

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

As those sounds slowly ceased, I felt the whole room vibrate sensibly; and at the far end there rose, as from the floor, sparks or globules like bubbles of light, many-colored—green, yellow, fire-red, azure. Up and down, to and fro, hither, thither, as tiny Will-o'-the-Wisps, the sparks moved, slow or swift, each at its own caprice. A chair, as in the drawing room below, was now advanced from the wall, without apparent agency, and placed at the opposite side of the table. Suddenly, as forth from the chair, there grew a Shape—a woman's shape. It was distinct as a shape of life—ghostly as a shape of death. The face was that of youth, with a strange mournful beauty; the throat and shoulders were bare, the rest of the form in a loose robe of cloudy white. It began sleeking its long yellow hair, which fell over its shoulders; its eyes were not turned towards me, but to the door; it seemed listening, watching, waiting. The shadow of the shade in the background grew darker; and again I thought I beheld the eyes gleaming out from the summit of the shadow—eyes fixed upon that shape.

As if from the door, though it did not open, there grew out another shape equally distinct, equally ghostly—a man's shape—a young man's. It was in the dress of the last century, or rather in a likeness of such dress; for both the male shape and the female, though defined, were evidently unsubstantial, impalpable—simulacra, phantasms; and there was something incongruous, grotesque, yet fearful, in the contrast between the elaborate finery of the courtly precision of that old-fashioned garb, with its ruffles and lace and buckles, and the corpse-like aspect and ghost-like stillness of the flitting wearer. Just as the male shape approached the female, the dark Shadow started from the wall, all three for a moment wrapped in darkness. When the pale light returned, the two phantoms were as if in the grasp of the Shadow that towered between them; and there was a blood-stain on the breast of the female; and the phantom male was leaning on its phantom sword, and blood seemed trickling fast from the ruffles, from the lace; and the darkness of the intermediate Shadows swallowed them up—they were gone. And again the bubbles of light shot, and sailed, and undulated, growing thicker and thicker and more wildly confused in their movements.

The closet door to the right of the fireplace now opened, and from the aperture there came the form of a woman, aged. In her hand she held letters—the very letters over which I had seen the hand close; and behind her I heard a footstep. She turned round as if to listen, and then she opened the letters and seemed to read; and over her shoulder I saw a livid face, the face of a man long drowned—bleached, bleached—seaweed tangled in its dripping hair; and at her feet lay a form as of a corpse, and beside the corpse there covered a child, a miserable squalid child, with famine in its cheeks and fear in its eyes. And as I looked in the old woman's face, the wrinkles and lines vanished, and it became a face of youth—hard-eyed, stony, but still young; and the Shadow darted forth, and darkened over these phantoms as it had darkened over the last.

Nothing now was left but the Shadow, and on that my eyes were intently fixed, till again eyes grew out of the Shadow—malignant, serpent eyes. And the bubbles of light again rose and fell, and in their disordered, irregular, turbulent maze, mingled with the wan moonlight. And now from these globules themselves, as from the shell of an egg, monstrous things burst out; the air grew filled with them; larvae so bloodless and so hideous that I can in no way describe them except to remind the reader of the swarming life which the solar microscope brings before his eyes in a drop of water—things transparent, supple, agile, chasing each other, devouring each other—forms, like nought ever beheld by the naked eye. As the shapes were without symmetry, so their movements were without order. In their very vagrancies there was no sport; they came round me and round, thicker and faster and swifter, swarming over my head, crawling over my right arm, which was outstretched in involuntary command against all evil beings. Sometimes I felt myself touched, but not by them; invisible hands touched me. Once I felt the clutch as of cold soft fingers at my throat. I was still equally conscious that if I gave way to fear I should be in bodily peril; and I concentrated all my faculties in the single focus of resisting, stubborn will. And I turned my sight from the shadow—above all, from those strange serpent eyes—eyes that had now become distinctly visible—For there, though in nought else around me, I was aware that there was a WILL, and a will of intense, creative, working evil, which might crush down my own.

The pale atmosphere in the room began now to redden as if in the air of some near conflagration. The larvae grew lurid as things that live in fire. Again the room vibrated; again were heard the three measured knocks; and again all things were swallowed up in the darkness of the Shadow, as if out of that darkness all had come, into that darkness all returned.

As the gloom receded, the Shadow was wholly gone. Slowly, as it had been withdrawn, the flame grew again into the candles on the table, again into the fuel in the grate. The whole room came once more calmly, healthfully into light.

