or, at any rate, pretending not to see.

Terry put his hand on the knob of the door and turned, pushing the door inwards. It opened at once, and he and Marius slipped silently into the room, closing the door behind them. The room was dark, except for the flickering of the candles which burned low at each corner of the bier in the center of the room. The shades were drawn so that no light could enter, and in the shadow the unsteady candle light played queer tricks on the wall. They saw there the figure of a solitary watcher. He was a little old man, and he sat hunched in a chair at the side of the coffin—fast asleep!

He had four days' growth of grizzled whiskers, and a curiously shapen head, which was partly accounted for by the fact that he had but one ear, the other being not even a stump, but having been sliced off close to his head. It gave his head a strange appearance, as though it was out of drawing—and it made Terry feel as though it had been drawn by an artist who would presently rub it out and try drawing it all over again.

He sat hunched in his chair, head fallen forward on his chest, one arm sticking grotesquely out over the arm of the chair. He was snoring slightly.

The atmosphere in the room was peculiar—as it always was, even when Martin Grimm was alive. There was a pungent odor there—almost the same odor that they had smelled on the message from The Seven. In the weird shadows they could make out that old Grimm's coffin was covered by a black silk cloth.

For a few moments they stood just inside the doorway, without saying a word. Finally Terry spoke:

"Poor old Grimm!"

"He is buried tomorrow?" inquired Marius softly.

Terry nodded. "Yes. I'm not going just yet. Let's take one last look at the body."

He walked to the bier and seized the end of the silk covering, drawing it back.

As they gazed at what was underneath, their faces blanched, and the breath came through their lips in short gasps. They leaned forward in horror at the thing that was disclosed to them.

"My God!" breathed Terry finally. "It cannot be!"

Who—or what—was in the coffin? Why not the body of old Grimm? Did Terry and Marius look down upon the face of Lenore? Was that why they were so shocked? Was it Blood himself who was in the coffin, or was it—— Read in the February issue of GHOST STORIES further developments in this enthralling mystery tale. On the newsstands December 23rd.

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The Black Spider

(*Continued from page* 19)

"Ah! Well, we'll see what we can do."

He drew a card from a silver case and bit the end of his pencil thoughtfully. He wrote something and handed it to the man.

"Take this along to the dispenser."

"Anything else, sir?"

"Yes. I want you to go to the first-class saloon and find Miss Seldon. If she's not there, the purser will tell you where she is. Ask her if she'd mind coming to see me here as soon as possible. You can turn in after that. I shall want you back at one o'clock.

"Very good, sir." At the door he paused and looked back. "Er—I suppose Dr. Murphy will understand? You see, he told me——"

Langley took him by both shoulders and pushed him out of the room.

"I'll make it all right with Dr. Murphy," he assured him and went back to his patient.

THE Japanese was moving restlessly and a crimson spot burned at each cheek-bone. He seemed to be gabbling something that Langley could not catch, clutching all the while at the white coverlet with fingers like yellow claws. Suddenly he sat bolt upright, a gaunt fragile figure in a borrowed pajama-coat that was four sizes too large.

"The box," he said in English, staring before him with glazed eyes, "—they must not take that! They will forget to feed it . . . the thing will die. I want it to grow. . . ."

The doctor forced him gently back and covered him.

"Your box is here all right," he muttered, rather for something to say than having the least hope he would be understood.

The man struggled feebly for a few minutes, then relapsed into the vague, restless state in which Langley had found him.

There was a box in the corner, a square box of painted wood with a double row of perforations round the top. It measured approximately a foot square.

Langley picked it up and, holding it to the light, tried to see in. He was about to put it down when he became aware that something was moving about inside.

He whistled softly to himself.

"Good Lord! This then, whatever it is, is alive too."

He set the box on the closed top of the washing cabinet and stood looking at it, his hands deep in his trouser pockets. He had the usual scruples concerning prying into other people's property, but he was equally prepared to set such scruples aside when it was a question of an animal requiring sustenance. He could not make up his mind as to the nature of the beast. The movements had been queer—similar in some respects to those of a bird. And yet, he did not think it was a bird. He brought his head closer. There was a peculiar, unpleasant odor about the box that both puzzled him, and—was very nauseating.

He glanced at his patient through the mirror, then withdrew a kind of skewer with a polished knob that appeared to secure the drawer. It had occurred to him that this drawer might contain a supply of the particular type of food that the creature required. But to his amazement he found nothing but minute metal cylinders, securely corked and labelled in Japanese characters, and a hypodermic syringe!

He closed it again and replaced the fastening.

HE remained for some seconds, gazing at his own reflection in the glass, then deliberately withdrew a second rod and threw open the lid.

He dropped the skewer and sprang back a yard, nearly falling over the foot of the bunk. At the same moment, the door behind him opened softly.

Queer, hairy claws appeared over the edge of the box, waving suspiciously. The box tilted, then fell on its side and there emerged—an enormous spider, its body as big as his two fists. The thing was black and, hardened as he was to jungle phenomena, Langley thought he had never seen anything quite so loathsome in his life. A second later it had disappeared and then he saw it racing up the white-painted wall with a glistening strand waving behind it that might have been a rope. It sought refuge in a corner of the ceiling.

He heard Bianca's little, gasping cry behind him.

"Dr. Langley, what is it? Oh, isn't it horrible!"

He backed towards her, his eye still riveted on the monster.

"It's a spider," he said calmly. "Our friend here brought it on board with him in that box. I'm afraid I let it out, and our problem of the moment is how to get it back again. Don't stay here if you're frightened."

He reached over and pressed the bell.

"I am frightened," said Bianca; "but I'm going to stay."

"Splendid! Well, keep as far away as you can. It may start roving in search of food—and some of these things have poisonous bites."

"But I've never heard of a spider as big as that."

"Nor have I. As a general rule I prefer them about an inch long. The Japanese gentleman on the bed, however, isn't satisfied yet. He wants it to grow!"

The girl stared at the yellow face with its two crimson spots.

"Do you mean to say he keeps that thing as a pet?"

Langley nodded.

"He's been babbling about it a good deal in his delirium. He seems to have it on his mind."

"I'm not in the least surprised," said Bianca.

A steward knocked on the door in response to the doctor's summons.

"Don't come in," said Langley. "Find

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me the biggest jar you can—one with a large opening—and bring it here at once."

Ten minutes later the knock came again and Langley put his head round the door.

"That's not large enough," she heard him say. Then: "That's better. I think we might manage with that."

She saw him cross the floor, armed with a large receptacle that might have been used for salt. He placed a camp-stool on the floor, under where the spider was crouching, and mounted it gingerly.

A feeling of nausea swept over her and she shut her eyes.

MINUTES passed and suddenly she realized that he was bending over the washing cabinet, doing something with a towel.

"Get me a piece of string, Miss Seldon, if you don't mind. I've got him inside."

She returned presently and watched him pass the cord several times round the mouth of the jar. He swore softly to himself as the knot slipped. The second time, she bit her lip, then went over to him and put her finger on the cord, to hold it for him.

He dumped the imprisoned insect in the cupboard and shut the door.

"Thanks awfully. You didn't like doing that, eh, Miss Seldon?"

"No, I didn't. I hated it. But I like to make myself do the things I hate. It wasn't really very difficult, once I'd assured my weaker self that the creature was safely inside and couldn't possibly hurt me. It was nothing to what you did."

"No," smiled Langley. "But I'm a—a doctor—and have to do a whole lot of unpleasant things."

"You were going to say 'a man,'" she challenged him. "I don't see why you didn't. Why do men hate referring to themselves as men? Women aren't ashamed of their sex."

"That's possibly because they've nothing to be ashamed of."

She moved forward impulsively.

"I'm glad you consented to look after me. I know I'm in good hands. I think you're a *super-man*."

THEY met that evening at dinner.

The band was playing and there were perhaps a score of people scattered among the tables.

"Tired?" asked Langley.

"Not in the least, thank you. I think our patient is better already, don't you?"

The doctor pursed his lips.

"He has a grip on life that is positively uncanny," he said. "We're going to pull him through you know. I understand the spider has found a new keeper?"

"Yes. Hales—and isn't he a most peculiar looking man?" commented the girl, with a shudder. "I'm told he pushes lumps of meat under the towel and the brute stands up on its hind legs and asks for more. Do you believe that?"

"No," said Langley firmly, "—I don't. But the fact that it eats meat doesn't altogether surprise me. There are such things as bird-catching spiders, you know. We've discovered our friend's name, by the by. It's Kamaga."

"That's interesting. I hate to have to refer to a human-being as 'him' or 'it.' Spelt with a K?"

Langley nodded.

"Spelt with a K. Has he disclosed anything more about the spider?"

"Oh, yes—whole strings of it. It's perfectly weird at times. You'd think he knew you were there and was propounding his theories. He talked this afternoon about Japanese gardens and the infinite pains taken to dwarf things. Then he spoke of himself. It's awfully difficult to get a connected story, because he has a disconcerting habit of reverting suddenly to his own language. At least, I suppose it's his own."

"What did you gather?"

She held her head on one side and screwed up her eyes.

"Oh, that he's a sort of scientist. He aims at increasing the size of things—everything. That's his main theme. He hammers away at that for hours."

The doctor looked up from the wine-list.

"Increasing the size of things, eh? You don't suppose he was responsible for the exaggerated growth of that confounded insect?"

She uttered a little cry.

"You mean that he—"

"I mean that a creature like that would command a high price at a zoo or a freak show. I don't believe a spider of that size exists under normal conditions. There was a drawer under the box which contained drugs, and a syringe. God! I wonder if he's doping that thing with something he's discovered?" He shuddered. "Let's forget about it and have some dinner."

"It didn't look very dopey," insisted Bianca. "It went up the wall like a streak of lightning."

"You saw that?"

