

The Ghost Pictures That are Terrorizing Three Villages

And How Sympathetic Students of Spirit Manifestation Accept the Tales of Faces on Tablecloth, Window-pane and Mirror, While Skeptics Hold They Are Merely Accidental.

Hereward Carrington, the noted investigator, who holds the three spirit picture instances reported from the south should be studied by science.

WHAT is the unseen power behind the mystery that is terrorizing the good folk in certain rural districts south of the Mason-Dixon line? Is some weird spectre actually prowling through the mysterious night hours, leaving behind evidences of an uncanny visitation, or is the Ku Klux Klan merely playing another of its fantastic pranks upon these communities? Whatever the answer, the people in remote parts of Kentucky, Indiana and Mississippi find themselves frozen in a grip of terror. They cannot explain the weird phenomena going on about them, but from recent happenings hosts of people who never before thought seriously of the presence of spirits are convinced that there is some means of communication between the astral plane and earth.

Prominent among recent evidence is the uncanny experience of Mrs. Craven Aubry of Eastview, Harden county, Kentucky. One night, when the pale September moon illumined the blue fields of Kentucky, Mrs. Aubry peered from the window of her living room. Save for a fierce wind which howled and flapped the crumbling shutters against the rambling old house, all was quite usual. Autumn magic charged the air, and Mrs. Aubry found herself indulging in thoughts that bordered upon the sentimental. Just a year ago, Craven, her beloved mate for many years, had passed to the great beyond. Memories of her life with this pal and husband were particularly poignant tonight.

She thought of the twilight hours when they had talked of their many adventures together; of the ups-and-downs, the triumphs and defeats through which they had passed. Often had they talked of life's big adventure, of the final climax which both must some day face. Life after death? Sometimes they wondered, but once or twice, Craven, with just the suspicion of seriousness in his voice, had promised that if there was any way of his spirit's returning, he would come back and give evidence of the fact.

It was just a year now since Mrs. Aubry faced widowhood and an uncertain old age. Yet, in all these 12 months, no sign had come from her departed one. But the widow was not given to dwelling upon the morbid, and, dismissing all thought of the past from mind, made ready for bed. Sleep that night was elusive, and despite her resolution she found herself haunted by memories of her deceased husband. The howling wind, the far-off hoot of an owl, and the banging shutter, lent a melancholy note to the lonely setting. A strange sensation pervaded the woman, but ultimately sleep conquered. The night sped by and Mrs. Aubry awoke, as usual, to find the new-born day. As had been her custom for years, she stepped into the little room which had served as a dining hall, and started to arrange breakfast. On reaching the table, however, she stood just as still as though her body had suddenly received the voltage from an electric current. There, unmistakably and indelibly marked upon the table cover were the craven features of Craven Aubry, departed. Who had entered during the night and left this uncanny imprint where she must see it? In a state of panic Mrs. Aubry summoned neighbors. No one could erase the image, no one could explain it, but the majority were convinced of its spectral origin, and the more superstitious dared not lay a single finger upon the cloth.

"Tis an evil omen," said one. "Tis

a warning from Craven," declared others, but there the mystery stood.

Then came reports from other distant communities, and immediately the various sections began to exchange notes. Squire Hooper, down in Connorsville, Ind., had had an experience that very week somewhat similar to Mrs. Aubry's.

Rising from a good night of undisturbed slumber, there stared at the window from the window pane the spectral hands and face of a woman! Hooper was a man of "sense." Some one had been playing a trick upon him. He would attend to the youngsters who so dared trifle with an upholder of law and order! He would administer some good thrashings, if need be. But before starting upon his mission of discipline, the squire determined to wipe the uncanny thing from the window lest it frighten other members of his family. He began with soap and ended by using everything available in the kitchen, but the ghastly imprint would not be washed away. Rub and scrub as he would, the face and hands remained upon the glass.

Once again the strange phenomenon struck. This time in a remote village in Mississippi—in the hamlet of Natchitoches, to be precise. This time the living likeness of a deceased negress appeared suddenly and apparently from nowhere upon a mirror in her former home! What was the cause of this strange business? How could it be explained?

Hereward Carrington, doctor of philosophy and a man who has devoted the greater part of his life to scientific investigation, within whose charming New York studio animated conversations are often carried on with spirits, had this to say concerning the spirit pictures:

"They are by no means new or uncommon. There have been many instances where pictures like these have appeared suddenly and apparently from nowhere. They are sometimes attributed to natural phenomena and sometimes to spirit origin."

