

GHOST STORIES

from REAL LIFE

BY JOHN ELFBRETH WATKINS.

WHETHER our sheeted dead do really return to speak and gibber through highways and byways, or rattle their bones in our haunted houses, you may believe, or you may not. Whether direct mind-to-mind communication can be maintained between the quick and the dead, you may seriously doubt. You may have sniffed and sneezed at all accounts that you have hitherto heard or read of spirit apparitions, spook or shade, boggyard or banshee, ghost or goblin, it matters not. Whether the strange occurrences here to be set down are the products of minds that are diseased-warped or minds gifted by supernatural sense—who knows? The gentle reader doth not; no more doth the humble writer, and as for the latter, all that he can say is that these strange accounts have been compiled from the testimony of recent cases filed with our new American Society for Psychical Research. And that profound association of ghost-hunters assumes no direct responsibility for these weird phenomena—gives them no indorsement beyond its avowal that they have been furnished by apparently trustworthy contributors.

The Violet Ghost.

First I will give you the pith of the strange story of the violet ghost. A personal friend of Professor James H. Hyslop, secretary of the society, was sitting by the deathbed of her 13-year-old son. In the death chamber was a small vase filled with violets, which the mother several times during the day brought to the bedside, and the last time she did so he whispered that he would devote his life to raising violets when he was well. Then in a very little while the black angel came, and with her his soul floated away through the violet-scented air.

"I laid the violets on his breast, and there they were when he was laid in his grave," writes the mother. "This was early in March." * * * In August of the same year I was alone in my room, sewing, when all at once, first a faint and then a very pronounced odor of violets filled the room. There certainly were no violets anywhere. It was not the season. What was it? "Charlie is here," something said within me, and just then my remaining son, who had been upstairs in a little den wherein the boys had always done their studying, came down and said: "Mother, have you any violets here? Just now it smelt so strong of them up in my room. It was so nice."

Every now and then, at long intervals, this fragrance of violets would thus suddenly be with us, and whenever it happened to be here just then would smell it and know it to be violets.

Then to this haunted house came a skeptic—the bride of the youngest son. She scoffed at the stories of the violet ghost until ten years after its first haunting, when, so she testifies, she herself met with it in the attic-room. She and her husband were standing in wonder when the mother slipped into the room and the latter said: "Oh, the sweetness of it! A basketful of violets could not have filled the room with that fragrance." * * * We stood and marvelled, but I knew in truth that Charlie had come again. Since we could not see him, this was surely a beautiful way for him to impress us with his presence.

The Ghost of Kate Field.

Indeed it was a "beautiful way" compared with that alleged to be employed by the ghost of Kate Field, the author. Miss Ames C. B., a correspondent of the Society for Psychical Research, after dining with the Boston author, Lillian Whiting, sat in a dark room with the latter. They were chatting of Kate Field. "Near the close of the narrative," says Miss B., "for an instant I had a curious numb feeling run through my left arm, shivering to the hand of an electric tingle. It was such a strange happening that when Miss Whiting finished, I told her of it and her only somewhat staggered me, for she said: 'Oh, yes, Kate is here! I felt her. That's how I know. She doesn't mean to give that little shock, but she can't help it.' I could hardly accept it with the same equanimity that Miss Whiting did. Never before had I had the same feeling come. As I was resting easily in a comfortable chair, it could not be numbness resulting from cramped—it did not last long enough."

Wrath of Joe Jefferson.

Joseph Jefferson's wrath employs more pleasurable means of signaling his earthly friends, according to another correspondent of the society, who, while recently attending a lecture, was annoyed by the repetition of the word "penicillin," pronounced over and over. "When a stranger said: 'Tell her how much I love her—Joseph Jefferson,'" she confided her weird experience to a woman sitting next to her, who happened to be a former actress who had known Jefferson well and at whose home at Martha's Vineyard, the veteran actor had visited a week before his death. "Mother," said the word by which this phantom announced itself, was the name of the daughter of the late actor's favorite stage character, Rip Van Winkle.