"Of course, I was at the door. Don't you remember?"

"I do," said Langley. "But I'd like to forget it. If I really thought there were insects like that in the tropics, I'd never place any confidence in a mosquito-net again!"

"'Bigger and bigger and bigger,' he keeps saying," pursued the girl, with evident relish. "If he really goes on as he's started, it ought to add a new zest to big-game hunting."

"We'll drop it," said the doctor coldly, "—if you don't mind."

THEY were on the point of disembarking at Singapore when Kamaga joined them at the taffrail. He had borrowed a suit of clothes that almost fitted, and presented the appearance of a sleek, good-looking boy.

"Good-bye, Miss Seldon," he said. "I shall never forget what you have done for me."

Bianca crimsoned and clung tightly to the doctor's arm.

"Really, Mr. Kamaga, I had little or nothing to do with your case. If you wish to thank anybody, you should thank Dr. Langley. It was he who pulled you through."

Langley turned.

"Oh, it's you, Kamaga. Glad to see you're better. You're lucky to be here at all. You've the finest constitution of any man I've ever come across. Come along, Miss Seldon. I'm going to take you to the hotel—without further delay."

They moved a few paces nearer the head of the gangway, and still Kamaga followed.

"I am coming to Borneo very soon," he enlightened Bianca. "I shall be seeing you again."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Kamaga? Er—good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Kamaga, a shade of wistfulness in his voice.

She lost sight of him in the crowd, but felt somehow that he was staring after her until the rickshaw had whirled them out of sight—into the atmosphere of Singapore's dust and intense heat.

"Infernal cheek!" said Langley. "What did I tell you?"

"I don't suppose he meant any harm," returned Bianca.

"Harm!" snorted the doctor. "He means nothing but harm. Cultivates spiders as big as footballs, and means no harm? Damn him!"

The girl was drinking in the sights and Kamaga was already a back number in her memory.

"I don't see that it's anything to get huffy about. It's a hundred to one we sha'n't see him again. Aren't those black kiddies just sweet! I'd like to take one home with me."

"You wouldn't," declared the doctor. "They're like lambs; they grow up! I can imagine nothing more unpleasant than a sheep about the house!"

DR. ANDREW LANGLEY was dining with Stewart—magistrate at Mirabalu—on a high veranda with an oil-lamp above and a pall of blackness all round.

It was ten months since he had left the *Batilcoa* at Singapore, and he was beginning to forget that he had ever had a vacation at all.

Langley rested both elbows on the rail and peered into the darkness.

He nipped the end from a cigar, lit it carefully, and threw the match into the night.

"Barry can be mighty hot-tempered at times," he remarked suddenly.

Stewart was pouring out liquor from a long earthenware bottle with a Dutch label.

"I know," he replied, without looking up. "It takes a good deal to rouse him, but when he's really thoroughly incensed—then look out! But what made you say that?"

"Something that occurred on his estate the other day. Jimmy, has anyone complained to you lately about Barry Seldon?"

The magistrate shook his head. He was a long, lean man with straight, clean-cut features, and eyes that were particularly blue.

"Don't think so. Has he been knocking his coolies about or something?"

The doctor emptied his glass.

"Not exactly. He kicked a stranger off the plantation last Thursday—kicked him pretty thoroughly, as a matter of fact. The fellow went away swearing blue murder. I thought you'd have heard of it by now."

Stewart grinned.

"Oh? What sort of stranger?"

"A yellow skinned blighter of some education who met Bianca on the boat

coming out—and tried to renew the acquaintance. Barry warned him once before."

The D. O. came slowly forward, his face flushed, his fists clenched at his sides.

"I don't think I quite understand you, Doc. A Chinaman—and Bianca!"

Langley glanced from the end of his cigar to his friend.

"There's nothing to get excited about. The fellow was washed past us in a storm and one of our boats picked him up. He was unconscious, of course, and Bianca volunteered to nurse him until one of the staff could be spared to take her place. We hoped to have seen the last of him at Singapore—but, unfortunately she rolled up here three months ago. He's Japanese."

Stewart started.

"Not Kamaga?"

"Yes. That's his name. You know him?"

"By sight only. He's taken over a few odd acres that were not the remotest use to anybody and put up some ghastly looking buildings. I was away when he came, but Brown saw him. Nobody raised any objection to his being there—so we let him stop." He clenched his teeth. "Some of these chaps have the cheek of the devil! If I hear the suspicion of a complaint against him, I'll have him deported."

The doctor nodded sympathetically.

"My sole regret is that I was the person who was instrumental in saving his wretched life. If you've got a couple of decent packs of cards in the house, I'll play you *Canfield*, for cents."

IT was close on midnight when a man rode furiously into the clearing that surrounded the bungalow and called to the magistrate from the saddle.

"Stewart!—Are you up there?"

The D. O. looked over.

"Hullo, Wright! You look hot. Come up and have a *peg*. The doc's here."

The newcomer slung his reins to an orderly and came up the steps, three at a time.

"I can't stop a minute," he panted. "Miss Seldon's up there alone."

He grabbed at the glass Stewart held out to him and drained it at a gulp. It was at that moment the magistrate noticed that Wright was white to the lips.

"Alone? Where's Barry?"

The planter caught at Stewart's arm.

"God—it's awful! We were up there—the three of us. The others had gone, and Miss Seldon had just come out in her dressing-gown to persuade Barry to go to bed. She was frightened at something, I think, and didn't want to admit it before me. I had picked up my hat and was making for the dining room door when a ghastly thing happened—Something black squeezed its way through the open window and dropped to the floor in front of us."

He paused for breath.

"Well?" ejaculated the D. O. impatiently. "What was it?"

Wright stared wildly, and swallowed hard.

"You'll think I'm mad, or drunk or something. It was a thing like a spider, only a million times bigger than any I've ever seen."

The doctor glanced up sharply.

"It was black, you say? About how big?"

Wright stared vaguely around the veranda as if seeking some object with which to compare it.

"It was tremendous. The body must have been nearly a yard long. For a matter of seconds we all stood there, paralyzed. Then I pushed Miss Seldon behind me and Barry pulled open the drawer in which he kept his pistol. The next thing I knew, the brute had sprung upon Barry and bitten him. . . ."

"Bitten him?"

The magistrate's face wore a puzzled expression.

"Yes! It all happened so quickly He staggered backwards with an ugly, gaping wound in his neck. The entire drawer came away with his hand and somehow or other I managed to get hold of that automatic.

"I fired at the thing, of course, and I suppose I hit it. Anyhow, one of my shots found the lamp-glass and blew it to atoms. That was when the creature was crossing the table, and I aimed a bit too high. The lamp flared up and smoked like blazes, and through the fog that descended upon the room like a pall, I caught sight of a shadowy horror clawing itself out by the way it had come.

"When I had adjusted the wick, and got back to Barry—*he was dead!*"

Stewart took him by both shoulders and shook him violently.

"Dead! Are you quite sure?"

"As certain as I stand here. The thing's bite had poisoned him. I got Miss Seldon to her bed, sent in the black girl who looks after her, and dispatched a runner to the doctor's place. Then I reconnoitered the ground all round the house, but could find nothing. I had another look at Miss Seldon, found Barry's pony—and came across."

Dr. Langley reached for his hat.

"The *black spider!*" he muttered, staring straight before him.

A moment later all three men were in the clearing.

THEY reached the veranda together. Stewart threw open the dining room door and went in, the doctor following at his heels.

A cloth had been hastily thrown over the body. Langley removed it.

"Well?" asked the magistrate presently, a lump in his throat.

"Dead," said the doctor and put back the covering. He rose to his feet and glanced round the room. "I must see Bianca."

Suddenly Wright—who was in the doorway—raised a warning finger.

"Keep quiet a minute. What was that?"

Above the chirping of the crickets, the ceaseless hum of insect creation, there floated to their ears the sound of a woman screaming.

Stewart clutched Langley's arm.

"Bianca!"

The other faced him squarely.

"Rubbish," he insisted. "It's more likely some native girl in the Kampon, on the other side. The sound came from a good way off."

He crossed the floor, and, gaining the

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passage, knocked loudly on the door. There was no response. He tapped again. The others, listening in silence, heard the handle turn.

"Jimmy! Wright! Come here, both of you!"

The room was in darkness and the doctor was striking matches, feverishly looking for the lamp.

"Stop just where you are for a moment!"

A light flickered and presently the apartment was dimly illuminated. They saw an empty bed, an overturned chair and the figure of a black woman lying in the middle of the floor.

The doctor turned her over.

"She's had a deuce of a knock from behind, but she's still breathing. We must send somebody to her." He looked up. "Are all you fellows armed?"

STEWART tapped his pocket significantly. He was unusually pale and beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

"Then it was Bianca we heard! That spider has been back again." He turned fiercely on the planter. "You ought never to have left the place."

Wright spread out his hands, babbling incoherently.

"I? What on earth was I to do? I had to find you! I had nobody to send. . . . I hit the thing, I tell you . . . how was I to know . . . ?"

"The spider has not been back," said Langley calmly.

"But man alive!" shouted the D. O., "Bianca's gone. Don't you understand that? She was taken from here."

"I know, but not by the black spider. The spider's master is the perpetrator of this fresh outrage."

Both men stared at him incredulously.

"The spider's master! What in the name of heaven——"

"I haven't time to explain it all to you now. We've got to find our mounts and ride like the devil. Wright, you'd better round up the estate watchmen and a couple of dozen reliable coolies and bring them across after us. Then send for Stewart's men. I want you fellows to be prepared to fire the scrub. Do you understand?"

The planter nodded grimly.

"I'll fix that all right. Where are they to go?"

"To Kamaga's place. I want them to surround it and await instructions."

The magistrate's fingers were moving nervously and his forehead was deeply furrowed.

"Kamaga's place! What on earth has that blighter to do with black spiders?"