The two doors were still closed, the door communicating with the servant's room still locked. In the corner of the wall, into which he had so convulsively niched himself, lay the dog. I called to him—no movement; I approached—the animal was dead; his eyes protruded; his tongue out of his mouth; the froth gathered round his jaws. I took him in my arms. I brought him to the fire; I felt acute grief for the loss of my poor favourite—acute self-reproach; I accused myself of his death; I imag-

ined he had died of fright. But what was my surprise on finding that his neck was actually broken—actually twisted out of the vertebrae. Had this been done in the dark?—must it not have been by a hand human as mine?—must there not have been a human agency all the while in that room? Good cause to suspect it. I cannot tell. I cannot do more than state the fact fairly; the reader may draw his own inference.

Another surprising circumstance—my watch was restored to the table from which it had been so mysteriously withdrawn; but it had stopped at the very moment it was so withdrawn; and, despite all the skill of the watchmaker, has it ever gone since—that is, it will go in a strange erratic way for a few hours, and then come to a dead stop—it is worthless.

Nothing more chanced for the rest of the night. Nor, indeed, had I long to wait before the dawn broke. Not till it was broad daylight did I quit the haunted house. Before I did so, I revisited the little blind room in which my servant and myself had been for a time imprisoned. I had a strong impression—for which I could not account—that from that room had originated the mechanism of the phantoms—if I may use the term—which had been experienced in my chamber. And though I entered it now in the clear day, with the sun peering through the filmy window, I still felt, as I stood on its floor, the creep of the horror which I had first there experienced the night before, and which had been so aggravated by what had passed in my own chamber. I could not, indeed, bear to stay more than half a minute within those walls. I descended the stairs, and again I heard the footfall before me; and when I opened the street door, I thought I could distinguish a very low laugh. I gained my own home, expecting to find my runaway servant there. But he had not presented himself; nor did I hear more of him for three days, when I received a letter from him, dated from Liverpool, to this effect:—

"Honoured Sir,—I humbly entreat your pardon, though I can scarcely hope that you will think I deserve it, unless—which Heaven forbid!—you saw what I did. I feel that it will be years before I can recover myself; and as to being fit for service, it is out of the question. I am therefore going to my brother-in-law at Melbourne. The ship sails to-morrow. Perhaps the long voyage may set me up. I do nothing now but start and tremble, and fancy it is behind me. I humbly beg you, honoured sir, to order my clothes, and whatever wages are due to me, to be sent to my mother's at Walworth—John knows her address."

The letter ended with additional apologies, somewhat incoherent, and explanatory details as to effects that had been under the writer's charge.

This flight may perhaps warrant a suspicion that the man wished to go to Australia, and had been somehow or other fraudulently mixed up with the events of the night. I say nothing in refutation of that conjecture; rather, I suggest it as one that would seem to many persons the most probable solution of improbable occurrences. My own theory remained unshaken. I returned in the evening to the house, to bring away in a hack cab the things I had left there, with my poor dog's body. In this task I was not disturbed, nor did any incident worth note befall me, except that still, on ascending and descending the stairs, I heard the same footfall in advance. On leaving the house I went to Mr. J.—'s. He was at home. I returned him the keys, told him that my curiosity was sufficiently gratified, and was about to relate quickly what had passed, when he stopped me, and said, though with much politeness, that he had no longer any interest in a mystery which none had ever solved.

I determined at least to tell him of the two letters I had read, as well as of the extraordinary manner in which they had disappeared, and I then inquired if he thought they had been addressed to the woman who had died in the house, and if there were anything in her early history which could possibly confirm the dark suspicions to which the letters gave rise. Mr. J.—seemed startled, and, after musing a few moments, answered, "I am but little acquainted with the woman's earlier history, except, as I before told you, that her family were known to mine. But you revive some vague reminiscences to her prejudice. I will make inquiries and inform you of their result. Still, even if we could admit the popular superstition that a person who had been either the perpetrator or the victim of dark crimes in life could revisit, as a restless spirit, the scene in which those crimes had been committed, I should observe that the house was infested by strange sights and sounds before the old woman died—you smile—what would you say?"

"I would say this, that I am convinced, if we could get to the bottom of these mysteries, we should find a living human agency."

"What! you believe it is all an imposture? for what object?"

