

QUEER STORIES I HAVE MET BY M.B. WELLS

BY M. B. WELLS.

THE hardest superstition to down," says W. T. Stead, the eminent London journalist, "is the superstition that there are no such things as ghosts."

That is all very well for Mr. Stead, living as he does in the English metropolis where one has at command all the ancient, medieval, and modern conveniences, including spooks, apparitions, clanking chains and dismal groans that can be turned on and off like the gas, and where the strong arm of British justice protects even the most officious iconoclast from violence at the hands of the uninitiated whose cherished delusions are held up to derisive scorn.

For my part, while I believe with Mr. Stead, I have no little sympathy, and great respect for that vast majority, not one of whom has ever set eyes on a single ghost.

I am personally acquainted with a number of individuals who belong to this highly suspicious, but entirely creditable majority. Among them is my friend Jones. Jones has behind him a long and most sensational ancestry. One medieval progenitor was tortured for heresy by the inquisition, another was a Rostrocian, and a third was hanged for robbing a church. In later days, a grandmother's aunt was burned at the stake for witchcraft, and a male descendant of that unlucky relative was convicted and sentenced to the United States Senate for 18 years.

Jones contends, and with some reason, too, that if anyone had a lot of walling specters bothering around, he ought to be the man. He never saw one, and he insists, of course, that there "hain't" any. When Jones talks about ghosts he gets very excited, and his language often suffers.

I have told him of a few of the more satisfactory spooks I have met, but he will have none of them. He says that I am the original "Come-on," and that I ought to keep my money, or give it to the Baby Home, instead of spreading it around so foolishly. Nevertheless, I have hopes that Jones will sit up some day and take notice of the truth.

Not long ago I stood in the presence of a ghost, or perhaps to be more accurate, the ghost stood in my presence, or to be more accurate still, the ghost floated around the room where I was present. In discussing grave matters like this, it is well to state the exact truth.

I did not see the ghost myself, but the medium did, and I am confident that he was telling the truth. I had given him three dollars, and for that amount of money he could afford to tell most anything.

The ghost was a lady. From the description given by the medium, who could see her distinctly enough, it seemed that she was my wife's great-grandmother, a relative whom I have never seen. The old lady looked at me longingly and affectionately, said that a fat friend of mine would soon be sick, and then vanished, even from the astral sight of the medium. He tried to call her back, but she wouldn't come, and I have never seen her since.

I admit that this experience was expensive, considering the brief interval that elapsed between the time when I gave up my three dollars and when I was ushered out into the glaring sunshine, afflicted with sad uncertainty as to the ultimate whereabouts of my long-lost great-grandmother-in-law, and a prey to anxiety regarding the physical welfare of some one of my corpulent friends, who was about to be stricken with illness.

Notwithstanding the brevity of the communication, the evidential value of the seance was complete. I know for certain that my wife had a great-grandmother, and the fact that a fat friend of mine did get sick proves everything that the old lady said.

Unfortunately I told Jones about it. He said that I was "stung" again, that he had three or four fat, sick friends himself, and that I ought to have taken a singing lesson, instead.

"They only cost two dollars more apiece," he said, "and you could have had a whole half-hour for your money."

It was a long time before I said anything to Jones about Professor Harrison. The professor ran a ghost emporium over on the East Side, where the rents were cheap and he could carry a large assortment of voices, gurgles, groans, phantom lights and other occult things at marked down prices.

I first got into touch with the Professor through another friend of mine whom I will call the Judge. The Judge believes firmly in the doctrine of reincarnation, and hopes, some day, to meet a ghost who will agree with him.

To digress for a moment, it is a curious fact that ghosts, who, like ministers, are supposed to know all about what happens to one after he is dead, almost unanimously dispute the theory of reincarnation. They (the ghosts) say that they are dead now, and that they can't remember ever being dead before, and that there's nothing to it.