"Not so long ago two remarkable mediums, the Bangs sisters, carried on a series of experiments in Chicago before a body of scientists and research workers. Before the very eyes of spectators spirit pictures appeared upon blank pieces of canvas which had been tacked up to receive them. Two pieces of cloth were placed together and tacked to a frame, like any ordinary picture might be; then



Another "psychic light" photograph offered as evidence by Mr. Carrington. Two investigators sat in a dark room and took a flashlight.

the frame was placed in front of a window so that the light might filter through. As the medium concentrated, gradually, but surely the features of some deceased person, recognized as friend or acquaintance by many of the spectators, appeared upon the canvas. The completed picture was beautifully colored and life-like in every detail, and while it looked as though it might have been drawn with crayon the "drawing" material felt like the dust from a butterfly's wings. It blew off quite readily, though with careful handling the canvases might be preserved for a long while.

"Very often the natural elements, the weather, for instance, is responsible for many so-called 'psychic phenomena.' A striking example of this occurred some years ago in Georgia. A young negress had been brutally murdered. Her body, prepared for burial, was laid out in the middle of the floor. A storm was brewing; thunder roared and suddenly a great bolt of lightning flashed through the room. It was over in a second, of course, but when the great blue flash had passed, the features of the negress, just as she laid in her coffin, were precipitated upon the window pane."

"While it would be necessary for any scientific investigator to put the pictures which have occurred in the south to a thorough test, in order to determine the

case, it is entirely possible that they might be of spirit origin."

So much for the spiritualistic theory! If the whole thing were a hoax there was but one man to explain the trick. That was the magician, Henry Houdini. For Mr. Houdini has exposed more "fake" mediums than any other living being.

STORY OF THE TUNE DIGGERS

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took her out to the hemlock tree. She walked steadily, clad in Ely's old clothes, his puttees and boots, his old mackinaw. They stood together for very long, while the barberry bush rustled its naked lacy branches vainly, boasting in a still little way the wood things have, or the feathery leaves it was weaving for those boughs. Then Pamela Brooke spoke. "Good-bye, Ely."

She turned away, her hands in the pockets of the old mackinaw. Then she faced Lucien, a curious expression on her face. In her fingers she held a folded, soiled piece of paper.

"It was in the pocket."

"It's his handwriting, Ely's. He was pretty weak—see how it shakes." The handwriting was Ely's. Pencilled, frail,



Houdini's own spirit hovering over him in a double exposure he had taken to prove all spirit pictures fraudulent.



A "psychic light" photograph taken during a seance. Mr. Carrington says the negatives were not tampered with in any way. Investigators in a New York laboratory are trying to solve the light by the spectroscope.

Houdini, as he prefers to be called, is not a scoffer nor a skeptic. He tells you frankly when the subject is broached that he is eager for a sign from the great beyond, but that in all his quarter of a century's investigation of the subject nothing yet has happened to convince him that there is such a thing as spirit communication. And, by the way, he is the one man whom Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would like to see "convinced."

"Spirit pictures—yes—I make them almost every night!" exclaimed Houdini. "It is a great trick, if you know how; one from which some of the so-called 'mediums' are reaping a golden harvest. With professional fakers the X-ray has played

a big part in 'spirit' photography. No doubt in this instance, the good rural folk allowed their imagination to run riot."

"Once while experimenting with some trick photography we were playing around with double exposure and many other methods in order to get some startling results. The camera man began taking 'stills' of me. Lo, when a certain batch of pictures were developed, there appeared over my head on one, the shadowy vision of the hands and arms of a foreign body. But true to all my experiences, we found the shadow merely the reflection of a friend who stood by with his arms resting upon a nearby window sill!"

hook, chained to a stake, yelped desolately and plunged at his collar. Lucien told her good-bye at the door. They said little. There was so little to say, out of a world of words so few that were any use.

"I'll come down—after a little," Lucien stammered. "When it's summer will you let me come—Pamela?"

"When it's summer—Loosh."

The brief warmth of her fingers in his own; a blue, blue tenderness of eyes—and she was gone. But Lucien felt no emptiness of loss. He stood very straight in the fringed path between two grayish ribbons which were all that remained of the great snow barriers, and the glow of all the possessions of the earth was his.

He looked at the house, at the rusty tin letters whimsically tacked beside the door. Ely had said that L belonged in Love! "Shut up, you fool," he said to the dog. "She's coming back."

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