HOW I LAID A GHOST

By R. J. Lee

One morning I received a message from a friend asking me to meet him in the evening, his family having been recently disturbed by certain mysterious noises, respecting which he wished to ask my advice. I waited upon him at the time appointed, when he told me he had only been in the house about a week, having but recently purchased it from its former occupant.

Nothing strange had been noticed for the first night or two, but about the third morning his wife was aroused early from her sleep by a noise as if some one was in pain.

Thinking it was, prhaps, one of the children ill, he went to their room, but they were sound asleep; neither did it proceed from the servants' apartments. On returning he found his wife greatly terrified at the presence of some one in the room.

She had not seen anything, but had heard the rustling as of a lady's dress. After waiting for a few moments in silence, he heard the same noise, which sounded to him as if a female had passed from the dressing-room, through their own, and along the corridor to the stairs. There was nothing visible, but the sweeping of the dress and the pitiful moaning were distinctly audible.

In vain did he search the house, for he could find no explanation of his mysterious phenomenon, until, at last, very much against his will, he was compelled to acknowledge that, if the house was not exactly haunted, there was something he could not make out.

This conviction had been strengthened the next day by one of the servants calling his attention to a large stain on one of the floors at the top of the house, having the appearance of blood, of which a great quantity must have been spilled, as it formed a large patch near the centre, and ran in several directions toward the side of the room.

Unlike most cases of ghosts he had heard of, the noises continued in the day-time as well as night; and so frightened were the domestics at the disturbance that it was with difficulty they could be induced to remain in the place after he had sent his wife and children away.

We went over the house together, and carefully inspected the various rooms—particularly the one in which the stain appeared, and the bed-room where most of the noises were heard. After we had completed our survey he asked me if I could offer any opinion as to the cause of the annoyance.

"Not unless I hear it," I answered. "I have in several cases succeeded in putting a stop to such things, and, if you are willing, I will spend a night here, after which I may, perhaps, be in a position to say something more about it."

"If you think you can in any way give us peace and quiet," said he, "the house with all it contains is at your service. because if it should get abroad that it is 'haunted,' its value to me will be nil, for I cannot live here myself, and how could I expect others?"

"Do you know if the former occupier was in any way disturbd?"

"He says not."

"How long did he live here?"

"Some five or six years, I believe."

"Do you know whether there have been any complaints from any one before he came?"

"No."

"Have you said anything to him about the blood?"

"I asked him if he had seen it; but he knew nothing whatsoever about it."

"Did you show it to him?"

"No; he said he would call in some time and have a look at it."

"Can you make arrangements for me to be alone in the house to-morrow night?"

"At what time?"

"The whole night, from—let me see! I will be here at about eight o'clock."

"And do you mean to stay in the house all night by yourself?"

"Yes! Why not? If there were more than one, the ghost might be afraid to show itself."

"I would rather it be you than I, then. But, if you wish it, you shall have it so."

Accordingly, at the time appointed on the following evening, I found Mr. H. himself in the house. The servants, after providing everything for my comfort during my watch, had taken their departure a short time before.

"Have you heard anything further since I was here?"

"Yes, several times during the day; but the noise is not nearly so loud as it was at first. I have been wondering whether any one can be confined in that room secretly. I have heard of people having been built in recesses alive, and the moaning seems to be like one gradually growing weaker, and that would account for us hearing the noises in the daytime as well as at night."

"We may soon ascertain if such a thing has been done," I replied, "by making a careful examination of the room, to see whether there is space for the carrying out of such a purpose."

We went up to the room, which was situated at the front of the house. At one end of it was the dressing-room, already mentioned, at the other was a second bed-room, and along the side of it ran the corridor communicating with the other apartments on the same floor, at the end of which were the stairs leading to the upper story.

At a glance we could see that the idea suggested was impracticable, and it was abandoned without further search.

We visited all the rooms, in each of which I left a small light burning, saw that the windows were securely fastened, and went back to make an inspection of the ground floor.