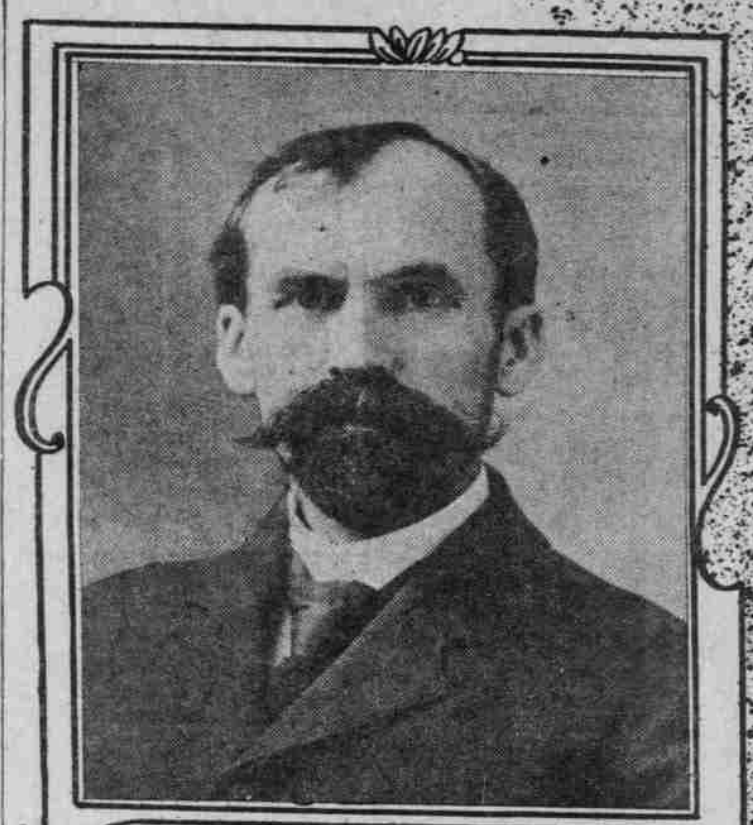
A ghostly signal, even more peculiar, was that reported recently by Hereward Carrington, the young Anglo-American scientist and author. In this case, the thing, whatever it was, heralded its coming by making the rattling sound of a coin spinning upon hardwood.

Ghost of a Kiss.

But here is a phantasmal salutation of a kind that is to be wished for, especially inasmuch as it is employed by the specter not of a deceased, but of a living person and that individual of the fair sex. A gentleman stopping at a Buffalo hotel was awakened during the night by the phantasm of his wife, which stood at the foot of his bed, and could be distinctly seen, although the room was entirely dark.

"What are you doing here?" cried the haunted man, half springing out of bed.

"I thought I would come out and see how you were getting along," replied the shade. Then it stooped to the head of the bed, bent over and kissed the startled man, who thereupon broke into a cold sweat and suffered a nervous chill. Indeed, he was so terrified, he became that he trumped up a pretext to wire his wife a business question. Her reply indicating that he was safe and longer and on his return home noted his wife's curiosity as to whether he experienced anything on the very night of his visitation. Pleased for her reason-



PROF. JAS. H. HYSLOP
HEAD OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH



MRS. LEONORE PIPER
THROUGH WHOM THE
SPECTRAL "DR. PHINUIT"
COMMUNICATES.

son for inquiry, she admitted that on the night in question she had read of a method of mentally projecting one's phantasm through space and upon trying had concentrated her mind upon the desire to appear to him and kiss him at 1 o'clock in the morning.

Projected Double Through Space.

Another who projected his own phantasm through space was "an able and respected professor at Harvard University," a colleague of Professor William James, who reports the case. One evening, while alone in his room, the unnamed professor opened his window, which overlooked a young woman's house—a half mile away—and, while sitting in the dark, tried as hard as he could to wish himself into her presence. At the same hour the young woman while at supper exclaimed:

"There is black looking through the crack of the door!"

"He can't be there, he would come right in," replied her vis-a-vis, turning round. But she could not be convinced until she had gotten up and investigated for herself.

Phantasm of Would-Be Suicide.