"Everything," said Langley. "He breeds 'em. Poor old Barry has been the victim of one of his ghastly experiments. No, I'm not mad, old man. I know what I'm talking about. Come on."

They rode into the night, taking an easterly direction through the rubber trees.

A pale moon bathed the hillside in yellow light. A fresh breeze from the sea rustled the leafy branches overhead and from the strip of jungle at the foot of the slope a hornbill shrieked.

"A whole regiment to tackle one Jap," shouted Stewart suddenly.

"I'm not afraid of Kamaga," returned the doctor. "If he was all we had to contend with, I shouldn't worry."

THE Awards for Opinions on GHOST STORIES, issue of September, went to:

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SOME ONE will collect the awards for opinions on this issue. Why not YOU?

They galloped down a steep incline and onto the flat land again. The doctor ducked to avoid a branch and swung himself to the ground.

"There's a fence of some sort here. I noticed it when I came past last week."

The magistrate, joining him, flashed an electric torch on a high wall of painted stakes, set closely together.

"He didn't mean anybody to get in here!"

"Or out!" added Langley, as he moved off to the right.

"There's a light up there," said the D. O. peering through.

"And a gate here. It's padlocked on the inside. We shall have to break it down."

They had found a stake and were wrenching off palings when Stewart turned and looked back.

His eyes had long grown accustomed to the darkness of this lone glade where even the moon's rays scarcely penetrated.

What he saw there behind him froze the blood in his veins. He dropped to his knees, pulling his companion after him, as a black horror—crawling painfully on five of its eight legs—crept from the trees and scaled the fence barely ten feet from them. They heard it drop on the other side.

"God!" exclaimed Stewart. "It's incredible!"

Langley had picked up the pole again.

"It's interesting to know that spiders have a homing instinct," he muttered. "Kamaga must have taken it there in some way—and let it loose. We can get through here."

They clambered through on foot, leaving their mounts tethered by the trees.

There was a broad, moss-covered track on the far side. Negotiating this, they made for a solitary light that showed ahead, then slowed down to a brisk walking pace as the first belt of outbuildings emerged from the shadows.

STEWART went first up the crazy ladder and pushed the door wide open. There was a strip of matting across the floor, a Japanese stool and a piece of low furniture, like a desk without legs.

As the Englishmen entered, Kamaga —clad in a white kimono that was guiltless of embroidery—came softly through a curtained aperture and stood before them.

Langley had him covered.

"The game's up, Kamaga," he jerked out. "Put up your hands. Do you hear me?"

The Japanese raised his arms slowly.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said quietly. "You have doubtless good reason for breaking your way into my home. I shall be interested to learn your motive."

"Kamaga," interposed the doctor, "I saved your life on the *Batilcoa*. We want you to tell us where you have taken Miss Seldon."

Stewart's finger, hooked round the trigger of his automatic, restrained itself with difficulty.

Kamaga blinked.

"The lady has disappeared?"

The magistrate's anger boiled over.

"I can't stand this! Keep this blackguard here, Doc. I'm going to search this place!"

"Be careful."

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"Oh, I'll look out for myself."

He plunged through the curtains.

Langley opened his case with one hand, struck a vesta on his shoe and lit a cigarette.

"It's no use beating about the bush, Kamaga," he told his prisoner. "I know everything."

The man's face betrayed no sign of emotion.

"Indeed?"

"I am referring to the black spider. You spoke of it in your delirium. You wanted it to grow—and grow—and grow. We know now, Kamaga, that it *as grown*. Keep your hands above your head, you yellow devil!"

A cry came from within.

"Doctor!"

"Hullo?"

"Bring Kamaga here. Make him walk in front of you and don't take your eyes off him for a second."

Langley pointed to the curtains.

"Get a move on," he said curtly. Kamaga obeyed.

HE was on the point of passing through when the doctor caught the curtains up and ripped the material from the rod that held it suspended. He was taking no chances.

He found himself in a long, narrow apartment stocked with appliances and glass jars. Stewart had his back to them, gazing down a broad passageway to a room beyond, the door of which stood open. There was an oil lamp in a bracket and its light was sufficient to reveal to the doctor's horrified gaze a menagerie of the most revolting specimens that it had ever been his fortune to encounter.

He saw tier upon tier of little square cages, each numbered and ticketed and containing specimens of insects of every sort and description, greatly magnified. A blue fly, as big as his hand—a centipede like a serpent, that kept up a ceaseless race to the roof of its prison, only to drop to the floor and begin again—a moth, with closed wings which, when opened, must have covered a couple of feet from tip to tip—giant ants—beetles—gnats. . . .

At the far side of the room beyond, there was a bed, completely screened by mosquito-curtains, hung from a wooden ring fixed to the ceiling.

"I want Kamaga to tell me who is sleeping in that bed," said the magistrate.

The Japanese did not reply.

"Why don't you go and see for yourself," asked Langley.

For answer, the D. O. stepped aside, revealing the form of a second enormous spider—a quarter of the size of the one that had poisoned Barry—crouching on the inner side of the opening, a metal collar round its middle and a long chain stretching from it to a staple in the wall. The creature had four eyes with great hairy flaps over them like lids, that kept lifting.

"Shove Kamaga in here," suggested Stewart. "It may help him to find his tongue."

He caught one of the uplifted arms and began pulling the Japanese towards the doorway. On the very threshold Kamaga gave an unearthly scream.

"Oh, no! It will kill me! I am not ready. . . ."

His gaze shot to the ceiling and, following it, the magistrate saw an enormous metal syringe hanging in a sort of cradle over a zinc tank.

"We don't want you to be ready, Kamaga," he said. "Mr. Seldon wasn't ready when you let your vile creation loose on him. Come on, my friend. In you go!"

The man had struggled to his knees and hung limply, like a sack.

"Stop," he screamed. "I will tell you. I will tell you everything. The English lady is in there. She is tied, but I have not harmed her. No closer . . . oh, no closer . . . it can reach. . . ."

Stewart threw him back towards the doctor and hooked down the syringe. He gave it an experimental pump up and down, then dipped its nozzle in the fluid in the tank and drew out the handle until it appeared to be full.

"What's that?" demanded Langley suspiciously.

"Don't know," said the other. "Dope for the spider I fancy. Isn't it, Kamaga?"

Kamaga inclined his head.

He squirted a steady shower of drops at the brute's head.

Presently, as he watched it anxiously, the flaps drooped and did not come up again—the legs drew gradually closer to the body, and, before the doctor could intervene, the magistrate had passed it on his way to the bed.

Langley's eyes were turned from the Japanese for the fraction of a second, but in that short space Kamaga found time to act. . . . A cloth—snatched from the top of a case—fell over the doctor's head, completely enveloping him. He threw it off after a brief struggle to find the tank overturned, flooding the passage with a sickly, sweet-smelling fluid. Every cage was open, and Kamaga was disappearing through the farthest doorway.

The shot he fired after him must have missed by a hair's breadth—and, Kamaga was gone.

THE doctor was left amid a host of crawling, buzzing, fluttering horrors, with Stewart—unconscious of anything except that he held Bianca in his arms—coming towards him.

"It's all right, Doc. I've got her."

Langley brought his boot down heavily on something and yelled at the top of his voice.

"Is there a way out through that room?"

"No, it's a *cul-de-sac*."

"Then run for it, for all you're worth. Kamaga's slipped me and his entire menagerie's loose!"

By a miracle they got through. Langley declared afterwards that they owed their escape in this instance to the fumes of the chemical Kamaga had overturned, to prevent them from employing it.

They were in the open again with the door of the house shut securely behind them.

"We must go warily," said the doctor. "I've an idea at the back of my head that we haven't finished with Kamaga."

Bianca blinked up at Stewart and smiled faintly.

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"May I try and walk please?"

The sound of her voice sent a pleasurable thrill coursing through Stewart's being. He lowered her feet gently to the ground, but still held her supported.

"You feel all right now?"

"Oh, yes, I think so. I'm stiff, of course, but that's all." She rubbed her eyes. "What a horrible nightmare! It seems to have been going on for years. I can't imagine how you found me. Did you hear me scream or did the doctor guess?"

"Both," said Langley. "Try and walk a few steps. That's splendid. Now try again. Keep moving your legs as if you were marking time." He pointed suddenly towards the huts. "Look, Jimmy! There he goes. He's making for the path."

"I can't see anything. Who was it?"

"Kamaga! He's thrown open the doors. Heaven knows what's hidden behind them. Bianca, we've got to run for it. You'd better hang on to both of us. If you find yourself falling, yell out —and we'll carry you."

They had gone twenty yards when Bianca screamed.

"Look! Look! Can't you see them in that patch of moonlight? Spiders! Spiders! Hundreds of them!"

Both men glanced back. The entire place seemed alive with them. Stewart swept the girl from her feet and they raced headlong for the gate.

Kamaga was out of pistol-shot, but they appeared to be gaining on him, his white kimono clearly visible among the trees. Suddenly he halted, stared round him in bewilderment, and began coming back towards them.

A voice from the direction of the fence indicated clearly why he had turned.

"Stewart! are you up there? Stewart!"

The magistrate paused and bellowed back.

"We're coming now. Tell them to fire the forest. Look out for Miss Seldon. I'm sending her on ahead." He released the girl again. "Bianca," he told her, "the gate is immediately in front of you and Wright's waiting for you down there. I want you to go there—alone. Are you afraid?"

She looked straight up at him.

"I am afraid, Jimmy," she whispered, "—but I'm going."

He found time for a single sentence more.

"I'm glad it was I who found you—and not the others. I'll tell you why—some day."

"I'm glad it was you, Jimmy," she said—and was gone.

"She's a wonderful little woman, Jimmy. What are we going to do now?"

The magistrate started moving off at a brisk pace through the trees.