All being satisfactory, and Mr. H. assured that I was not needing anything else, he handed me the kays, and, wishing me success in my undertaking, bade me "good-night," and left me alone to meet the ghost.

After his departure, my first business was to make the policeman on duty in the neighborhood acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and got him to call in two or three times during the night, as it might be I should require some assistance.

Having done this, and regaled myself with the refreshments provided, I selected a volume from the book-case and repaired to the haunted chamber.

It was the first week in September, and the day had been very warm, so I threw one of the windows open, drew an easy-chair to the table, both of which had been brought in for my convenience, and commenced the perusal of my book. I depended on the lights for sufficient warmth in the cool hours of the morning, as the heat of a fire might induce me to sleep while I was waiting for the visitor.

I had been reading about half an hour when my attention was attracted by a low, plaintiff moan, several times repeated. It sounded as if it proceeded from a wardrobe standing in a recess between the chimney and window.

I went very silently to the spot and placed my ear against the door. Yes! it certainly came frm there. I turned the key and opened it, but discovered nothing. I moved the wardrobe a little forward at one end to see if there was anything at the back.

No! Perhaps it came from the next room, so I made my way there, but with like result. In fact, I could not even hear the sound.

I came back, but in my absence, the moaning had ceased; so, with nothing to guide me, I had to wait for its recurrence before I could attempt any discovery.

I had determined to pass the midnight hour in the room where the blood had been found, and just before twelve laid my book aside and repaired to that apartment, which was immediately overhead.

After waiting half an hour, I took a turn through the house and finally came back to my old quarters, having met with no success.

Another hour passed, and still no result. I began to think the haunting was over for the night, and my watching had ended in failure, but, just as the morning was breaking, the same cry reached my ear, accompanied by a sound which might fitly be described as the rustling of a dress.

Still it proceeded from the same place, and again I examined the wardrobe. Then I opened the door at the top of the grate communicating with the chimney, to see if anything was there. No, nothing was to be seen.

Now it sounded as if in the room above, but a journey there proved as fruitless as before.

When returning, however, the noise seemed nearer and louder than I had heard it, as though the ghost was in the room I had recently left, and then I remembered Mr. H. had told me it was in the early morning his wife had been first alarmed.

Very quietly I reached the foot of the stairs and passed along to the door, keeping on the opposite side of the corridor, so as to shield myself as much as possible by avoiding the glare of the lights. Still there was nothing visible.

I entered the room, and could distinctly hear the moaning, but the ghost did not appear. I turned out the lights and then in a few moments saw something come from the bottom of the bed towards the door. Slowly it moved and made no noise but the low, pitiful wail, as though in great trouble.

I spoke, and immediately it stood still and looked round as though imploring my help, but spoke not. I approached, but it stood its ground, and allowed me even to touch it. We were neither of us afraid of the other.

In less than half an hour I had learned as much as I could of its sad story, having, in the meantime ministered to its comfort as far as I then could, after which it vanished from my sight never more to haunt that house.

Early in the morning Mr. H. announced himself by a good pull at the bell, being anxious to know the result of my labors.

I told him I had seen the ghost, and, having learned its story, had succeeded in laying it; but I could not give then a full explanation, inasmuch as there were still one or two points upon which I needed to be satisfied. I promised, however, that in the course of a week I would tell him all I knew.

Before that time had expired, Mrs. H. and the children returned home, and had almost overcome the alarm the ghost had caused them, but were still very impatient for me to go and tell them what I had discovered.

At last the day arrived, and I met Mr. and Mrs. H. and their two eldest children.

They first assured me, on their part, that thy had not heard the least disturbance since I had left the house, neither by day nor night.

