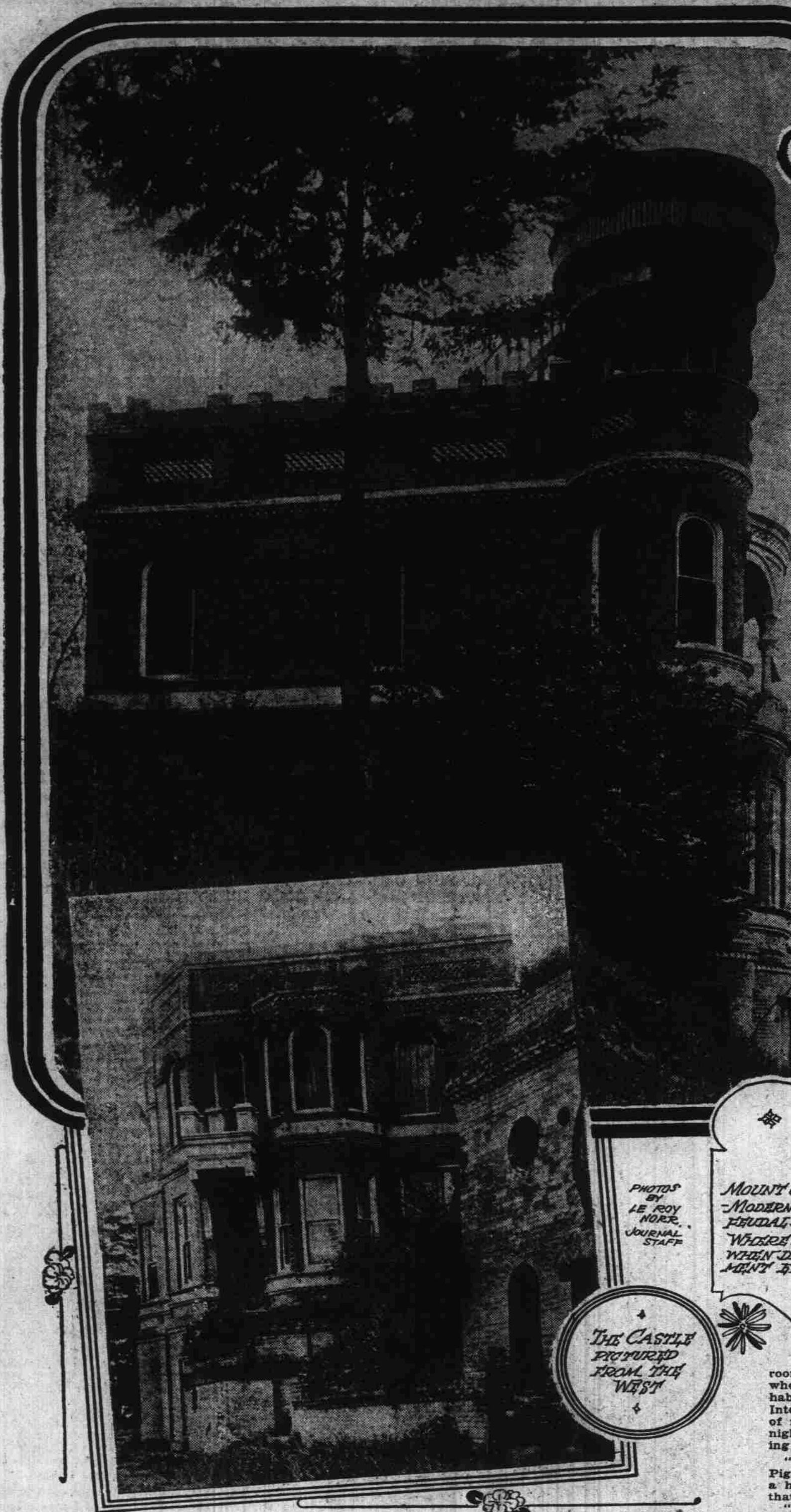


Portland's "Haunted" Castle

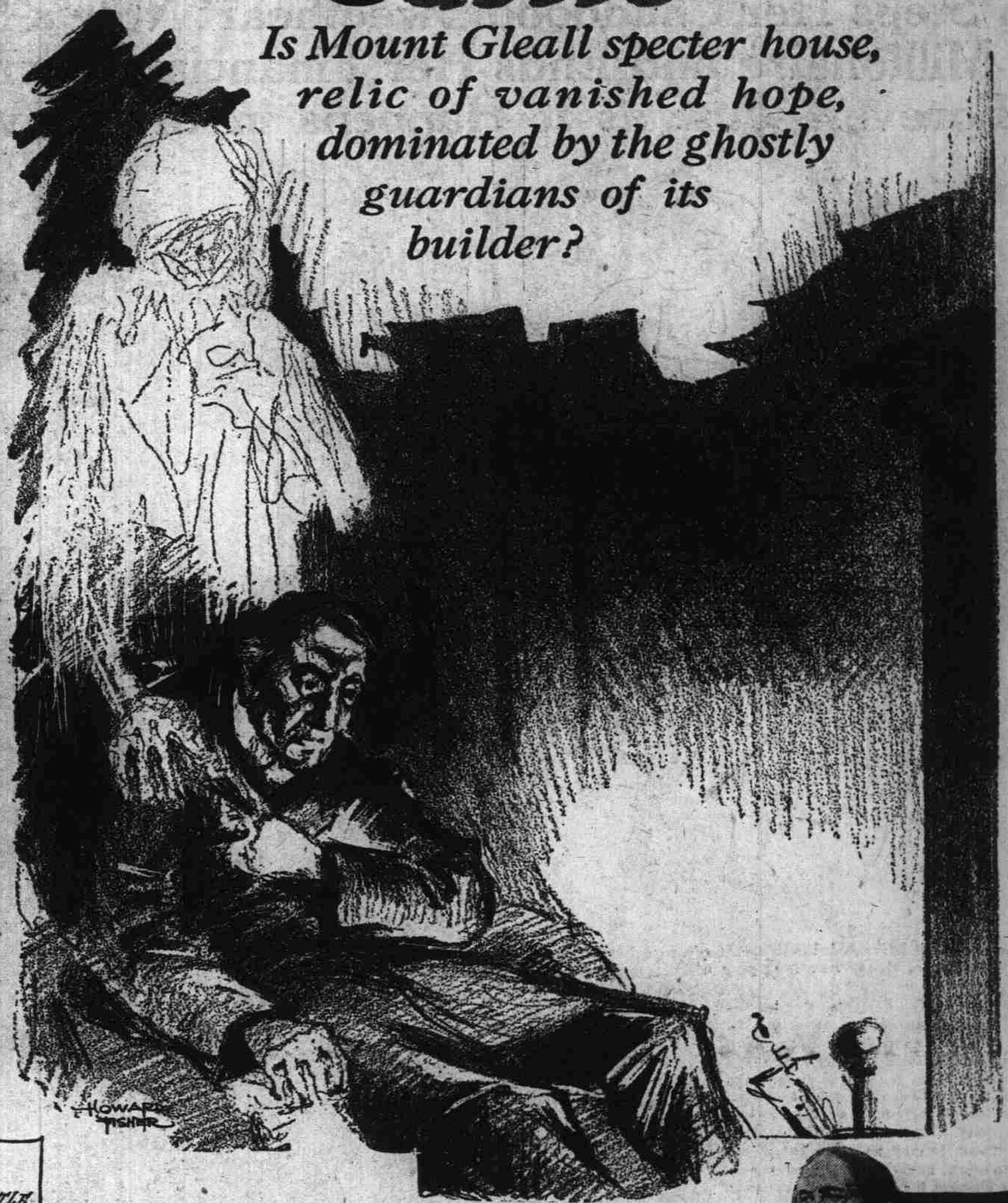
Is Mount Gleall specter house, relic of vanished hope, dominated by the ghostly guardians of its builder?



PHOTOS BY LE ROY MOORE, JOURNAL STAFF

MOUNT GLEALL CASTLE—MODERN ECHO FROM FEUDAL DAYS—WHERE HOPE DIED WHEN DISAPPOINTMENT ENTERED.

THE CASTLE RETURNED FROM THE WEST



doors—doors that were but playthings in the hands of the winds that swept the mountain forests where the castle clings perilously. Floors creaked their thrilling, chilling refrain upon the midnight air—floors that creak the livelong day unnoted and at night, when the stillness is appalling, sound like thunderbolts. Floors always creak, of course.

Mild, cooling summer breezes touched lightly on the hillside and bounded back from that impregnable barrier to the windows of Gleall castle—and the glass rattled gently as the breezes struck it—though the air outside might hardly wave a twig upon the towering fire.

The "spirit" bubble bursts under the light of the artist's study. There's no ghost story after all.

But what a thrilling yarn Poe might have made from the mere supposition of spirits! What thrilling scenes might have been enacted in the "tower of silence," what a house of Usher he could have made of Mount Gleall castle, that he might undo his work again in another tale like "The Fall of the House of Usher!"