"But," objected the Judge, one night after Dr. Wellman had finished an apparently very learned disquisition on super-terrestrial metaphysics, "you informed me the other evening that, when you were alive, you did not believe in the survival of human consciousness after death. Is it not possible, being mistaken then, that you may be wrong about reincarnation now?"

It may be well to explain here that Dr. Wellman is a remarkably well-preserved ghost, who has been a ghost for 300 years. We heard him shouting through a horn in a dark room one night at 50c a head. The Doctor, during physical life, was a shoemaker in Germany. Since then he has advanced considerably, having taken the 33d degree, and earned the honorary title of D. A. M. N. (Doctor of Astral Metaphysics and Noumena.)

"The dead see and know all things," asserted the Doctor solemnly in a ministerial voice.

"That Wellman is an ass," said the Judge to me, after we had gone outside. "He doesn't know what he is talking about, and I am not going back any more."

"I know of a medium," continued the Judge, as he paused in a sheltered doorway to light a cigar, "that has an Irishman for a control who used to be a bartender in St. Louis before the war. Let's go over tomorrow night and see him. He isn't a D. A. M. N. fool anyway."

The next evening we went to see the Irish spook at Professor Harrison's.

On our way we met Jones, who wanted to know if I had much money with me, and where I was going. Jones can be fearfully offensive and tiresome at times.

"I'll tell you, Jones," I explained evasively, yet truthfully, "we are going to see a friend of the Judge's. We'll have to hurry, because he may be dead before we get there."

When we arrived at the Professor's, the show was about to begin. There were ten of us, including the Professor and his wife, all alive.

Unlike other mediums, the Profes-

VERBATIM CONVERSATIONS WITH MY WIFE'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER AND MY OLD FRIEND MIKE

sor pulls off his performance without much preliminary foolishness. I will say, too, that the Professor is very genial and democratic, and his seances are well worth the money.

We were seated comfortably around a table, holding hands in a

"Good evening, ladies and gents." "Good evening, Mike," responded the Judge. "I am glad to see you." The Judge, of course, didn't see him, but it is quite the conventional and proper thing at a spook-fest to tell an invisible ghost that you see

sisted the electrician. "D'ye mind when you stopped at that saloon on Grand Avenue and Morrison street before ye came up here?" asked Mike. "Er-er um," stammered the man of dynamos, volts and amperes con-



AND THEN A LOUD HIBERNIAN VOICE CALLED THE ROOM: "GOOD EVENING, LADIES AND GENTS"

circle. No sooner were the lights turned out than an excitable lady at seat next to me remarked with a convulsive shudder:

"I feel the current so strong tonight. I'm sure we are going to get something good. Don't you think so, Professor?"

"I wouldn't be surprised," replied the Professor, in a confident tone. "I didn't feel the current myself, but then, there must be someone present who feels the psychic current first."

Pretty soon an electrician, who sat on the other side of the table, said he saw some sparks, and the seance was on.

The horn, which previously had been placed in the center of the table, began to tremble and rattle, and then a loud Hibernian voice filled the room.

him. It puts him at ease, and he works better. On the same principle, perhaps, that a famous prima donna cannot sing behind a screen, or, if Paderewski played in the dark, people would think that it was a pianola. Anyway, the Judge was glad to see him, and he said so.

"How long since you have had a drink, Mike?" asked the electrician. "About half an hour ago," responded Mike.

"How is that?" asked the electrician in surprise. "I didn't know they drank in Heaven."

"I'm not in Heaven."

"That's too bad, Mike, but where are you?" "I'm just dead, an' it's not bad at all, at all. It's like bein' at home, only it isn't hot like it was in St. Louis."

"But how about that drink?" per-

fusedly. "I wasn't feeling just right, so I stopped in and—"

"Yis," interrupted Mike, "an' ye tuk a Scotch highball. I was standin' right by ye. Ye got the sooty wather and the other physical parts, an' I got the spirits, which was the best part of it b' d'ad!"