"Then," I said, "I will give you my story, which is very short, indeed. Had it not been for the noises in your room, I have not the least hesitation in saying that you would not have attached any importance to the stain on the floor in the upper room, which I find now is due to the upsetting of a bottle of furniture polish, and not to any murder you had an idea had been committed. This was the point upon which I was wanting information and which I have satisfactorily proved. As to the cause of the noises, as the morning was breaking, after one unsuccessful endeavor to discover it, I opened the door of the grate in your room, and while I was up stairs, the ghost descended the chimney, where it had been confined from the commencement of your alarm, and when I returned to the room I found, not the shadowy ghost of the human form, as you had believed, but, in veritable flesh and blood, I beheld—a pigeon! I gave it a saucer of water and some bread, which was greedily devoured, and after a short time growing stronger, and manifesting a desire to be free, I opened the window and it escaped."

They looked at me in astonishment as I finished my story, and could scarcely believe that such a trifle had caused them so much alarm.

"And is that really all?" asked Mrs. H.

"All, madam," I replied. "I can assure you that is how I laid the ghost."

—AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME

Stock Easily Moved.

1st Business Man—"So, we can't hold a candle to the kind of goods you sell? Must be easy to keep your stock moving then?"

2nd Ditto—"Would be if you held a candle to it—we sell gasoline."

Below the Belt.

She was newly engaged, and was confiding in her dearest friend. "Do you know, dear," she said, "Tom and I understand each other perfectly. He tells me everything he knows, and I tell him everything I know, too."

"Really," exclaimed the friend in sarcastic tones. "And don't you sometimes find the silence rather oppressive?"

The total number of typhoid cases during the Great War was less than the deaths from that disease during the Boer War.

"Invest" in Recreation.

Mrs. Nina Moore Jamieson, the well known writer, who was one of the speakers in the Women's Building at the Canadian National Exhibition, made a striking appeal to parents to recognize the importance of right play in the lives of their children.

"I wish you would all make time to provide recreation for your boys and girls," said the speaker. "In almost every farm house there is a room where the threshers are given their dinner. Now any room that is big enough to hold tables at which sixteen hungry men are fed, is large enough to be a social centre for the family. There are two kinds of entertainment, the kind you buy for a dollar and the kind you get for nothing, and the last is a long way the best. Clean out the dirty pond or stream and see that it gets no further pollution and have an old swimmin' hole. Several dirty ponds near us have been cleaned up, and now, when I miss the soap from the kitchen sink, and the towel from the rack, I know that some boys are having the time of their lives. Those ponds will be rinks in the winter and then it will be 'Mother, can we have the horse and scraper to clear off the snow?' and I'll say, as usual, 'Go and ask your Dad.' And the next thing I will hear will be, 'Dad, mother thinks we can have the horse and scraper to clear off the pond.' After a while I will miss their father and enquiring will be told that he, too, has gone to the pond. At night the young people of the neighborhood will gather, and someone will build a fire and roast sausages—or smoke them—it's all the same to them—and I will take them down a kettle of cocoa. It will all be simple, but it will be a great pleasure. Then there is dancing—the room that does for the threshers will do for the dancers. It is time that the ordinary pleasures were not considered as being outside the farm life. As to the radio—it will not only keep us from isolation, it will give us a vision of the world beyond our own horizon."

Mrs. Jamieson urged that both boys and girls be given an opportunity to earn their living on the home farm. "A thousand occupations are now open to girls," she said. "If a girl can live at home and at the same time be independent, she has achieved the ideal form of living. She will be better off and the home will be better off for having her there."

On a Boston street car the front sign reads "Dorchester" and the side signs "Ashmont and Milton." "Does this car go to Dorchester?" "Yes, lady; get right on." "Are you sure it does?" "Yes, lady; get right on." "But it says 'Ashmont and Milton' on the side." "We ain't going sideways lady; get right on."

After five years of service, one of the veterans of the London-Paris passenger air service has been retired. The great plane, which is the oldest on the route, was given a funeral ceremony at Croydon recently.

Children in the Dark.