"Try and secure Kamaga—dead or alive—before the fire gets a good hold. Can you see which way he's taken?"

"Yes. He's over there to the left. We'd better split up and endeavor to corner him."

IT was ten minutes before Stewart had his quarry in range, and he fired wide to make him aware of the fact. Langley appeared on the other side.

The Japanese faced them placidly, a knife balanced on the tips of his fingers. He allowed them to approach within a few feet of him, then touched the naked blade with his lips.

"You will allow me the privilege of an honorable death, gentlemen?"

"Honorable be damned!" said Stewart.

Langley touched his sleeve.

"He means *hari-kari*. Better let him do it. It'll save a lot of trouble."

And then a peculiar thing happened.

A black mass dropped suddenly from the tree above them, smothering Kamaga with its enormous bulk.

Both men started backward.

"The *black spider!*" gasped the D. O.

They fled down the slope, with Kamaga's unearthly cry ringing in their ears and a belt of flame threatening to encircle them—and not once did they look back.

"They Who Play With Sacred Things——"

(*Continued from page* 16)

slap on the back to brace him up now.

"Don't let the thought of death ever trouble you, old man," I said. "Of course you don't want to lose your wife. But remember what I told you. All life is spirit. Death is a happy state. Spirits tell us, through their various ways of communicating with us, that the next world is a happy one. There is no pain, no thought of economic progress. They pick and choose their associates.

"Fact is, my friend, a man lives this life here on earth only to improve his mind so that he will derive better benefits from the next. If any one of us were to pass on right now, at this moment, we'd be far better off. This that I'm telling you is recorded by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, and other able, reputable men all over the globe."

FOR another hour I talked to him along this line, and when he rose to leave me, he was most profuse in his thanks. "You have opened my eyes to a new line of thought," he said. "Maybe now I'll be able to handle things more intelligently. A thousand thanks to you," and with that, he left.

If I had had any inkling of the terrible aftermath of that evening's talk, I would have kept Jennings locked up in my house against all statute law—even if I had to use brute force to do it. But how was I to know?

The following day I thought over all that Jennings had said. I tried to figure out a way to help him, a way that would be human and material. But it came to nothing. Then I turned to the viewpoint of the spiritual. But the result was the same. Nothing could be done, I realized, until I knew more about his case.

The next afternoon I went over to call on Jennings' wife. I was going for no outward reason except to get better acquainted. In reality, my object was to see for myself what sort of woman she was, and learn if possible what could cause Jennings' continued mental upset. If the cause could be remedied in a human way, I would see it. If I found the condition to be one of evil spirit influence—I at least would know it, and be able to advise him how to fight it.

Naturally, I would make no reference to Jennings' call of the night before, and I would give no indication that he had told me any of his affairs.

A maid showed me into a well-furnished reception room on the lower floor. This was my first step inside his house, and I was agreeably surprised to find the place well furnished in a conventional way, with easy chairs, brass Buddhas and other charms on the mantel, oil landscapes and girl's heads in attractive frames adorning the walls.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Jennings," I said as she entered. She was a tall, slender woman, of rather nervous make-up. I noted with a swift glance that she wore a lacy negligée, and was carrying a lighted cigarette. "I trust you will pardon this intrusion, but I felt that such close neighbors as we are, should know each other better."

She knitted her brows, and for a moment stood staring at me. She gave me no handshake of welcome, didn't invite me to sit down. It seemed as if she were trying to probe what I had said, to find some ulterior motive.

"I think I know you pretty well now, Mr. Kirkland," she replied, taking a deep inhalation from her cigarette. "Ed has told me he met you often on the train going in. You're something of a Spiritualist, aren't you?" A faint smile puckered the corners of her mouth. "You'll have to excuse my saying so, but you came at a most inopportune time."

No further hint was necessary. "My apologies, Mrs. Jennings. Perhaps you and Mr. Jennings will join me at dinner some night, soon?"

"Perhaps. Good day, Mr. Kirkland," and before I had reached the outer door, she had turned and was mounting the stairs.

This was something I didn't expect. Her voice had been hard in tone, and there was a hint of scorn in her manner. If Jennings hadn't told me there was something of an evil spiritual nature in her, I would have said that Mrs. Jennings' manner indicated she was hiding some guilty secret, and, in sending me away summarily, that she was protecting that secret from discovery by any outsider.

Well, maybe I had gone too far in my effort to help. After all, Jennings' affairs were his affairs, not mine.

Matters went along in their even way, so far as the Jennings' household was concerned, for about a week. I took a closer interest in them than formerly, of course. But I could find no lead that would solve the problem of Jennings' spirit visitations, or the vampirish thing that was wasting them away.

THERE came a night when I was awakened out of a sound sleep by voices. I made out a man's voice and a woman's. They came, it seemed, from my bedside not three feet away.

Instantly I was wide awake. The first thought that flashed through my mind was that here was Jennings' ghost come to spread its evil influence over me. Terrified, holding my breath lest I disturb the specter, I waited. Then reason came.

The voices were human enough, and they came from the head of a garage driveway that separates Jennings' house from mine. In my first moment of wakefulness I attached a supernatural meaning to them. And what I heard those next few seconds gave me a shock I wasn't prepared for.

"No—no, Jim. For the hundredth time no." This was the woman's voice. "For a year now you've made that proposal, and you know I can't run away with you. If Ed were anything but the poor sap he is, I'd go in a minute. You know that, darling. But I can't bear to hurt him that way. He's too good. He's too thoughtful and kind. That's just the trouble. I couldn't be happy with his misery on my mind always. No, Jim. I can't go away with you. Now don't speak of it again!"

"But, sweetheart, you love me, don't you?" It was a thick voice—husky. I could tell that the man had been drinking.

"You know it."

"Then I don't see——"

"Of course you don't. You can't. But I do. And that's what's keeping me thin—thinking of Ed. But nothing can keep me from loving you, can it, darling?"

There came a pause. Then.

"Run along, now. Good night, precious. Till tomorrow!"

I heard a measured footstep, a door slamming shut—silence.

The woman was Mrs. Jennings. I couldn't be mistaken, for the same hard tone of voice she had used with me, I heard coming through the dark that night. But who was Jim?

IT didn't matter. Much of Jennings' problem was clear to me now. Poor devil! It was the old story of the steady, regular husband being too consistently good for a cigarette-smoking, drink-loving wife.

But how account for the ghost? The "temperamental upsets" the woman had, were clear now. I suppose the situation of living with an adoring husband and loving some one else, was at times intolerable to her, and she blew up occasionally, because she couldn't help herself. But the phantom that haunted Ed Jennings——

It was some time before I fell asleep again. And when I awakened, the bright sunlight was flooding through my window. I looked at my watch, and saw that it was nearly half-past seven—barely time for me to catch the eighten.

On the train I ran into Jennings. He was slumped into a window seat, staring at the ceiling.

"Hello!" I said, taking the seat next to him. It was the first time I had seen him since he came over to my house that first night.

"Oh, hello, Kirkland."

Saying nothing else, he resumed his staring at the ceiling. For a moment I sensed that he too had heard the talk between his wife and her visitor the night before, and was trying to make up his mind what he should do.

"How've you been, old man? Everything all right?" I asked, taking no notice of his preoccupied manner.

"Oh, I've been all right. Nothing has happened. Say, Kirkland, I've been thinking a lot about what you told me." He paused, and a strange, far-away look came into his eyes. "All life is spirit—I can see it! I feel it! After death there is no worry—all is happiness!"

"Right!" I exclaimed, secretly pleased that he showed signs of profiting by what I had said to him.

BUT before I could go on, he had shrunk within himself once more, and that far-away, strange look had died out of his eyes.

The train pulled out, stopped at several way stations, then settled down for its long run before reaching New York. These early morning trains made no stops near New York, being rated as expresses for the twenty miles or so just outside the city.

We had left the last stop, and were just gathering speed for the express run, when Jennings aroused himself, and said suddenly: "No worries after death. You go right on living—always happy!"

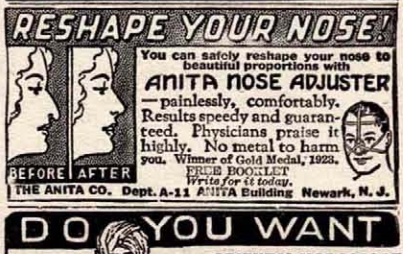
He wasn't addressing me. He was talking to himself. I paid no attention. Nor did I take notice when he spoke his thoughts aloud twice more before we reached the city. "No worry after death. All life is spirit. We'll always be happy!"

He left me with a nod. No further word was spoken.

I went through the business I had to attend to during the day, and arrived home about three in the afternoon. The day was gone, so far as concentrated work was concerned, so I settled down to read. I selected a new book on "occult theories and collected facts," written by an East Indian. And before I had gone very far, I came across the "astral body" theory, stated clearly and concisely, and giving at least a dozen examples taken from life, of evidences that the theory is something more than a theory—that it is actually a working fact.

"When the mind thinks, the soul follows the thoughts," I read. "Where the thoughts are, there will the soul be found. And at times the thought is so strong as to cause the soul to take visible shape, the shape, of course, of the physical body——"

Jennings! My mind focussed on him at once. Here was the explanation of



the phantom. His wife's thoughts were so centered on getting him out of her life, that her astral body projected itself to his bedchamber, to his front doorstep. It was this that haunted him. And she wouldn't leave him for fear of hurting him!

I knew better. Actually, she was a coward. She feared to hurt herself by running the risk of being hounded by conscience. What a scrambled affair that Jennings situation was!

Although I did not then realize it, the affair was to come to a swift and terrible end that very night.

It was the dinner hour. I was out back cleaning the spark plugs in my car. Suddenly my attention was drawn to the Jennings' dining room, which is at the rear of their house, behind a tall hedge. Loud voices attracted me, and though I couldn't see, I could hear plainly what went on.