"Mike," inquired the Judge, noticing that the electrician was silent, "do you know Dr. Wellman?"

"Do I know that lobster? Sure I do. He's right here in the room now, tryin' to but in wid a long talk about the wan-ness of ultimate WHAT. I'll swat him in the astral plexus, if ye say so, Judge. He'll think he's the ray-incarnation of Jim Corbett."

"Do you believe in reincarnation, wid a step-ladder brow was tellin' Mike?"

"I don't know much about it,

Judge, but I'm thinkin' it's all right. A fierce-lookin' spook fr'm Hamburg me about it the other day."

"Did he say who he was?" "He did, but it was wan o' thim Dutch names, an' I can't ray-mimber. It sounded something like Chop an' holler."

"Was it Schopenhauer?" "That's th' boy. He says to me: 'Mike, that ray-incarnation's the right dope,' says he."

"How d'ye know?" says I. "You read my book, an' ye'll know all about it," says he. "Did you read it, Mike?"

makes the contents of the book much lighter, Judge. Th' Doc goes around 't' all th' meetin's like this, an' whin he gets a chance, he reads a chapter or two an' looks like he wrote it hisself."

"Does he understand it?" "Not th' doc. He always gets mad whin I ask him what it means."

"Speaking of reincarnation, Mike," began the Judge again, "I—"

"You'll excuse me, Judge," interrupted Mike. "There's a spirit standin' by that can't hold himself together much longer, an' if I don't give him th' horn now, he'll explode, an' he won't be able to get back."

The horn, under the impulse of the anxious and unstable newcomer, circled rapidly around the room, seemingly over our heads. An abrupt voice shouted:

"Dr. Jig! Dr. Jig! Dr. Jig!" "Does anyone know Dr. Jig?" inquired the professor.

No one answering, the Professor said: "We don't know you, Doctor. You are in the wrong place. Good by."

The horn fell to the table with a clatter, and it was evident that he had exploded, although we didn't hear the report.

"Mike," I finally called after a long silence, "are you still there?" "Sure I am," replied Mike, giving the horn a shake.

I didn't know Dr. Jig, but before he passed out, he lived in my neighborhood, and I knew who he was.

"Mike," I asked, "Can you get Dr. Jig back here again? I want to speak to him."

"I'll try," said Mike obligingly, but he was pretty mad whin he went to pieces."

"The vibrations iv anger," explained Mike, "are sharp, jagged strokes iv light, an' they are a strong dish-integratin' force, Did anyone of ye see the lights?"

"I didn't see the lights," spoke up the electrician, "but I thought someone had burnt out a fuse."

"The Doc is comin'," announced Mike, "a little at a time. There's his left leg now. Th' rest of him will be along pretty soon. That's a good boy, Doc. Steady now! Here's the horn, Doc. Here's a gentleman that wud like t' spake wid ye."

"You—you probably don't remember me, Doctor," I said hesitatingly, "but there's my friend Jones. He told me that you attended his father-in-law once when he was sick. He said that you were a good doctor, and that he was sorry that you died."

A psychic sense, that I did not know I had, told me at this point that the Doctor was considerably mollified, so I went on:

"My friend Jones doesn't believe in this sort of thing, and I thought if I brought him around, you might convince him. He has a whole lot of dead and distinguished relatives. I'll tell Mike about them, and he'll help you hunt them up."

"If your friend Jones does not care to know the truth, he is probably not fit to receive it. 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear,'" quoted the Doctor gloomily.

"That's all right, Doc," I said hurriedly, "but you don't understand Jones. We'll show him, won't we, Mike?"

"You bring him in, an' we'll fix him 'plenty,'" said Mike, as he took the horn from the quickly disintegrating doctor.

"I didn't hear you tell Mike anything about Jones," remarked the Judge, after the seance was over.

"No, but I told everything I could think of to the professor, and it comes to the same thing. I'll get even with Jones, if it costs me ten dollars a minute."

