

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT of 1940

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"Heap on more wood; the wind is chill
"But let it whistle as it will,
"We'll keep our Christmas merry still."

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Really Splendid the Way People Are Carrying On, Writes Lady from England

Mail and Milk Arrive as Usual at 4 a.m., and Shops Keep Open During Raid. Haven't Slept in a Bed Since August, Forgetting How to Lay a Table, but Cheerful, Humorous, Resolute, Sure of Victory.

Mrs. F. C. H. Simms, of 52 Maple street south, recently received a very interesting letter from her sister in England, which is reproduced as follows (in part):

"I was so glad to get a letter from you at last. I don't think you can have had all the letters I have written you. Your letter was only 14 days getting here—isn't that splendid? Many thanks for the little story, it was jolly good.

"Well, we are certainly living through some hectic times, but so long as we do live through them, that is the main thing, isn't it? And so far we are all well and cheerful.

"I have never seen the autumn colouring so beautiful as it is this year, and so brilliant, but the leaves are falling so fast and I have so many trees, I am nearly buried in them. Jack says I can play at Babes in the Woods in my dugout!

"I shall not know myself when I sleep in a bed again. I have not slept in my bed in the house since the middle of August! Of course, some nights it is quite impossible to sleep at all. The anti-aircraft guns all round here

are terrific. There is one in particular I call "Our 'erbert!" It shakes me in my chair bed almost as much as the bombs, and goes off five times in quick succession. It gives me a ghastly headache, but if it keeps the devils at bay, well, what is a headache!

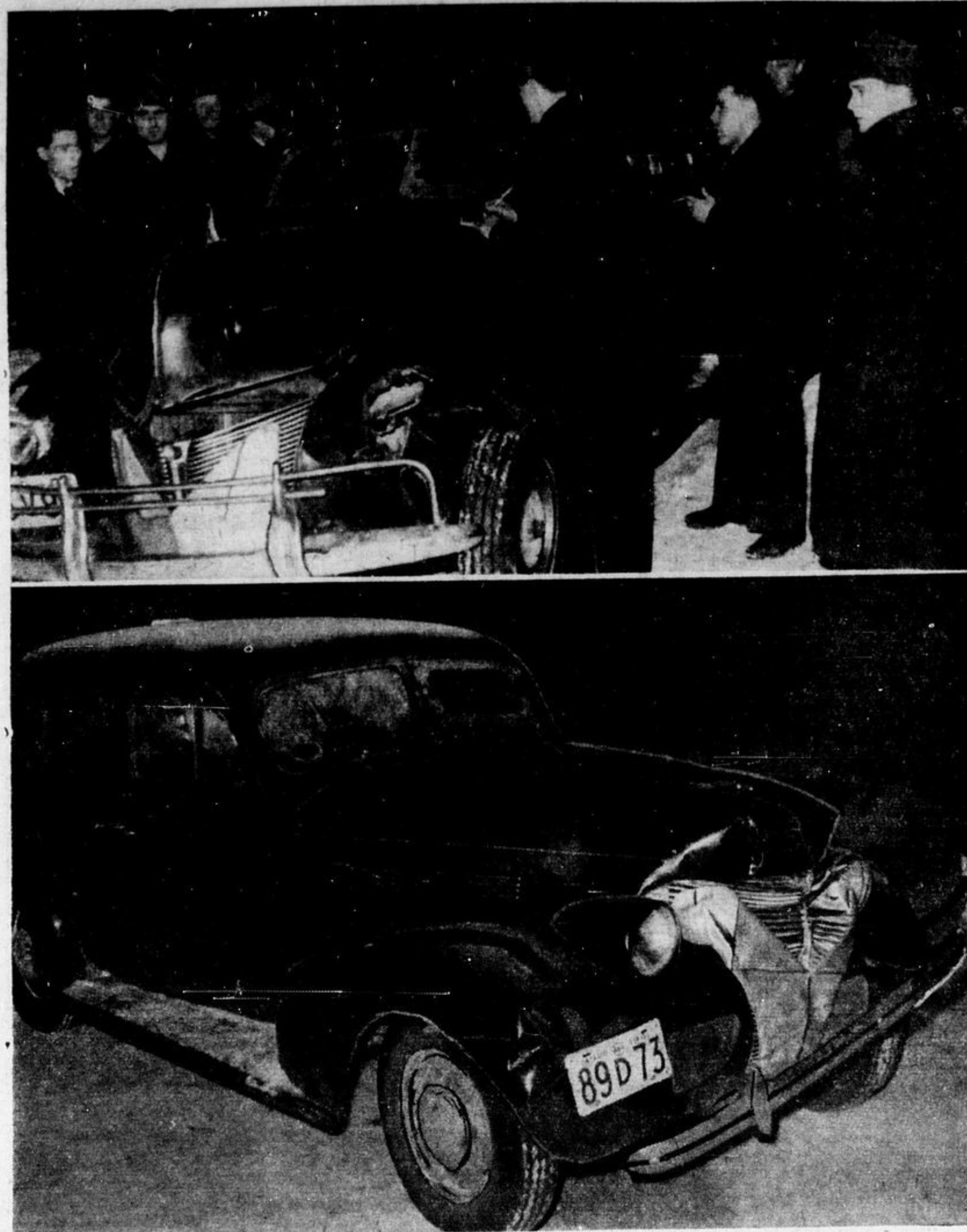
"What is so extraordinary is that when the guns are firing the noise is so awful that it is impossible to sleep, and if we get a lull and the guns stop, it is so silent you can't sleep either, because the German bombers hover overhead at such terrific height, sometimes five miles up, deciding what they will hit, and then swoop down and let their bombs go. So if it is silent, you hold your breath waiting for the bomb.