"Not an imposture in the ordinary sense of the word, if suddenly I were to sink into a deep sleep, from which you could not awake me, but in that sleep could answer questions with an accuracy which I could not pretend to when awake—tell you what money you had in your pocket—nay, describe your very thoughts—it is not necessarily an imposture, any more than it is necessarily supernatural. I should be, unconsciously to myself, under a mesmeric influence, conveyed to me from a distance by a human being who had acquired power over me by previous rapport."

"Granting mesmerism, so far carried, to be a fact, you are right. And you would infer from this that a mesmeriser might produce the extraordinary effects you and others have witnessed over inanimate objects—fill the air with sights and sounds?"

"Or impress our senses with the belief in them—we never having been in rapport with the person acting on us? No. What is commonly called mesmerism could not do this; but there may be a power akin to mesmerism, and superior to it—the power that in the old days was called Magic. That such a power may extend to all inanimate objects of matter, I do not say; but if so, it would not be against nature, only a rare power in nature which might be given to constitutions with certain peculiarities, and cultivated by practice to an extraordinary degree. That such a power might extend over the dead—that is, over certain thoughts and memories that the dead may still retain—and compel, not that which ought properly to be called the Soul, and which is far beyond human reach, but rather a phantom of what has been most earth-stained on earth, to make itself apparent to our senses—is a very ancient though obsolete theory, upon which I will hazard no opinion. But I do not conceive the power would be supernatural. Let me illustrate what I mean from an experiment which Paracelsus describes as not difficult, and which the author of the Curiosities of Literature cites as credible:—A flower perishes; you burn it. Whatever were the elements of that flower while it lived are gone, dispersed, you know not whether; you can never discover them re-collect them. But you can, by chemistry out of the burnt dust of that flower raise a spectrum of the flower, just as it seemed in life. It may be the same with the human being. The soul has as much escaped you as the essence or elements of the flower. Still you may make a spectrum of it. And this phantom, though in the popular superstition it is held to be the soul of the departed, must not be confounded with the true soul; it is but the eidolon of the dead form. Hence, like the best-attested stories of ghosts or spirits, the thing that most strikes us is the absence of what we hold to be soul; that is, of superior emancipated intelligence. They come for little or no object—they seldom speak, if they do come; they utter no ideas above that of an ordinary person on earth. American spirit-seers have published volumes of communications in prose and verse, which they assert to be given in the names of the most illustrious dead—Shakespeare, Bacon—heaven knows whom. Those communications, whif of higher order than would be communications from living persons of fair talent and education; they are wondrously inferior to what Bacon, taking the best, are certainly not a Shakespeare and Plato said and wrote when on earth. Nor, what is more notable, do they ever contain an idea that was not on the earth before." Wonderful, therefore, as such phenomena may be, granting them to be truthful, I see much that philosophy may question, nothing that it is incumbent on philosophy to deny—viz., nothing supernatural. They are but ideas conveyed somehow or other, we have not yet discovered the means, from one mortal brain to another. Whether, in so doing, tables walk of their own accord, or fiend-like shapes appear in a magic circle, or bodiless hands rise and remove material objects, or a Thing of Darkness, such as presented itself to me, freeze our blood—still am I persuaded that these are but agencies conveyed, as by electric wires, to my own brain from the brain of another. In some constitutions there is a natural chemistry, and those may produce chemic wonders—in others a natural fluid, call it electricity, and these produce electric wonders. But they differ in this from Normal Science—they are alike objectless, purposeless, puerile, frivolous. They lead on to no grand results; and therefore the world does not heed, and true sages have not cultivated them. But sure I am, that of all I saw or heard, a man, human as myself, was the remote originator and I believe unconsciously to himself as to the exact effects produced, for this reason; no two persons, you say, have ever told you that they experienced exactly the same thing. Well, observe, no two persons ever experience exactly the same dream. If this were an ordinary imposture, the machinery would be arranged for results that would but little vary; if it were a supernatural agency permitted by the Almighty, it would surely be for some definite end. These phenomena belong to neither class; my persuasion is that they originate in some brain now far distant; that that brain had no distinct volition in anything that occurred; that what does occur reflects but its devious, motley, ever-shifting, half-formed thoughts; in short, that it has been but the dreams of such a brain put into action and invested with a semi-substance. That this brain is of immense power, that it can set matter into movement, that it is malignant and destructive, I believe; some material force must have killed my dog; it might, for aught I know, have sufficed to kill myself, had I been as subjugated by terror as the dog—had my intellect or my spirit given me no countervailing resistance in my will."

To Be Continued.