STATESMEN WERE QUICK TO FIGHT

Some Stirring Events at the National Capital Half a Century Ago.

SENSATIONAL episodes happening at the National Capital in which Congressmen were the leading figures was the topic in which a number of gentlemen participated, says the Washington Post, when an old inhabitant of Massachusetts with the remark that he considered the attack upon Senator Sumner of Massachusetts by Representative Preston S. Brooks, of South Carolina, as the greatest incident of the character that was being discussed that ever happened in any hall of legislation.

"It was more than 50 years ago," said the old gentleman, "when this unhappy circumstance occurred. To be more exact, it took place in the latter part of the month of May, 1856. That would make it 52 years ago next month. I remember the event very well, for I was in the Senate chamber soon after Brooks made his assault and saw pieces of the broken gutta percha cane with which he struck the Senator lying near Mr. Sumner's desk."

"Of course there was intense excitement, and it extended all over the civilized world. In many quarters great indignation was expressed, and particularly in England, where the champion of the abolition of slavery, was a great favorite. Brooks was arrested and taken before Justice Hollingshead, one of the most prominent of the Washington justices."

"The district courts did take some action, however. A short time after the assault Mr. Brooks was taken before Judge Crawford, who fined him in the sum of \$300."

barous and ruffianly and used other language of a character that induced Mr. Brooks to challenge him to fight a duel. Wilson, however, was averse to the code and declined.

"Anson Burlingame, also of Massachusetts, made a speech in the House of Representatives in which he cited the killing of Abel by Cain and said Brooks smote Sumner as Cain smote his brother. This led Brooks to challenge Burlingame, who said he would meet Brooks and negotiate things on the Canada side of Niagara Falls. Brooks was ready to fight and willing to go, but several friends who were willing that he should fight did not think he should go so far north for the purpose and he was prevailed upon not to go. As I understand it, he was persuaded against his own will to follow the advice of his friends, and the end of this phase of the matter was that both of these gentlemen were put under heavy bonds not to fight."

"This period of the year 1856 was full of sensational incidents. It was in the same month that Brooks caned Sumner that Representative Herbert, of California, shot and killed a waiter at the Hotel Keating whose name was Keating. There had been some sharp talk between Keating and the Congressman while the latter was breakfasting, and a conversation which was carried on in rather low tones at last broke forth in a violent and certainly not dignified manner. The waiter, Daniel Ratcliffe, and the other waiter, Lenox, Lenox at one time had been Mayor of the city. Both were rather hot-headed and both favored the duel in certain circumstances. They had a war of words in the courtroom and the war was passed. Now among a certain class of gentlemen in this community that meant a fight at that period. These prominent lawyers actually did have a collision in the courtroom, but were separated. Before arrangements for a meeting on the field of honor, however,

both were arrested and required to give bonds not to engage in a duel.

"There were other sensational events about this time, one of which was a difficulty between Mr. Sherman, afterward Senator Sherman, of Ohio, and a Mr. Wright, of Tennessee, both distinguished members of the House of Representatives. Sherman threw a batch of wafers into Wright's face and the Tennessee made an attempt to strike his opponent. There were widespread rumors of a duel to be the outcome of this, but the reported meeting was a flash in the pan. In fact, there was no challenge from either gentleman.

"It was in this same year that President Pierce refused to recognize further Mr. Crampton as the British Minister, because, as it was declared, her Majesty's government was endeavoring to recruit soldiers in the United States for service in the war against Russia. There was naturally much excitement, but diplomacy managed to settle the difficulty peacefully."

Just You.

Undeant I'd defy, nor future woe;
Than all the joys of heaven could e'er impart.
Because it's you.

WANTED: AN ANSWER TO AGNOSTIC

Ministers Called on to Refute the Attack on Revealed Religion, by a Nonogenarian.

BY CHARLES A. COMSTOCK.