Castles come and go in fiction and in fact; fortunes are easy to gain and easier to lose; ghosts appear on the wings of midnight and vanish with the dawn, but the dreamer who built the "haunted" castle, inspiration for many a Portland-told ghost story, sums it all up in his quaintly philosophic way by saying:

"Life is just one darn thing after another, multiplied by five," wherein he amends the older form of the expression by his multiple.

Mount Gleall castle, as far as its builder was concerned, was the "house of disappointment" in many ways, though he still firmly believes that his dream house on the hill was his master conception, a poem in architecture and comfort, a creation that would have been his greatest satisfaction if affairs beyond his control had not twisted and warped in the scheme of things.

"It" is the word. "It" the car line had been built. "It" Piggott had not been swept into the maelstrom of the great panic. "It" the grocer had not been mercenary and demanded tribute for delivery over unusually trying grades from the streets of the city to the hillside castle. "It" the hand of fate hadn't taken the lyre from the hands of the poet-builder and put him at a littered legal desk to seek his livelihood in that more profitable pursuit. The castle is a monument to "it."

There are no ghosts at Gleall castle. Yet there is greater wonder in the appeal the place has for

those who can find the time and the energy to live so high and so aggravatingly distant from the corner store. There is a view from the front rooms of the quaint old castle that is said to be unequalled—a view that encompasses the entire area of Portland, with three great snow-capped peaks in the background; with the bustling city a playground of little people at its feet.

After Piggott had deserted his dream castle, where he fashioned poems of sometimes more than passing merit, to labor upon a more lowly level as a lawyer, the castle was rented to Judge Nat Bloomfield. The judge found no ghosts.

During only brief periods has the castle been uninhabited, despite public opinion to the contrary, and even now, although its upper rooms are empty and their windows boarded up, the lower floor is the happy home of a frugal family.

The castle's tattered walls bear lasting evidence of the old structure's place as a landmark and as an object of the interest of sightseers who have written upon almost every available inch of its unprotected interior their names and addresses and the dates of their visits.

Children, never really welcome as intruders in such a place, have defiled the walls and woodwork with their pencils, nails and knives and from the tin roof of the tower to the door casings travelers have added their marks. The centers of the earth and the corners thereof have sent their residents to see Portland's castle and to leave their marks upon its walls.

All of this has been done during those brief periods when the house has been vacant and at the mercy of intruders. Nowadays one must pass a suspicious little woman who keeps her family together there in order to see the interior of the castle. If she doesn't exact a fee of 10 cents or a quarter, it is only because her visitors are better talkers than she is.

The old castle hangs upon a precipitous slope from which one might, almost in one leap, alight in the center of Broadway at its southern end. It can be reached by the pedestrian only when he is willing to ascend Portland heights and approach the place from the rear or wind up a narrow, steep trail leading off from Terwilliger boulevard or climb the long flight of stairs from Broadway up the trying grade to the hillside home.

Once in its tower of silence, however, the climber is bountifully repaid by the view he may obtain of the city and its great valley. There is no end to the novelty of the perspective, and when that fact is mixed with the contemplation of the castle's history and the fiction



C.H. PIGGOTT

THE BUILDER AND FIRST OWNER OF THE CASTLE AND ITS "TOWER OF SILENCE"

that has been built up between the lines of that history, there is interest enough in the place for anyone.

Armed with a camera, there are many subjects for the amateur about the old castle, but a direct front view of the structure, showing its most interesting angles, is not obtainable from any available vantage point short of an airplane soaring in front of the place. The castle is marred and scarred by time, but it is all there—the romantic old-world gallery over its front entrance is just as great a novelty in this ultra-modern age as if it had been transported direct from the Rhine.

By Earl C. Brownlee

AWFUL silences, punctuated only by measured footbeats of ghostly occupants who play upon creaking stairways; dark corners and queer rooms lighted only by the meager sunshine that filters through cracks in boards of broken windows; plaster and brick crumbled away to expose the frail skeleton of construction; a grim old tower standing sentinel in the winds like a forbidding fortress on the terraced banks of the aged Rhine—this is Mount Gleall castle, Portland's specter house.

In the nearly 30 years it has been surveying the broad valley from its eminence several hundred feet above the level of the city, the "haunted" castle has been the shrine of false hope and the scene and setting of an imaginative drama that would outdo the most weird of Poe's fantasies. And about it all a dizzy whirl of human affairs has woven a mantle of romance and a shroud of pathos.

From which is derived the question, logical in these days of widespread belief in the supernatural: "Do spirit controls of the builder of Mount Gleall castle, envious of those who encroach upon his domain, inhabit the specter house to haunt his successors to the privacies thereof?"