A FARMER'S PARADISE.

For the past few years the agricultural element has predominated in the Legislature of Manitoba, and the legislation has been largely in the interest of the farmer. As a consequence the lawyers have been practically legislated out of existence, so far as a once remunerative court practice is concerned, and the sheriffs cannot make a decent living. But while the lawyers and sheriffs have suffered the country generally has benefited, for credits are now limited, and farmers cannot get so deeply into debt as formerly; but should one become involved to any great extent, the exemption law protects his homestead, implements, and enough farm stock to permit him to carry on operations, to the full capacity of his farm. The law is now the poorest profession in Manitoba. The lawyers who make an income worth boasting of are all solicitors for large corporations.

MINES OF NEW ONTARIO.

VAST WEALTH THAT IS WAITING FOR DEVELOPMENT.

What Was Done Last Year—Information Given in Mr. Blue's Annual Report—Statistics of Last Year's Output.

According to the report of the Bureau of Mines for Ontario, the first part of which has just been issued, the mining activity of the past year has left nothing to wish for.

The total number of locations sold and leased in the year was 1,255, embracing an area of 115,809 acres, whereas for the five years 1892-96 the number sold and leased was 1,016, with an area of 93,821 acres. The revenue derived by the Crown last year from sales and rentals was \$144,299, whereas for the preceding five years it was only \$131,518. Adding the rentals of lands previously leased, the aggregate revenue of the five years was \$146,959, while for 1897 it was \$150,540, or, if the revenue from mining licenses be included, the aggregate for 1897 was \$153,561. Equally significant was the activity shown in the incorporation of mining companies. In 1897, the number of companies incorporated was 140, with a capital stock of \$101,531,000, while during the previous 29 years only 146 companies had been incorporated, with capital amounting in the total to \$62,399,380.

ROOM FOR DEVELOPMENT.

"There is room," the report goes on, "for large development in the mineral industries of the province. Not only does the varied list include all of the principal and more commonly found metals, such as iron, copper, lead, silver, and gold, but it also embraces the comparatively rare metal nickel, the deposits of which in the Sudbury district constitute one of the two sources of the world's supply. In the smelting of iron ore a fair beginning has been made, but the capabilities of expansion in this line have as yet been scarcely more than touched. The magnetite deposits of Eastern Ontario and the hematite and magnetite of Northwestern Ontario, taken together, are more than sufficient to supply our own needs in the way of iron for perhaps centuries to come.

TWO IMPORTANT INDUSTRIES.

"Among the non-metallic substances we possess the basis of two permanent and important industries in our salt beds and petroleum wells. The whole shore of Lake Huron, from the latitude of Kincardine southward, and for many miles inland, is underlain with beds of salt hundreds of feet thick, supplying the raw material not only for refined salt itself, but for carbonate and bicarbonate of soda, soda ash, bleaching powder, and other essentials for the textile and other industries. The petroleum industry leads all others of a mineral nature in the value of yearly output, and affords an admirable example of what enterprise and skill can do in the profitable utilization of raw material. Another instance of this is seen in the cement business, which has undergone satisfactory development during the past few years.

"In the products of clay—brick, tile, terra cotta, and sewer pipe—the output is limited only by the market. A new branch of the business has recently been established in the manufacture of paving brick. The use of this article for street purposes seems bound to be very extensive, now that Canadian makers have shown that the product of their kilns is comparable in quality with brick from the yards of Ohio and Illinois, besides being lower in price. Natural gas is a substance which in point of value stands high in the list of Ontario's mineral products, although it is to be regretted that so much of it is taken out of the country for consumption. In almost every one of the minerals here mentioned the opportunities for the profitable investment of capital are numerous, and the vivifying touch of enterprise and capital is alone wanted to call many other industries into being."

NICKEL AND COPPER.

The prices of both nickel and copper have fallen almost steadily from 1892 to 1897, and these prices bear a close relationship to those of the refined metals. The average of nickel in the six years has been 11.058 cents, of copper 3.950 cents and of cobalt 23.760 cents, per pound in the form of matte, and in the case of each metal the cost of labor is less than one-half—ranging from 42 to 44 per cent.

The whole of the matte produced at the smelting works of the Sudbury district is sent out of the country to be refined, there being no refineries of nickel and copper mattes in Canada. The great bulk of it at present goes to the Orford Copper Company's works at Constable Hook, N. S., and a small portion to the works of Joseph Wharton, at Camden, in the same State. The cost of refining cannot be accurately stated, but it is about 9-12 cents per pound for shot or plate nickel, and 6 cents for nickel oxide, while for fine copper it is about 3-12 cents per pound, or about double the labour cost of producing the matte.