(Thrughout the South of France on All Soul's Eve every grave is marked by a lighted lantern).

The hillside graveyard all the night
Rocks with a flickering sheen of light,
Because the living people grace
With candles every resting-place.

I wonder if the weary men
That lie there waken up again
And grumble, on their couches deep,
Because the light disturbs their sleep,
Thinking, for just a moment, they
Must work through yet another day.

I wonder if the women there,
With dust of lilies in their hair,
Keep tight their lids against the gleam
Lest it should drive away their dream.

But I am sure that there are those
To whom the lantern-candle glows
With all the gladness of a rose:
The little children that are dead,
They feel they have been long abed;
The dear, dear children greet each spark
With smiles, for children dread the dark.

—Reginald Wright Kauffman.

Words That Make Us Wonder.

Have you ever wondered how some of the queer words and expressions we use to-day first came into the language?

The expression "raining cats and dogs" originated in the days when seamen used to refer to waves on the water before a storm as "cat's-paws," whilst the dog has always been regarded in northern mythology as symbolic of wind. Consequently, when a heavy rainstorm was accompanied by high winds, sailors would say "it was coming down cats and dogs."

We shall use the expression "big wig," although these articles are a fashion of the past. In other days, however, a person's importance was judged by the size of the wig he wore, and therefore the highest in the land were known to the less fortunate as "big wigs."

"Pin-money" is an expression that serves to remind us of the days when pins were expensive, and husbands allowed their wives special sums for their purchase. Later on the expression was applied to a wife's pocket-money.

Another word that has an interesting origin is "hanicap." This is probably derived from "hand in the cap," as in former times it was the custom to draw lots from a hat or cap.

The Passing of Wild Animals.

The picture that presents itself to most minds at the idea of the death of wild animals is one of violence and agonized pain. As a matter of fact, few ideas are more erroneous. Most wild animals die quietly.

Both animals and birds dislike anything unusual; they will not tolerate the deformed, maimed or crippled, so that when an animal feels any unusual symptoms, instinct makes him steal away from his fellows. He goes as far as possible, and then rests in as retired a place as he can find. A lethargic feeling comes over him, and he closes his eyes in sleep. He has no fear of not awaking; any image that might cross his elementary sense of memory would be of waking as he has always done hitherto.

Birds in whom the tide of life is running low often fly out to sea, and close their eyes in lasting sleep before their tired bodies touch the water.

Even captive bred canaries feel this primeval impulse to fly away at the end; they will flutter restlessly against the bars of their cage one day, and the next morning you will find them "asleep." Most birds of prey have their own hunting grounds and do not poach on their fellows' ground.

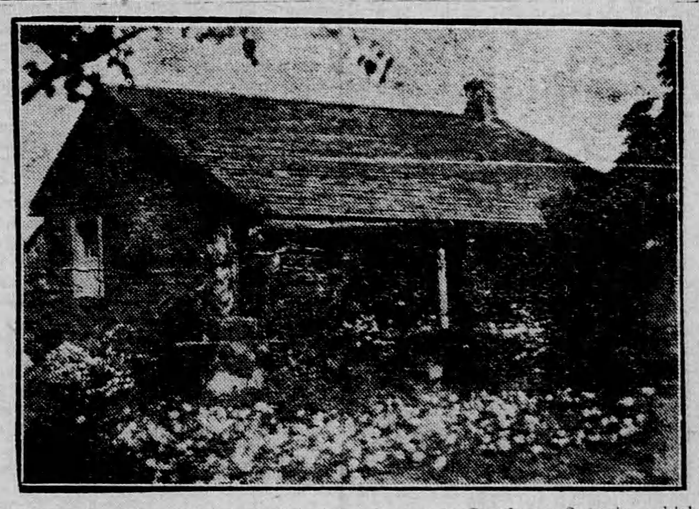
An eagle had long been known round about a certain mountainside. One day he was seen to be sailing downwards on outstretched wings, but his head drooped unusually, as if it were too heavy for a tired body. Lower and lower he sailed, dropping slowly at last into a quiet wood. There he was found the next day by a boy who had watched him fall.