It started with a crash of china. Then the voice of Mrs. Jennings:

"Oh, I hate you so! I don't know why I ever married you! No friends, no life in this hole—nothing! Three meals a day, mow the lawn on Saturday, read the paper on Sunday—and you're satisfied. Get out of my sight before I kill you!"

The hysteria back of those words, made me nervous. And, there was something malignant about them.

"But, my dear, I love you," I heard Jennings say. "If you haven't been happy with me here, you should have said so."

The quiet way he said it, wrung my heart for the man!

"Love you? I hate your smug face—your smug ways. Is your blood made of water? Haven't I let you know in a thousand ways this last year that I hate you—despise you——"

I waited to hear no more. It was too much like eavesdropping. I came into my own house and closed the door. My dinner had been prepared by my housekeeper but I had little appetite for it. After I had eaten I sat around awhile, in hopes Jennings would call.

But he never came. He went that night to a place far removed from the busy world.

I LEARNED later that it was a maid in the Jennings household who gave the alarm. Just as I sat down to eat, I heard hurried footsteps outside the house, and a loud rapping on the Jennings front door. Peering out, I saw two uniformed policemen. They were admitted—only to come out a few minutes later, leading Jennings. Mrs. Jennings lay within the house—dead.

They had to pass my house to get to Main Street. And as they walked him past my door, Jennings made them stop momentarily while he glanced in at the sitting-room window near which he had sat that first night. From behind a curtain in the dining room I saw him smile, heard his lips form the words:

"All life is spirit. No worry after death. After death—happiness."

And for a long moment he lingered, eyeing the house. The gathering crowd couldn't understand, nor could the two officers of the law make out what he meant. But to me it was a kind of benediction, a kind of warped gratitude he wanted to express to me. Then they led him away.

They charged him with first degree murder, but his case never went to trial. Poor Jennings' reason had snapped, and they put him where warmth, shelter and good food will be his lot while he lives.

From a gossiping maid the neighborhood learned that on that fatal night he found out about "Jim," and the terrible import snapped his reason. According to the maid, he had no censure, no vindictiveness. Only concern for his wife. And in his mental distraction he used a pair of strangler's hands to send her where he had come to know "there is no worry—all is happiness."

Nobody ever found out who the mysterious Jim was.

And for myself—logically, I had reason to take unto myself a share in the tragedy, for wasn't it I who had started his mind to work on the channels that brought him to ruin? Never mind my motive. Results force me to answer my own question with a positive "yes."

There is a saying that "they who play with sacred things, know not what they do." There never was a truer saying than this. In the case of Ed Jennings and his wife, the result was terrible to contemplate.

Yet that should not be our last thought. In poor Jennings' hopes, lies his future happiness.

All life *is* spirit. There are no worries after death.

"What A Man Sows——"

(*Continued from page* 39)

presence of yourself or some sane and —well, somebody whose nerves are in good shape, would ease the strain. . . . The fact is——"

He broke off suddenly.

Slowly he rose, his knees bent, hands outstretched like a man about to grapple with an adversary. He warded off an invisible blow and then closed with an invisible foe.

The veins on his forehead stood out —his breath came in gasps. The flesh of his neck was suddenly compressed as by strong fingers. Someone, or something I could not see, appeared to have him in a death grip.

I GLANCED at Roberson. He stood staring in terror. He dodged this way and that as though trying to get hold of this invisible thing. A thrill ran through me. A chill began to creep up my spine. I found myself shivering violently.

"Roberson, damn you—help me!" gasped Forber. His hands were at his throat, as though trying to tear away iron fingers that were choking him. Then he swung his right hand free and struck the air. But though I saw nothing, there was a sort of soundless impact. With each blow he grunted. Perspiration streamed down his face.

Forber had stooped down now, and was apparently trying to lift something. Whatever the thing was it had vigor for he suddenly staggered back, with his hand to his mouth. He appeared to have received a heavy blow on the jaw. His hand came away stained with blood.

Roberson sprang to his aid. Cursing under their breath the two men staggered about the room, struggling desperately with their invisible opponent. Presently they appeared to have overcome the *thing*. They were lifting something that struggled and they swayed this way and that as they carried the *presence*, or whatever it was, to the bed.

Then a horrible thing occurred. The bed bounced—as though a heavy weight had fallen on it! I began to think I had lost my senses. Forber's hands were busy at the head of the bed while Roberson sat at the end, holding the *thing* down.

Then I noticed that Forber's hands were bleeding. Little red marks appeared—like those made by a dog's bite. He sought to protect himself with the pillow. His curses were horrible.

Suddenly he looked over his shoulder at me. His eyes were bloodshot and terror stricken.

"For God's sake, Hardman, come here!" At that moment both men were hurled back to the centre of the room, but they returned to the struggle, and again possessed themselves of the accursed *thing*. This time Forber dragged it to the window, struggling desperately.

"Open it," whispered Forber, to Roberson. But Roberson fell at this moment and uttered a shriek of terror.

I stepped forward to pick him up, but something intervened. Something obstructed my hand as I sought to touch him, and with that, Forber fell heavily towards the window, while Roberson bumped to the floor—as though both men had been suddenly relieved of a strain. It was as if my touch had banished some malevolent energy, or influence.

"Thank God, it's gone!" gasped Forber. I can't be sure whether Forber said *"he's* gone" or whether he used the word *"it."* He came close to me. He laid his hand on my arm. Roberson caught me by the hand.

"You have got to stay with us," said Forber, very earnestly.

"If you will kindly explain what the whole thing means," I said, "I shall be glad to help you if I can but I'm dashed if I am going to stay in this room unless I have an explanation."

FORBER leaned over the desk still keeping his hand upon my shoulder. The next moment I was aware that he had taken a revolver from a drawer. I looked at him. His eyes were blazing with fear and excitement. I felt quite sure that I was in the presence of two

madmen who shared an hallucination, that had in part, conveyed itself to me.

But Roberson spoke with more calm than he had hitherto displayed.

"Shall I tell him?" he asked looking at Forber. Without waiting for an answer he said: "This thing has happened before. It began in Africa. On the night we went aboard at Mombasa I was just going to sleep when Forber started up with a shout. I jumped out of my bunk and put my hand on his shoulder. He was fighting something, but as soon as I touched him he laughed and said it was all right."

Forber interrupted by suggesting we should have a drink. With quick, jerky movements, he fetched a bottle of whiskey from the mantel. Then he got three glasses and a syphon of soda. I could see he hated to leave my side. He poured out a stiff drink with shaky hand. Then he turned to me and apologized for his bad manners. I helped myself, and Roberson did likewise. We all drank raising our glasses with trembling hands.

Though thoroughly shaken I could not help seeing the humor of three vigorous men petrified with fear and trembling at every sound. But I was in a hurry to go. I rose and put down my glass. I stepped toward the door and found Forber there before me, gun in hand.

"No you don't," he said brutally. "You are going to stay right here. You are a fine antidote for—for our troubles. You're the best I've struck and you are going to stop with us for a bit. I must have some rest. This has been going on long enough. I am all in. I'm done."

He pulled a chair to the door and sat down heavily. I pulled out my cigarette case and offered it to each. We lit up and I helped myself to another drink.

As I passed the writing desk I caught sight of the telephone. On the pretext of helping myself to some more soda, I leaned over the desk and lifted the receiver from its hook. As I resumed my seat I noticed that Roberson was sunk in sleep. Forber was blinking but still alert.

"Roberson is tired out," said Forber. He cleared his throat. "This business has knocked us all to pieces. The attacks get worse as our nerves get worse. I need somebody around whose nerves are in good condition. You are a good chap, Hardman. You see how easy it was when you intervened. You are all right, Hardman and we are damned—damned——" To my amazement the big fellow burst into tears.

AT this instant there was a knock at the door. Forber started up. He opened the door. A sleepy youth stood at the end of the passage, and gaped at us. Forber's appearance, bloodstained and dishevelled, startled him.

"Well, what do you want?" demanded Forber.

"The receiver is off," said the youth, "and folks are complaining 'cause the bell keeps ringing." Forber glanced at the desk. He strode across and replaced the receiver while I moved quickly into the hallway pulling the door behind me. I held the handle firmly. I heard Forber dash across the room.

"For Heaven's sake, Hardman," he gasped, "don't leave us!"

I told him through the door that I would be back in a minute and stepped into the lift. I told the boy to take me down quickly. At the bottom I bade him call up any doctor he knew and get him to come at once.

Then I dashed into the street.

At the end of St. James' Street, I saw two policemen chatting. I went up to them and suggested that something very queer was going on at No. —— Pall Mall and that they ought to investigate. My story seemed inadequate and the officers were not impressed.

I tried to improve on my first effort and eventually got them to come with me. With due dignity the law moved slowly along Pall Mall. The night porter had evidently fallen asleep and it took him a long time to open the door. The appearance of the police impressed him and he ran us to the top floor with such speed as the antiquated lift could make.

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I knocked at the door of flat No. 18. There was no response. I tried the handle and found it gave. We entered. The little hall leading to the sitting room was but a matter of three or four strides. The room was as I had left it—at first sight. Then I noticed that the desk had been pushed back against the wall and the whiskey, the glasses and syphon of soda lay on the floor. The bottle was broken. The bed in the alcove had been violently disturbed and beside it lay Forber.

He was on his face. His body was crumpled up and one arm lay in an unnatural position as though broken. I stepped aside to let the police make their examination.

Without comment the senior officer turned Forber over. His tongue lolled from his open mouth and his eyes stared glassily at us.

I looked round the room for Roberson. The window curtains that had been partially drawn were now torn aside entirely. One of them hung from a solitary hook. Behind it was Roberson hanging half out of the window.