The history of Mount Gleall castle dates from the happy day of its conception, back in 1892, in the mind of its idealistic, dreaming, philosophizing poet-builder, C. H. Piggott. Through the human storms and stresses of 30 years the gaunt old castle has been one of the quaintest objects to which Portland has directed the sightseer.

"That," Portland folk always say, "is the haunted castle." Such is the sum of their knowledge about

the odd structure that overlooks the city from a commanding place above the southern terminus of Broadway. But why "haunted"?

Is it the fact that stories of the resounding footsteps upon its stairs have reached the ears of the army that delights in ghost stories? Is it the fact that its doors, mysteriously slammed to interrupt the slumbers of innocent occupants, have echoed their weird noises over the city?

Amid the appalling silences of that hillside site have been many sounds of mystery—and more than one inexplicable phenomenon.

It is reported by Mr. Piggott that a picture taken of the castle and its surroundings years ago revealed within the forested slopes about the structure, perfect likenesses of Queen Victoria, an Indian brave and another strange character. Surely the queen was not on hand for the occasion, yet her presence there, a photographic falsification, has enhanced the strange history of Mount Gleall.

The castle, product of dreams, was built by Mr. Piggott in 1892 to satisfy his desire for something entirely "different" on a view site second to none in the city. He personally designed the structure, after ideas gained in reading history, and worked always with a thought to his "view" and the complete elimination of long stretches of unbroken wall space. The result is a highly peculiar arrangement of rooms and windows and many unshapely jogs and angles.

The castle is not accessible. That fact brought about its desertion by the builder, who had hoped for a cable line on the terraces about it. Then came the panic of 1893, and the Piggott fortune of approximately \$100,000 was swept into the vortex of disaster. The castle, which cost its builder \$12,000, in

spite of the fact that he supplied its bricks from a yard he owned, went with the rest of it.

That is merely a detail. Piggott built according to his heart's desire. He had view, comfort, room and quiet—as he desired. The three little folk in the family—Gladys, Earl and Lloyd—had their own certain parts in the house over which the poetic lawyer and his wife presided. From the names of his three children, Piggott derived a name for his castle, taking the first two letters from the name of each child to form "Gleall."

But there was one spot from which the world was barred. It was "the tower of silence," that little round room atop the castle, with quaint windows to overlook mile upon mile of valley, north, south and east.

"The tower of silence," Piggott explains, "was my sanctum sanctorum. I was until I was forced to forego the delight of living in the castle, no woman's foot ever trod the floor of that room and no woman's eye glimpsed the beauties that might be seen from its little windows. There I dreamed my dreams—alone, away from everyone and everything. There my verses were fashioned—until literature proved poor stuff to fill the larger with—and there I found the true philosophy of a careless, free and happy life."

But Mr. Piggott has not told all the story, perhaps. His "sanctum sanctorum" was in the thirteenth room in the castle—a spark to inspire the imagination of believers in the supernatural, who insist upon the presence of ghosts.

Through those 13 rooms word-of-mouth fiction has it, echoed the tread of mysterious footsteps in the silent hours of the night. Into the shadowed corners of those 13

rooms came din of doors slammed when every human hand in the habitation was stilled by sleep. Into the 13 rooms came the clatter of rattled window glass when the night air was as still as the breathing of a slumbering babe.

"While I lived in the house," Piggott declares, "there was never a hint of a spirit. I am sure of that."

"But I am not so sure of what came afterward," says this interesting man, now denied the comforts of his once luxurious home.

"My long study of the psychic and the phenomena of spiritism convinces me that my own spirit controls inhabit the castle I dreamed into being, so those who are reaping the benefits, in spite of the fact that they have my own sincere good will, shall be disappointed. I believe my spirit guardians are making the house their own."

But most folk will accept as entertaining the grim and ghostly yarns woven about the "haunted" castle and will pass them lightly on as the stuff fiction is made of. The game of ghost hunting will not be taken seriously by the masses and, perforce, is more or less a light subject in its connection with Mount Gleall castle. The present owner, C. W. Embody, a Portland lumber man, and present and past occupants of the castle, will not attest to the presence of spirits—ghosts are in the imagination of timorous folk.

Several years ago an artist with ambition and a rare nerve essayed an analysis of the weird sounds that invaded the nooks and corners of the castle. He established his studio there and worked diligently for many months between his art and a casual study of his ghostly companions.

This man found the source of those mysterious, pattering steps upon the narrow stairway of the castle. He traced the mystery to its source and discovered the echoed puff-puff of switch engines in the Albina railroad yards—miles across the city, but, nevertheless, uninterruptedly wafted to this lofty dream castle. When the engines stopped their puffing the footsteps on the stairs stopped their pattering.

Doors slammed their merciless fright into the hearts of timid vis-