Computed at the present selling prices of nickel and copper in the American markets, the value of nickel and copper produced from the ores of the Sudbury mines in the past six years would be for nickel, \$8,798,125; and for copper, \$2,947,162, or a total of 11,745,287, but for a portion of the period the selling price of nickel has been much higher than it is.

Suffering Vanquished.

A NOVA SCOTIAN FARMER TELLS HOW HE REGAINED HEALTH.

Had Suffered From Acute Rheumatism and General Debility—Scarcely Able to Do the Lightest Work.

From the Acadien, Wolfville, N.S.

One of the most prosperous and intelligent farmers of the village of Greenwich, N.S., is Mr. Edward Manning. Anyone intimate with Mr. Manning knows him as a man of strong integrity and veracity, so that every confidence can be placed in the information which he gave a reporter of the Acadien, for publication the other day. During a very pleasant interview he gave the following statements of his severe suffering and recovery:—"Two years ago last September," said Mr. Manning, "I was taken with an acute attack of rheumatism. I had not been feeling well for some time previous to that date, having been troubled with sleeplessness and general debility. My constitution seemed completely run down. Beginning in the small of my back the pain soon passed into my hip, where it remained without intermission, and I became a terrible sufferer. All winter long I was scarcely able to do any work and it was only with the acutest of suffering that I managed to hobble to the barn each day to do my chores. I appealed to medical men for help but they failed to bring any relief. At last I decided to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and with their use came complete and lasting cure. I had not used quite three boxes when I began to feel decidedly better. I continued using them until twelve boxes had been consumed, when my complete recovery warranted me in discontinuing their use. I have never felt better than since that time. My health seems to have improved in every way. During the past summer I worked very hard but have felt no bad effects. The gratitude I feel to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, none but those who have suffered as I have and been cured, can appreciate.

An analysis shows that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills contain in a condensed form all the elements necessary to give new life and richness to the blood and restore shattered nerves. They are an unfailing specific for such diseases as locomotor ataxia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance, sciatica, neuralgia, rheumatism, nervous headache, the after effects of la grippe, palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration, all diseases depending upon vitiated humors in the blood, such as scrofula, chronic erysipelas, etc. They are also a specific for troubles peculiar to females, such as suppressions, irregularities and all forms of weakness. They build up the blood and restore the glow of health to pale and sallow cheeks. In men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, overwork, or excesses of whatever nature. Sold by all dealers or sent postpaid at 50c a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the R.D. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

AFGHAN NEW WOMAN.

The new woman has penetrated even to the harem of the Ameer of Afghanistan, where she wears male attire and does as she pleases.

The Ameer picked her up on his return journey from the northern part of his dominions a good many years ago. She had been brought before him by an indignant father and proposed husband for punishment. She would not conform to the usage of the country and enter the married state, though she had then reached the age when it became incumbent upon her to do so.

The girl declared she had run wild all her life, and did not wish to give up her freedom and be shut up in a harem. She sought the Ameer's protection and obtained it.

"All right," he said, "since you want to be free you shall be, but free you must also remain; that is your punishment. You wish to live like a man you shall live like one, and for your own protection you must wear men's clothes."

On her arrival in Cabul she was given the title of odor, or chief, and was made the harem's messenger. She comes and goes as she pleases or is ordered, both by night and day, and no one even in slanderous Cabul has ever breathed a word against her fair name.

ABOUT BOOTS AND SHOES.

If a boot or shoe is too tight in any one particular place, dip a cloth in very hot water and lay it on the uncomfortable spot. This will cause the leather to expand, and to adapt itself to the shape of the foot.

It is said that shoes which "draw" the feet may be made perfectly comfortable by pouring water into them; this if allowed to remain in the shoe for a few minutes, will take all the neutral heat from the leather.

Soles cut from several thicknesses of brown paper, and renewed every day, are wonderfully soothing to the feet.

For softening shoes that are hard and thick castor oil is one of the best possible things. It will keep the leather in excellent condition, and make the shoes last nearly twice as long as in the ordinary way.

Ghostly Inspectors.—My grandfather said the shoe clerk boarder, once knew an old man who insisted that the ghosts came and milked his cows every night.

Sort of milkin' specters, eh? commented the Cheerful Idiot.