We dragged him into the middle of the room. He was breathing with difficulty. In five minutes Roberson had recovered consciousness but he was no use to us. He could not talk coherently, but blabbed nonsense.

THE officer was admirably efficient. He called up a hospital and he called up the morgue. Then he turned to me.

I gave him the story as best I could. He was perfectly civil and respectful but I could see that he was in grave indecision when the ambulance arrived as to whether he ought not to send me along with Roberson to the alienists. I'm afraid I was not very articulate. The nervous excitement, plus the whiskey I had absorbed, left me somewhat hysterical perhaps.

However, I was allowed to return to my rooms after giving my address and certain impressive references.

Well, that's about all. I gave my testimony next day before a magistrate. Forber had been strangled. Roberson had been knocked out by a punch on the jaw. He is still alive I believe but has never left the asylum for mental cases. His brain gave way. Possibly he is still visited by what I can only call, the *"thing."*

* * *

THAT was the story as Hardman told it at Hetty Delville's dinner party. When I talked with him afterwards he added a few items that perhaps throw a little light on the matter.

When he picked up Roberson at the window he thought he saw someone looking in, but he was not sure, and the officer saw nothing. It was a dark oriental face with an expression of extraordinary concentration. When he left the house he overtook, in St. James' Street, a dark-skinned man who turned apprehensively upon him as he passed.

Hardman did not stop but he noticed the man's hands were soiled and his clothes dusty. After he had gone twenty paces he regretted his lack of enterprise. When he turned again the man had gone. He had spoken one word as Hardman passed him. At the time he thought it was a mere exclamation of surprise at the near collision. Afterwards Hardman seemed to accept the word as sounding like "Karma."

I reminded him that Karma is the word used by the Buddhists to indicate the law that "what a man sows, that shall he also reap." If there is anything in it, one may surmise that Forber and Roberson were the victims of vengeance.

This was borne out by one thing Hardman told me. A man he knew in Africa button-holed him in his club one day. After a few remarks about mutual acquaintances he referred to Forber. He spoke of a series of particularly atrocious cases of cruelty to natives, flogging and unspeakable practices. An inquiry was ordered. Evidence pointed to some white man, but the natives were reluctant to give testimony. Forber was mixed up in it but he appeared to have some influence and was permitted to clear out.

I don't offer this as a satisfactory explantation but if you believe in esoteric influences, thought waves, mental suggestion, or hypnotic processes—it may give you something to work on. Hardman would not go further than that.

It is guess-work, at best.

The Specter of the Yellow Quarter

(*Continued from page* 11)

became unconscious. I asked him about the whereabouts of Tom, Tsing's grandson, who formerly had lived with him. He replied that he did not know—that Tom had not been near the house for days.

Not only through the tales told me by the old man, but from other sources, I knew that Tom did most of his gambling at a Bowery resort operated by a man familiarly known as "Black Mike." Mike was of Italian extraction and very swarthy—hence his nickname. I had met him, and we were not unfriendly. Knowing that gambling was as necessary to the Chinese as food and that Mike was accredited with running a "square game," I had not had him driven from the district.

He came promptly in answer to my summons and talked freely. In recent weeks Tom had played much at his place. Luck had run against the youth, but Mike had permitted him to continue playing until he owed him $5,000. He had done this because, in the past, Tom had always made good. But this time no money was forthcoming, so Mike finally had insisted on at least a partial payment, threatening to collect on the I. O. U.'s from Tsing, unless the youth made good. Even this threat, however, failed to produced coin.

Then Mike had taken the slips to Suing Lum—better known in the quarter as "Chino Joe," who long had been on intimate terms with both Tom and his grandfather—and had asked his advice. The upshot of the meeting was that Suing Lum purchased the I. O. U.'s for $3,500 cash and Mike promptly washed his hands of the matter. He had heard that Tom had disappeared, but could tell nothing of his whereabouts.

I KNEW Chino Joe fairly well. He was the very prosperous proprietor of one of the quarter's best curio and jewelry shops and lent money on the side. I found him in his shop on the extreme edge of the quarter. He expressed the most profound sorrow over his old friend's death and hoped that his murderers would be apprehended and punished.

Without hesitancy he told me about the transaction involving Tom. He expressed warm friendship for the boy, insisting that his worst fault was imitating the white gamblers. He showed me the I. O. U.'s purchased from Mike, explaining that he had obtained them so they would not fall into Tsing's hands. He had sent for Tom, advised him to go to some other city and recoup by honest labor, promising to hold the pledges until such time as the youth could redeem them.

He added that he did not know where Tom was but believed that as soon as he read of his grandfather's death in the newspapers, he would put in an appearance. When questioned about Bow Ming, he refused to talk, saying he never had seen her or discussed her with Tsing, considering her presence in the old man's home his private affair. Through quarter gossip he understood that Tom was to marry the girl. He had never heard of other suitors.

I went to the restaurant of Sam Hack, one flight up over a curio shop. I had known Sam for years—in fact, had helped him out of a certain difficulty with the government, which had made him my friend for life. Since taking over my Deputy's job I had renewed his acquaintance, and under pledge of secrecy had told him of my connection with the police.

There were but a few rain-soaked stragglers in the place when I entered. Only a nod of recognition passed as I went to a table near a window which commanded a view of the tenement opposite, and ordered a light meal. By the time Sam was ready to serve me, the room was deserted, save for us two, and we could not be observed by the cooks behind the swinging doors.

I was still nibbling at my food and striving to fasten upon the thing at which he had hinted, when a series of high pitched cries from the street below snapped me back into my surroundings. Looking out, I noted two or three Chinese huddled at the curb, chattering excitedly and pointing. My eyes sought the place they indicated—the windows of the flat of Tsing Lai Low.

INSTANTLY I sprang to my feet, the pulses in my head pounding, my heart thumping, and pressed my face close to the pane. For, directly across from me, in a window of the murdered man's living quarters, stood Tsing Lai Low—or his exact counterpart—the glare from the electric light before the house showing full upon him as he stood silhouetted against the drapes that concealed the room beyond.

It seemed as though his eyes met mine full, though I could not be certain, because of the intervening distance and the numbness which clutched me. But, as I looked, he raised his right hand, palm toward me, and pressed his fingers down, the Chinese method of beckoning. The next instant he was gone—disappearing into nothingness.

I jerked on my overcoat as I ran, tore past the befuddled officer in the tenement doorway and bounded up the steps, three at a clip.

What a sight met my eyes there. The place told its own story. When I last had seen it, everything had been in order as my assistants and I had rearranged it. Now everything was overturned from end to end. The killers had returned. Again they had searched the place. Whether they had succeeded this time I could only guess.

How had they entered? Surely not as before, by one of the doors opening from the hallway, for, Clancy had been on guard there. Quickly I ran from room to room, turning on the lights, examining the barred windows and rattling the knob of each door leading to the outer passage. All were locked. Yet every room had been ransacked. Finally I reached the kitchen. The curtains of both windows were down. I jerked one up. The catch was properly turned and I could see the bars beyond in place. I leaped to the other and up went the curtain. That window was unlocked. I flung up the sash. Three bars had been cut away, leaving an opening more than sufficient for one or several persons to enter.

USING my flash, I examined the sill. There were wet stains upon it, undoubtedly made by the feet of those who had entered. I swung the light wider and the means of entry were further explained. The circle of light fell upon a swinging ladder of silk rope, the upper end of which must have been fastened to the chimney, or some other projection upon the roof.

Quickly I pieced together what must have occurred. The intruders were willing to take desperate chances to obtain something which they had failed to locate when they had killed Tsing. Knowing we could not keep track of all the yellow men of the quarter, they had spied upon us, possibly coming and going as residents of the house until they had learned where our guards were placed, and that the murder rooms were vacant. Then, knowing they could not enter from the hallway, they had gained admission from the rear.

But, while searching, they had been interrupted by something which had frightened them. Was it the cries of the Chinese in the street, or had they too seen the "ghost?" As that word flashed into my brain, I shook my head impatiently. No, it could not have been that.

Determined to search every possible hiding place in that flat before I departed again, I despatched Clancy to the hallway, instructing him to see that I was not interrupted unless something of vital importance occurred. Then I set about my task.

At various times in the past there had been occasions when it had been necessary for me to search thoroughly the quarters of various suspects for incriminating things. I was thoroughly familiar with the *modus operandi* and was confident that, with unlimited time at my disposal, I would be able to cover every inch of the place so completely that nothing would escape me. What the intruders had been after was a mystery. But I was confident that it was neither money nor jewels.

My search lasted for many hours, until long after gray dawn. I hunted every nook and cranny, behind pictures and hangings and under rugs. I examined the desk and all other receptacles for hidden drawers. Some such I located, but the killers had been before me and had emptied them. I went over every inch of the closets, ripped open pillows and mattresses, tore upholstery from the furniture. I even looked into the kitchen utensils and poured vegetables and other foods from their containers. But not a single written paper of any kind did I find.

WHILE striving to determine at what point to renew my search, I recalled that Poe and other famous writers, when chronicling the thefts of famous documents, had caused the thieves to leave their plunder in exposed places as the surest means of keeping them from those who tried to recover them. Such craft was associated only with unusually keen brains.

Now Tsing was a logician of a high order, and he might have tried a similar ruse. My eyes began sweeping the room, for a bit of paper stuck carelessly into the frame of a picture or in some other exposed place. I noted nothing which appeared significant. Finally I studied the things near me. Upon a taboret at my elbow stood an ornate, covered, china bowl. I knew it contained sugared fruits, for I had removed the cover in my search. Still——I reached over, reversed the dish and poured its contents upon the stand.

Instantly I uttered a low cry of triumph. For, wedged at the bottom, was a folded piece of finest parchment which, when opened, I found to be covered with a mass of small Chinese characters. And, in one corner, was a seal stamped with the Tsing family crest—probably made by the big ring which the wise man wore constantly. Though I couldn't translate even one of the characters, I was convinced that I had recovered the key to the mystery—the document for which Tsing had been knifed. He never would have gone to the trouble to conceal it so cleverly had the paper not been of the greatest importance.