"Last week one big German bomber was hit by the A.A. guns so he let go fourteen bombs in quick succession before crashing. That was in the road, next but one to ours. It was like a minor earthquake.

"It is really splendid how people are carrying on; our letters and papers and milk come just as early, about 4 a.m., and all the shops remain open during raids.

"The sounds so nice in your letter when you say "dinner is just coming in." My word! I have forgotten how to lay a table. You see, the sirens keep going so it is no good laying a table. You just put things on a tray; then, when the sirens go, pick up the tray and go down to the shelter. Sometimes the raids last for hours, so I keep plenty of work and knitting down there, so as not to waste any time. The most difficult part is cooking, because you have to turn the gas off at the main when the sirens go, so you can only have what can be cooked in a few minutes, or won't spoil if you turn off the gas and turn it on again later. The other day I had only just got washed and dressed when the sirens went, so could not get any breakfast but thought I should be in again directly. However, I did not get back till 10 a.m., so it was too late for breakfast. I decided to have my dinner early, so I had a little piece of loin of lamb to roast. I prepared it and put it in the oven, and had just put some potatoes on to steam. Bang went the sirens and out had to go the gas. Got back again about 11.30 a.m., lighted up once again, and it was just getting "hotted up"—bang went the sirens and out went the gas. Well, this time, the raid lasted nearly five hours. I was so hungry that at 4.30 p.m. when there was a lull in the gun firing, I dashed in and cut off two lumps of bread and seized the cheese, and had that in my dug-out. The all clear went at 5 p.m.; too late for dinner then, so had an egg for my tea, and so we go on and keep smiling.

"Please don't think this a grouse, dear, but thought you would like to know how we manage. A friend of mine had just put a batch of loaves in



NO GHOSTS YOU SAY — ALL RIGHT EXPLAIN THIS ONE

"Haunted my eye. Go on! you're nuts", said a Timmins police officer of the day shift after a night shift man told him the story of the house at 73 Wilson Avenue.

"All right then," replied the day shift man. "Come on with me and examine the place. You can take my word and the word of two other men about the noise. Come on now, smart guy, and see if your discerning mind can find a solution to the mystery."

An hour later the two officers walked back into the police station. The night shift man looked slightly triumphant and the day shifter more than a little perplexed. "I'm darned if I can see any reason for it," he admitted.

The story behind this is that for the past three weeks the police station has been receiving an average of two or three calls a day from occupants of the house at 73 Wilson Avenue. They complain that they are unable to sleep because of noises in their house—noises which have no obvious or visible source.

The noises, they say take the form of a number of hard raps—as though a person pounded hard with his closed fist on the frame of a window pane. There would be one, two and nearly always three distinct and hard smashes and then the noise would cease for an interval. The knocking would begin about eight-thirty at night—just after it got good and dark, and continue until perhaps 2.30 o'clock the next morning. On Wednesday morning it continued until after five o'clock.

Now all this is hardly conducive to sleep—especially when there is no apparent reason for this hammering. The house occupants have traced the possibility of frost, steam pipes and the natural creaking of a building under varied kinds of atmospheric pressure and discarded them all. They are unwilling to believe that the "joint is haunted", but nonetheless are puzzled and not a little anxious.

Well, this went on for weeks and each time a complaint was received an officer or two men would be sent to find the trouble. He would blame it on small boys, frost or some other cause and soothe the fears of the householder.

The complaints began to be more frequent and on Tuesday night the sergeant on duty decided to make an end to the matter. He despatched a man to stay right at the house for an hour or so.

While the officer was on duty he was telephoned by the sergeant on duty. "Yes," he replied to the obvious ques-

tion, "the noises still continue at intervals and he had gone through the house from basement to attic and could find no cause. How about sending another man or so down?"

Well—two more men were sent. They did not walk boldly up to the house, however, but clambered over back fences and came on the building quietly from the rear, hoping to catch some intruder at his nefarious work. No one was seen and the men crawled up to the window in question, slowly and quietly. When they were about ten feet from it and looking right at it—"Bang—Bang—Bang".

There was no reason. They were the only persons in the vicinity of the window—their flashlights stabbing through the pitch darkness told them that. The officer inside the building said that he had been in the room out of which the window faced—he was alone in the room.

Grimly the officers decided to carry out some tests. They placed men at vantage points covering the window from every possible angle and waited. Presently—"Bang—Bang—Bang".

Well, to make a long story short, the men were there until seven o'clock yesterday morning and still they were unable to figure out a reason. If you are thinking of a possible cause right now—well, the policeman probably thought of that and investigated it long ago. Three intelligent men can dig up and discard after investigation an awful lot of reasons for a noise.

So the mystery of 73 Wilson Avenue still is a mystery. The place may be "haunted" although haunted houses have gone out of date lately—and again it may not be. There may be a perfectly simple explanation. If you can think it out call the police and let them know.

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Toronto Telegram:—When it comes to throwing a brickbat some people have a perfect aim.

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