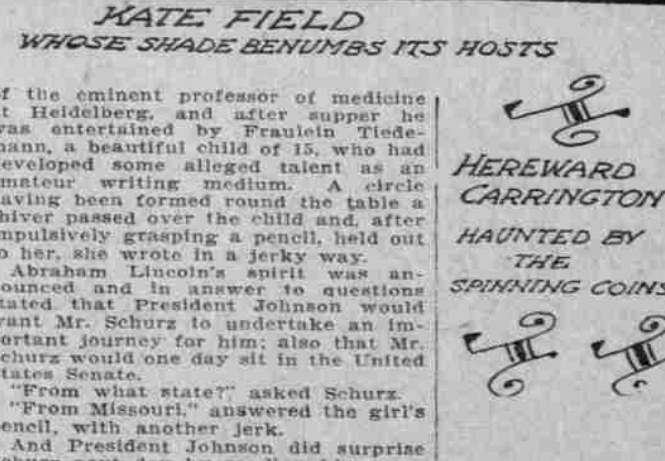
But in the strange case now to be told such a phantasm of the living went on no idle business. Rather it saved a suffering mortel from a mad and reckless death. Professor Hyslop sets this case from what he terms "a most intelligent source"—a minister who recorded the details in his diary shortly after their occurrence. On a Saturday evening, while trying to write his next day's sermon, he had an impulse to go out upon his porch, which overlooked a misty marsh lying between his house and a lonely beach. It was a heavy night and a dense gray fog gave a gloomy, desolate aspect to all around. He felt a mad impulse to leap into the water, and while he was trying to overcome this his blood was curdled by a low, mournful cry that seemed to come out of the fog enveloping the lowland. At the same instant, he reports, "the gloom seemed to give way to a narrow streak of light, and I saw a woman standing on the path leading to the beach, and then the beach itself, became as distinct as at noonday; then suddenly at the end of the narrow streak, at the very water's edge—a man. In an instant I recognized him; it was my senior warden."

Schurz and Lincoln's Ghost.

A ghost experience of Carl Schurz, although happening a generation back, is one of the most interesting reported to the society. On his way to Washington to answer a summons of President Johnson he stopped over in Philadelphia with his friend, Herr Tiedemann, son



JOSEPH JEFFERSON
WHOSE GHOST WHISPERS
THE FAMILIAR NAME "MEENIE"
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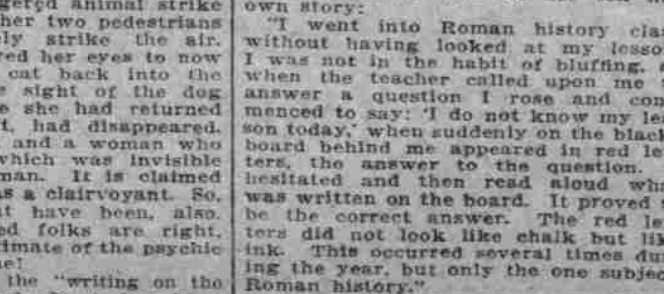
KATE FIELD
WHOSE SHADE BENUMBS ITS HOSTS



HEREWARD CARRINGTON
HAUNTED BY
THE SPINNING COINS



CARL SCHURZ
TO WHOM LINCOLN'S GHOST
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around, as is this sporty specter which now and then does a good turn for W. H. S., another correspondent of the society. "I made a mental request that the colors of the wither of that Sarban be shown to me," he reports. "The request was shortly followed by a mental picture of a jockey on a horse, the colors of the jockey being rather a brilliant blue and broad yellow stripe. The race took place three or four days afterward, with 15 to 20 horses, and only one entry had colors as above. That was John A. Drake's Savable, blue and gold. I had no faith in the picture received and when I found that Savable was 40 to 1 in the betting I paid no further attention to the matter. Savable was played down to 15 to 1 and came in first." This gentleman had greater faith in a later experiment. "I closed my eyes while lying down," he goes on to say, "and two blurs of color suddenly showed up before my face—gray and magenta. When I got a programme on the way to the track I knew for the first time that these colors belonged to the Thomas stable, which had Hermes entered for the race. His price was 4 to 1 to win and even money for second place. I bet \$5 each way and won \$25, as he came out first."

Sent Ghost to London on Business.

Another accommodating ghost influenced a dying father in London to favor his son in America in the making of his will. This shade was "Dr. Phinuit," he alleged spirit control of Mrs. Leonore Piper, the celebrated non-professional medium of Boston, with whom the British Society for Psychical Research has lately subjected to close study. Mrs. Piper, after telling the son's wife that the father would die in a few weeks, was asked to intercede with the old gentleman in favor of the son. The spectral "Dr. Phinuit" was commissioned as intermediary and within the time intimated the father died suddenly of heart failure. The son started for London after learning from "Dr. Phinuit" through Mrs. Piper, the exact state of the will and the intelligence that the principal executor would make a disposition in his (the son's) favor, subject to the consent of the other two executors.

Three weeks afterward, testifies the son, "I arrived in London and found the principal executor to be the man Dr. Phinuit had described. The will went materially, as Dr. Phinuit had stated. The disposition was made in my favor, and my sister, who was chiefly at my father's bedside the last days of his life, told me he had repeatedly complained of the presence of an old man at the foot of his bed, who annoyed him by discussing his private affairs."