Placing the document in my inside pocket, I left the tenement after ordering Clancy to remain inside the flat un-

Preparing for

Motherhood

By Bernarr Macfadden

NO matter how strong the mother instinct may be, no matter how desperately she may long for babies, no woman can think of childbirth without the cold hand of dread gripping at her heart.

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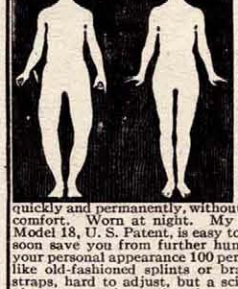

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til relieved. Then I hastened to the office of the Police Commissioner, detailed all I had done to date and showed him the previous paper.

The translation of the document took but a few minutes. It was even more important in text than I had anticipated.

Briefly, it disclosed that Bow Ming had a fortune of more than a half million American dollars coming to her, at her marriage—at the disposition of old Tsing—this money having been left to her in this manner by her father, a former mandarin, at his death. But it appeared that rich and powerful men of the yellow quarter had learned of the beautiful and wealthy girl in the seclusion of the home of Tsing Lai Low, and these had begged permission to bid for her hand. They had been refused, because it was Tsing's wish that Tom Low should marry the girl.

When Tom had disappeared, these wealthy suitors, believing their favored rival was definitely out of the running, had resumed their efforts. It was then that old Tsing had prepared a will providing for the girl's future under the guardianship of the leaders of the Four Brothers, at his death. Right here was the nigger in the wood-pile.

MY problem then was to learn who these suitors had been. I realized the task was well nigh impossible, unless I could locate Bow Ming, for from no other native could I hope for assistance.

Then came the third night following my discovery of the will. I had been in a fever most of the day. But some hunch—compelling, though based upon no reason—urged me to continue my quest without let-up. And, though dusk brought with it a furious fall of dry snow, almost as impenetrable as fog, and despite my aching limbs, I headed for the quarter. Floundering through the drifts made me desperately tired. So, after learning from the tenement guards that nothing had transpired, I trudged wearily into Sam Hack's place. Noting my condition, he gave me a hot drink, pungent with native liquor, then persuaded me to lie down in his tiny bedroom.

IT was after midnight when I awoke. The snow was still falling. Ignoring Sam's pleadings that I remain, I started for home, for my head throbbed with pain, my legs shook and I feared I was on the verge of collapse. As I floundered through the door to the street, I discovered I could see but a few feet before me. A man or two passed, only dark blurs identifying their presence. Swinging sharply, I headed toward the Bowery. I stumbled across the curb and all but fell. I was in the roadway, in drifts up to my knees.

The dull, raucous squawk of a horn roused me. I stepped aside just in time to escape a cab. Then I plunged on again, striving to reach the opposite side of the street. But I failed to locate the curb. I twisted and zig-zagged, but met no obstruction. I was lost, befuddled, snow blinded—unable to make my way across a narrow New York street. The thought was so fantastic that I laughed aloud.

Then, right before me, suddenly through the falling flakes, appeared the counterpart of old Tsing Lai Low, as I had last seen him in life, though with features set and frowning. But I was not afraid. And in wonderment I noted that no snow had settled upon his silken robes or his flat-topped cap.

"Come!" he said. The next instant I felt my wrist seized in a firm grip and Tsing turned and dragged me after him in a twisting route through the storm. On, on we went. It seemed hours. My feet lagged. I could scarcely lift them.

Then, without warning, he brought me to a sudden halt. Strangely enough now, I could see quite plainly through the falling snow. We were before a building. Old Tsing shook me sharply and pointed straight before us. "Look!" he said.

I noted two great doors—unusual doors, with many panels, rimmed with red. I looked closer. The doors were weather-beaten and old.

Then I realized that the grip upon my wrist was gone. I glanced about me. Old Tsing had disappeared. I laughed. My addled brain had been playing me tricks. Still, there were buildings before me. By keeping close to them I could reach a corner—maybe find a policeman. My eyes were closing. I staggered. There was a wild rushing in my ears. The snow had gone. Everything was getting black——

When I regained consciousness, I found myself in bed, in a hospital, a nurse bending over me. I tried to talk. But she forced me to drink and again I dropped off. When I awoke I felt better. There was neither fever nor pain, only great weakness. The nurse told me I had been there three days, delirious most of the time. A policeman who knew me had found me in the Bowery, slumped beside an "L" pillar, and had sent me to the hospital in an ambulance. If I remained quiet I would be able to leave soon—in two days perhaps.

I remained quiet, all right. And I left in two days. But, though in that time I thought often of the thing which had appeared and guided me in the storm, I did not try to reason out what it was. It might have been a ghost, or a mad imagining of my fever-racked brain. But it didn't matter—then. The only point which possessed significance for me was this: The first time I had seen the counterfeit of Tsing, it had beckoned me, caused me to make the search which had located the old man's will. In the storm it had led me to a place which I would be able to identify by the peculiar doors. And I was determined to find those doors. Any idea that they did not exist, that I had imagined them, never entered my mind.

From my home I telephoned the Commissioner. He was glad to learn of my recovery and reported that no progress in the case had been made. Apparently the mysterious doors must be located before we could make a new start. That night, accompanied by Clancy, I searched every foot of the three streets constituting Chinatown, and failed to locate them. But I did not lose faith in their existence. So, before retiring, I located the policeman who had found me in the storm and learned that the exact place where I was picked up was in the centre of a block of shabby structures, a full half mile from the yellow quarter. I reasoned that I probably had seen the doors just before collapsing there.

The morning after I was at the point almost with the coming of daylight. My hunch proved 100 per cent. In less than five minutes I had located what I sought—a dilapidated, three-story structure, obviously used as a storehouse. However, half of the lower floor had been reconstructed into a shop, which was occupied by a tailor. The other half showed only two large doors, held shut by a staple and padlock. In an effort to freshen the front of the first floor, these doors had been painted a dull gray, relieved by red stripes.

From the tailor I obtained the name and address of the owner, an attorney in lower Broadway. Upon learning my official standing, the latter replied readily to my queries. The place, for some years, had been rented for storage purposes to a Chinese named Suing Lum, who ran a curio shop in Chinatown. The mention of Chino Joe gave me a bit of jolt.

LEAVING him, I hastened to the quarter, located two detectives on duty and took them with me to the mysterious building.

Still there, I had scarcely completed that business when I received another jolt—word by telephone that Tom, old Tsing's grandson, had been arrested at the Grand Central Terminal as he was alighting from a train.

When he reached Headquarters—where he greeted me like a long-lost friend, but betrayed no sign that his arrest worried him—I had him taken to my office and sent his captors outside until I had interviewed him. He told his story frankly and quickly. After leaving New York he had gone directly to Denver, where a distant cousin lived. His object in going there, where he was unknown, was to go to work in earnest, establish himself under the eyes of one who knew both himself and his grandfather and prove that this time his reform was genuine.

"Is Chino Joe a friend of yours?" I inquired.

"No," he shot back, frowning. I told him what the man had told me about the gambling I. O. U.'s. "That's a lie," he said. "Joe hates me. He wanted to marry Bow Ming——"

"What! Was he one of her suitors?"

"Yes. The most persistent. He even threatened my grandfather because he would not consent that he should marry her. Not once, but many times. He even tried to buy me off. Then he tricked me. His friends got me to gambling again. I lost heavily. He bought my I. O. U.'s and threatened to take them to my grandfather if I did not leave the city. I shouldn't have done it, but I was in a panic. I feared to face my protector after I had lied to him—and to Bow Ming. So I went West—to prove by hard work I was truly repentant. I wanted to earn money to buy back the notes. To——" He stammered, stopped, then buried his face in his hands.

Right then the solution of the case appeared as plain as daylight. Chino Joe had not only tricked Tom, but me. What a slick heathen! I swore to myself as I recalled how easily he had duped me. He had driven Tom into hiding. He had demanded the girl. Tsing had refused and announced he would prepare a document which, if anything happened to him, would put the Four Brothers in charge of the girl. Joe had struck quickly thereafter—killed Tsing and kidnaped Bow Ming. But he hadn't found the will—the document which would have protected her from him, even if he had squirmed out of a murder charge.

Then came a new thought which sent me cold all over. Food, which I had learned was being taken to the storehouse—was for Bow Ming! Telling Tom I would return soon and bring about his release, I turned him over to the waiting detectives, gathered three huskies from the Bomb Squad and started full speed for the warehouse in a department automobile.

But we were halted as we approached it, by one of the men on guard. He was just about to telephone me. Chino Joe had just driven up in a taxicab and entered the building. He appeared to be in a great hurry. I cursed the Chinese in good, round United States. The information meant that one of his spies had learned of the arrest of Tom and he had hastened to Bow Ming's prison to spirit her away, or to force her to tell him where Tsing had hidden his will.

LEARNING that the men previously detailed by me had the place surrounded—back, front and from the roofs—so that none could leave it, I gave the order that they were to move in closer. Then, at a signal from me, which would be a pistol shot, they were to rush the place from all sides. Leaving one of those I had brought, directly before the storehouse door, I headed for the tailor shop.

Its proprietor nearly collapsed at sight of my badge. But, without explaining, I put him in charge of a detective and with the third, tore open the trap and descended to the cellar. Our flashes played on all sides, over and behind the great piles of boxes. Chino Joe was not hidden among them. Next we moved to the rear. The door leading into the yard was securely fastened. The Chinese had left by some other means—probably through a passage leading into the rear shack. It took time, but finally we located what we sought. It was a passage, about five feet in diameter, hidden by a huge crate cunningly held by hinges which permitted it to be moved like a door.