A bird-lover once noticed a little songster sittting silently on a frond of evergreen over a little stream. He was old, for his feathers were streaked with grey and he had wrinkled scales on his feet. He showed no fear of the man, who often visited the place; presently he settled on his finger and closed his eyes. He took a drop of water from a finger as if glad of the friendly action, and then the man put him back on the evergreen.

A day later the man saw him hanging from a spruce root, his feet holding on firmly, his beak touching the water, quite dead—asleep and at peace.

There are, of course, tragedies in animal lives; the lion and the deer, the fox and the mouse, the hawk and the sparrow. But we are wrong in imagining violent deaths of this type to be painful. The agony is mental, and occurs before the attack, when we suffer in anticipation. In other words, we suffer because of our brains.

The majority of the animals, however, pass in natural sleep.—Ernest Clarke.



Here is said to be one of the oldest homes in Scarboro, Ontario, which has been standing for over 100 years. For many years it was used as a school house for the children of pioneers.

School Children and Their Health.

Hurrah! School is in full swing again! And what of the health of the boys and girls? "Keep a child robust and sound in body until he is eighteen" say medical experts, "and the chances are he will remain so throughout life." How important then that its health should be maintained. A word to parents: Are your children free from frequent colds, enlarged tonsils, adenoids, decaying teeth? These are serious hindrances to their health. Are they free from eyestrain? Do they hear well? Are they sound in body and limb? If not, then in school they lose a golden opportunity.

"Canada a Land of Opportunities!" we say, and yet in this land are we breeding a race that shows appalling signs of deterioration? Statistics show an average of one physical defect for each school child in the United States. Fully twenty-five per cent. of the nation's children are below par. How is it with Canada? Are your children under-weight? Being underweight does not necessarily mean being undernourished. Our schools aim at wholesome citizenship, and whether your boy goes into professional life or industrial life, sound health is essential to his success. What then can we do to make our boy and girls fit for the work of life?

Medical examination in the school is not a fad. It is based on medical research and confirmed by experience. When the war broke out, over twenty-five per cent. of our boys were physically unfit. We must not repeat that neglect to the rising generation. Systematic medical supervision must be given to our children during the years they are at school. Careful medical examination should be given every child entering the school. And the mother should be present to hear what the doctor has to say, and in turn to ask questions for the benefit of the child. Especially so, in the case of non-Anglo-Saxon mothers. Thus they will come to understand that the school doctor is trying to help their child. And the mothers' intelligent co-operation is needed to attain the best results.

During school age there are adenoids and diseased tonsils to be watched. There are ear-aches and eye-strains to be relieved, and teeth to be treated. There are skin and scalp diseases, spinal curve and weak feet, all of which can be helped and corrected if treated in time. A delicate child is no longer looked upon with pride. In so far as we are eager to be healthy, ashamed to be unhealthy, we are awake to the ideal of our generation.

What of the child's teeth? If teeth are lost, food cannot be chewed, if they are defective, disease germs lodge in them, if teeth and gums are diseased, poison invades the system and undermines the health. The child suffers pain, and no one can be at his best mentally or physically while suffering.

What of your child's sight and hearing? Eye-strain or defective vision may cause irritability, headaches, nausea, loss of appetite, not infrequently blindness. And deafness, starting with adenoids, hardening wax or a cold, may become impossible to remedy, unless taken at the beginning. Is your child to be under a handicap? Eye and ear defects are in a large measure responsible for inattentiveness, bad discipline and failure to be promoted.

It all comes to this. We consider our reputation lost if our young people come from our schools illiterate. Is our reputation secure if they come from our schools with needless physical defects and handicaps. Let every boy and girl in Canada be given a chance to be physically strong.

The path to fame runs over the hill of difficulty.