I AM a plain, wayfarin' man, content to allow the sentinels on the watch towers of creed do my thinking for me. I have been fairly impressed with the orthodox attitude as to things mundane and celestial, taking it for granted that the Bible, to men of understanding, gave a reasonable and straightforward method of attaining to eternal life, and that Jehovah, the God of the Christians, was a loving and all-wise Father.

I confess that I came to this attitude and conviction, from hearsay. I never read the Bible, because it seemed to my benighted understanding to have little or no consecutive relationship—it being, as it were, disjointed and discursive. I was content to leave it to pilots more skilled than I to thread through, to guide me safely on the road.

I believe that I am one of a type of millions in this country who give a nominal adhesion to Christianity, willing to "stand up and be counted" as believing in that faith. It has, therefore, been with no little consternation that I came across a two-column article in last Sunday's Oregonian, by a man nearly 90 years of age, a Mr. James Stout, who has written with reference to the Bible, our heavenly Father, Moses, Christ and religious belief in general in violent and vituperative abuse in a way that has given me much cause for reflection. Why such outspoken unbelief should be suppressed, even if the pains and penalties of the inquisition should be invoked as of old.

What fills me with greater astonishment is, that our ministers and laymen who are schooled to confront such opponents with the sword of the spirit, who vaunt themselves as doughty warriors (which has given the church militant an exalted name for prowess and courage to withstand its foes) have one and all re-

tired to their tents as if there are no enemies besieging the citadel of our faith. I flattered myself that men competent to deal with Mr. Stout and expose his fallacies would come trooping in numbers to the defense of our religion and our sacred standard-bearers, whom it seems profanation to stigmatize; so far not one has entered the lists to refute him. What is the matter? Some might aver that his accusations have been made and answered a thousand times. For the edification of many like myself, let us hear it repeated once more.

For my own part Mr. Stout's letter has set me thinking and enough of the Bible is quoted to incline me to see that our

Father is not one, after all, of all-lovingness. Are we to understand that as we were made in his image, with all our frailties and shortcomings that it is therefore to be tolerated in him?

If Mr. Stout is wrong I want to know it. It does not seem to me right that those who can refute him (assuming that they can) draw themselves into their shells, or like the ostrich, stick their heads in the sand, thinking they have hidden themselves from public view. They are mistaken. I want his allegations refuted so as not to lose faith in what I have been taught. It is due me and thousands like me.

Portland, Or., May 11.

THE PRINCIPLE OF TURBINES

ONE can think of few things harder to describe than the turbine engine, although in principle it is simplicity itself. A child's pinwheel is the idea one can start with, the pin representing the shaft. But in order to get a more economical use of steam than by blowing a jet against a pinwheel design in the open air let it be enclosed in a large pipe or cylinder. Then to get the greater power from the intake of the steam against these blades it is necessary to get them as far from the shaft as possible and there are a great number of these blades, very small and fixed on the outside of a cylinder, in the center of which cylinder is the shaft. This cylinder with its blades sticking out all over its surface is tightly encased in another fixed cylinder, leaving just room for the blades to revolve. Then as the steam is blown through between the inner and outer cylinders the numerous blades take up this power and quickly

start the inner cylinder and its shaft revolves with extreme rapidity.

Again, to get still better results from the jets of steam, rows of blades are placed on the inside of the casing or fixed cylinder in such a way that the rows of blades on the moving cylinder just fit in or dovetail together, these fixed blades in the casing are so arranged that they serve to reverse the direction of the steam before it strikes the next row of movable blades. The blades that are furthest from the intake of high pressure steam are made larger, so as to take up better the rapidly expanding vapor, and this process is carried on through various steps until a full vacuum is reached. All of the thousands of small blades, both in the movable and fixed rows, are curved—Yachting.

The English Episcopal clergy are discarding the old soft felt hat they have worn so long, and are adopting a stiff one made of smooth black felt, shaped like the straw-tube hat, that is called in England "biscuits." The new hat is said to be "smart and yet sober."