That the ghostly Dr. Phinuit was this old man is the belief of those concerned.

This, too, is weird: Mrs. A. B. Quentin is troubled by a constant dream, in which the water comes up and covers the lawn of the home of her ancestors, at Great Neck, L. I. Once when she told her grandmother of this dream the old lady exclaimed: "Why, have you had that old dream? I dream it, too, and my mother did before me." And lately Mrs. Quentin was amazed to discover that her own little daughter, aged 12, had had the same dream. "It was the same thing, word for word," says Mrs. Quentin, "and I am positive she had never heard either my grandmother or myself speak of it."

Ghastly Ghostly Hands.

But for ghostly ghastliness and ghostliness here is the cream de la creme of the whole collection: On the eve of his death William P. of Tennessee, X, longed to hear a young lady play Bragan's "Angel Serenade." She on the same night, although 200 miles away, had this experience: "I was lying on a couch in my library thinking of him when his hands (I saw them distinctly) took mine and led me to the piano," states the young woman herself, recalling that same sad night, "at once began to play 'Angel Serenade.' And his hands followed mine all through the notes till I became hysterical and had to stop playing. 'Now comes the strangest part,' she continues. "His mother tells me he kept wishing to hear me play, and suddenly he became very quiet and his fingers seemed to be playing upon a piano. All

at once he gave a great sign and said: 'How beautiful!' and dropped into a comatose condition, from which he never awakened."

An hour after his death next day the young woman, still 200 miles away, was reading in her room when a draught of icy air blew between the blue curtains of her room. Her little dog raised his head, began to whine and then crawled under her chair. Then she looked up, and there between the curtains stood her newly deceased friend with outstretched hands and a most heavenly smile upon his face.

"I stared at him spellbound for a few minutes," she continues, "and as the clock struck 3 he vanished. Just then our door-bell rang and I went to the door to receive a telegram saying: 'Willie died at 8. Come at once.'"

Phantom fashions are as fickle as those in feminine finery, and but few now remain of these good old-fashioned death wreaths of the creepy sort that bring out the cold sweat and the gooseflesh, that cause our teeth to chatter, that make us shake all over with the shivers and that force our "each particular hair to stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

PORTLAND.

If perchance you've bought your ticket for a trip out in the West And you've crossed the Rockies' summit And the Continental Great, And he then you have forgotten By what line your tickets read, Then you may know your train is going With a smooth and even speed— Then you may know you're bound for Portland.

By the line the water took, When the hand of the golden stair Started river, rill and brook. But if you find your meditation Interrupted by the shock Of the sharp engine putting As it climbs along the rock, Then you may know that you're making Round a curve, reverse-compound, Then you may know that you've missed Portland.

And for some other port are bound, Or if from your car window You should glance a moment back, And should see a freight train stretching Long a mile or more of track, With its engine puffing steam, At the task it has ahead, Then you may know you're bound for Portland.

Down the famous waterbed, Of a dozen cars or less, With two mighty engines putting The sleep in sore distress, Then you may know you've made a blunder And for Portland you're not bound, But you'll surely find your way, Or the Northern Puget Sound.

Or, when you've passed the Rockies' summit And descended to the plain, And you feel that hark and tighten With a gasp that gives you pain, And you know from your sensation You're a mile up in the air, And you feel that any moment You may catch the Golden Stair, Then you may know without consulting Either time card, sheet or map, That you're not bound for good, old Portland Down the famous water bed.

If you now in meditation Wonder what city is to be The future great metropolis Of the great Pacific Sea, Just recall (if you're from college) Newton solved it full and fair, When he said for bodies falling 'S equals one-half g-t square.' And the force that hurls and flings Through the mighty realms of space Always is moving onward, Ever in their appointed place, Has decreed that here at Portland Shall stand the future greatest city Of the great Pacific Sea. H. A. RANDS, Oregon City.

Advice to Correspondents.

If you've got a thing that's happy, Boil it down. Make it short and crisp and snappy. Boil it down. When your brain its coin has minted, Down the page your pen has printed, If you want your effort printed, Boil it down.

Take out every surplus letter. Boil it down. Fewer syllables the better. Boil it down. Make your meaning plain—express it so we'll know, not merely guess it. Then, my friend, as you address it, Boil it down.

Cut out all the extra trimmings. Boil it down. Skim it well, then skim the skimmings. Boil it down. When you're sure 'twould be a sin to cut another sentence in two, Send it on and we'll begin to Boil it down.