Instructing my companion to stand guard at the entrance so that I could not be interrupted from the rear, I stumbled ahead through the passage, trying to make no noise and keeping the circle of my flash near my feet. My journey seemed endless. Then suddenly I heard mumbled cries—the voices of a man and woman. Gripping my revolver, I increased my speed. I reached the foot of a flight of rickety steps, stopped and listened. Sounds from above were plainly audible. A man was shouting, in Chinese. A woman was crying. Then came shrieks and what I took to be the sound of blows.

I covered the steps in bounds. The door at the top was unlocked. I was in the hallway of the shack. The voices came from the floor above. Apparently the beating had stopped. The girl was crying and pleading. The man was replying angrily. I covered the flight to the floor above speedily, hugging the wall to prevent creaking of the steps. Such noise as I made was drowned by the voices above.

I was at the door, stooped and looked into the keyhole. But a key in the lock, a cheap affair of an old type, blocked me. I noted that a bar which had held the door fast from the outside leaned against the wall. Then came another angry cry from the man, another blow and a wild shriek from the girl. That last sent me crazy with anger. Without pausing to summon help, I placed my revolver against the keyhole and fired. It was the quickest way to break in. A crash of falling metal followed the gun's report—then startled cries.

I threw my shoulder against the door. It gave way. The next instant I was inside, my pistol poised. Chino Joe stood over the cowering Bow Ming, a murderous-looking whip in his hand.

"Drop that!" I roared, keeping him covered while I helped the girl to her feet. The whip fell to the floor and he crossed his arms over his chest.

"What do you mean by breaking into my place?" he stammered, fighting to regain his composure.

"Only this, you yellow crook! I'm arresting you for kidnapping Bow Ming and—for the murder of Tsing Lai Low!"

His cruel features turned a sickly grey at the announcement, but he tried to force a grin. He shot a glance about as if seeking some means of escape. But, right then to our straining ears came the sound of the police closing in—from the yard—the hallway below—a dozen points.

SUDDENLY Chino Joe straightened up and shrugged. "In my country," he said slowly, "there is a proverb that 'patience and a mulberry leaf will make a silk gown.' You have the patience. You win. But—you shall not take Suing Lum!"

With a gesture as swift as the dart of a cobra, his right hand jerked from his left sleeve. At the flash of steel I leaped to stop him. But, too late. The dagger apparently had gone to its mark. He stumbled and dropped as I reached him Then he coughed and for a moment tried feebly to fight me off. The next instant the slayer of old Tsing straightened out at my feet—dead.

That about completes the story—except that we did find dope hidden in the warehouse, though we did not succeed in apprehending Chino Joe's confederates.

As for Tom and Bow Ming—they were married within the year.

Do I really believe that I saw Tsing Lai Low's phantom standing at the window that night in the yellow quarter?

I can't tell. I can't say that I didn't. It has me guessing.

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Were You Born In December?

(*Continued from page* 58)

strange vibrations of Uranus. This star was discovered in 1781 and it has the quality of always doing the unexpected. It upsets our judgment—makes us act upon impulse—and, as the Sagittarian at the best of times is impulsive, and inclined to promise more than it is possible to perform, the greatest self-control will be needed to combat the effect of these vibrations. If your birth occurred within this period, try to keep this in mind each day. It will help you.

URANUS gives brilliancy of intellect, invention, and originality. He rules over electricity, and radio, and all the latest scientific inventions. The present age is called the Uranian Age because the world is coming more and more under the influence of this weird planet. It is the star of astrology, occultism and genius, but it also governs all the cranks and eccentrics of the world. Sometimes it brings separations, and sudden calamities.

If you are a Canceranian, born in the early part of July, or a Scorpion, born in November, Uranus promises unexpected gain, or some very pleasant surprise for you. For, your vibrations are now in harmony with his powerful rays. If, therefore, you are the child of emotional Cancer, or magnetic Scorpion, you may make a sudden change which will turn out very much to your advantage. You may form a new friendship which will change the whole current of your life, or, this influence may materialize as sudden gain through investment, or speculation.

And, whatever comes, will come to you suddenly. This is a good time for you to travel—to join new societies or to associate yourself with some progressive movement, because the Uranian influence seems to work better through numbers of people than through any one individual.

IF your birth occurred at about this time, you will probably develop, or now possess, great application and perseverance. Do not grumble if you feel that you are overloaded with work. You will be able to handle it and it will be the means of leading you to success.

April and August are the luckiest months of the year for those born during the first three weeks of December.

There is one thing you must not forget, and it is this: the stars do not make your destiny. You control your own life—within certain limitations. But, the stars do tell you whether the road of life along which you have to travel, is clear or not.

Therefore, if along life's road-way you find yourself faced with obstacles of all kinds and are feeling depressed and discouraged—remember, this is only a passing phase.

Remember also, that when you learn to see a little way ahead, and prepare yourself, the way becomes easier, and success is brought within your grasp.

LUMINOUS PAINT

Make Your Watches, Clocks, Etc., Visible by Night

The very latest discovery in the scientific world. Hitherto, practically unobtainable except at an exorbitant price, we have at last succeeded in producing this remarkable LUMINOUS PAINT, which, applied to the surface of any article, **emits rays of white light,** rendering it **perfectly visible** in the dark. **THE DARKER THE NIGHT, THE MORE BRILLIANT IT SHINES.** Quite simple to use. Anyone—you can do it. A little applied to the dial of your watch or clock will enable you to tell the time by night. You can coat the push buttons or switch plates of your electric lights, match boxes, and innumerable other articles; make your own Luminous Crucifixes, Luminous Rosaries, etc. Bottle containing sufficient for several small articles, **Price 25c.** Larger sizes **50c** and **$1** postpaid. **Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. 852, Racine, Wis.**

Microphone Transmitter Button

$1.00 POST-PAID

You can easily make a highly sensitive detectophone by using this Transmitter Button to collect the sound waves. You can build your own outfit without buying expensive equipment. It is simple and inexpensive. You can install an outfit in your home and hear conversations being held all over the house. You can connect up different rooms of a hotel. This outfit was used by secret service operatives during the war. It is being used on the stage. It is ultra-sensitive and is the greatest invention in micro-phones. You can mount the button almost anywhere—card board boxes, stove pipes, stiff calendars, on the wall behind a picture frame, etc. The Button is so light and small it cannot be detected. Persons can be overheard without suspecting it. You can listen in on conversations in another room. A deaf person in the audience can hear the speaker. Connected to phonograph, piano or other musical instrument, music can be heard hundreds of feet away. Button may be used to renew telephone transmitters; often makes an old line "talk-up" when nothing else will. The ideal microphone for radio use; carries heavy current and is extremely sensitive. Amplifies radio signals. Countless other similar uses will suggest themselves. Experimenters find the Button useful for hundreds of experiments along the lines of telephones, amplifiers, loud speakers, etc. Many fascinating stunts may be devised, such as holding the button against the throat or chest to reproduce speech without sound waves. $5.00 is given to anyone who sends in a new suggestion for the use of the Button providing the manufacturers find it suitable for use in their literature. **PRICE $1.00 POSTPAID, ANYWHERE.**

JOHNSON SMITH & CO., Dept. 852, Racine, Wis.

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With a bunch of these bills, it is easy for each person of limited means to appear prosperous by flashing a roll of these bills at the proper time and peeling off a genuine bill or two from the outside of the roll, the effect created will be found to be all that can be desired. **Prices, postpaid: 40 Bills 20c, 125 for 50c, or $3.50 thousand postpaid.**

Wonderful X-Ray Tube

A wonderful little instrument producing optical illusions both surprising and startling. With it you can see what is apparently the bones of your fingers, the lead in a lead pencil, the interior opening in a pipe stem, and many other similar illusions. A mystery that no one has been able to satisfactorily explain. **Price 10c, 3 for 25c, 1 dozen 75c. Johnson Smith & Co.**

Good Luck Ring

Quaint and Novel Design

A VERY striking and uncommon ring. Silver finish, skull and crossbone design, with two brilliant, flashing gems sparkling out of the eyes. Said by many to bring Good Luck to the wearer, hence its name. **Good Luck Ring.** Very unique ring that you will take a pride in wearing. **ONLY 25 CENTS.**

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JUST LIKE ORDINARY CIGARETTES. BUT SUCH REAL STARTLERS! The box contains ten genuine cigarettes of excellent quality. They appear so real, but when each cigarette is about one-third smoked, the victim gets a very great surprise as it goes off with a loud **BANG!** A great mirth provoker yet entirely harmless. **Price 25c per box.**

Popular Watch Charms

15c

ONLY 3 for 40c; $1.35 doz.

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Novelty Badges

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This well made and effective Pistol is modelled on the pattern of the latest type of Revolver, the appearance of which alone is enough to scare a burglar, whilst, when loaded, it will probably prove just as effective as a revolver with real bullets, without the danger to life. It takes the standard .22 Calibre Blank Cartridges, that are obtainable most everywhere. Even the most timid women can use it with perfect safety and frighten a thief without risk to herself or anyone else. **A Great Protection Against Burglars, Tramps and Dogs.** You can have it lying about without the danger attached to other revolvers. We sell large numbers around the 4th of July. Well made of solid Metal. **PRICE ONLY $1.00 Postpaid. Blank Cartridges 22-cal., shipped by express only, 50c per 100. Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. 852, Racine, Wis.**

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Place a very small amount of this powder on the back of your hand and blow it into the air, and everyone in the room or car will begin to sneeze without knowing the reason why. It is most amusing to hear their remarks, as they never suspect the real source, but think they have caught it one from the other. Between the laughing and sneezing you yourself will be having the time of your life. **For parties, political rallies, car rides or any place at all where there is a gathering of people, it is the greatest joke out. Price 10c or 3 for 25c**

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