

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

THE STORY OF A HAUNTED HOUSE

How Two Young People Caught the Ghost and What He Was Like.

"Yes, the house is a good one," said the agent; "it is in a good neighborhood, and you're getting it at almost nothing; but I think it right to tell you all about it. You are orphans' you say, and with a mother dependent upon you? That makes it all the more necessary that you should know. The fact is, the house is said to be haunted."

The agent could not help smiling as he said it, and he was relieved to see an answering smile on the two faces before him.

"Ah, you don't believe in ghosts!" he went on; "nor do I, for that matter; but, somehow, the reputation of the house keeps me from having a tenant long at a time. The place ought to rent for twice as much as it does."

"If we succeed in driving out the ghost, you will not raise the rent?" asked the boy, with a merry twinkle in his eyes. "Well, no—not this year, at any rate," laughed the agent; and so the house was rented; and the slip of a girl and the tall lad, her brother, went their way.

Within a week the family had moved into the house and were delighted with it. It was large and cool, with wide halls and fine stairways; and with more room than they needed. But that did not matter in the least, for they had always been cramped in small houses, suffering many discomforts; and they never could have afforded such a place as this if it had not been "haunted."

"Blessings on the ghost!" cried Margaret, gaily, as she ran about as merry as a child. "Who would be without a ghost in the house, when it brings one like this?"

"And it is so near your school," said the mother; "and I used to worry so over that long walk; and now David can come home to lunch, and you don't know how nice that will be."

"It seems to me," said David gravely, "that if I should meet the ghost I would treat him with the greatest politeness and encourage him to stay. We shall not miss the room he takes, shall we? I think it would be well to set aside that room over yours, Margie, for his ghostly's own, for we shall not need that, you know. Besides, the door doesn't shut and he can go in and out without breaking the lock."

And then they all laughed and had a great deal of fun over the ghost, which was a great joke to them.

They were very tired that night, and slept soundly all night long. When they met next morning, there was more laughter about the ghost, which was shy about meeting strangers, perhaps, and had made no effort to introduce himself. For the next three days they were all hard at work, trying to bring chaos into something like order; and then it was time for school to open, and Margaret was to begin teaching, and David inserted an advertisement in the city papers for a maid-of-all-work, who might help their mother in their absence.

For one whole day prospective colored servants presented themselves and announced: "I'll do the house where day wants a work lady? No, ma'am, I ain't wintin to work in dis house! Ketch me workin' in no haunted house!"

After which they each and all departed, and others came in their stead. One was secured after awhile, but no sooner had she talked across the fence with a neighbor's servant than she, too, departed.

"Never mind, children," said Mrs. Craig, wearily. "I would much rather do the work than be troubled in this way."

So the maid-of-all-work idea was dismissed and the Craig family locked the doors and went to their rooms worn out with the day's anxieties.

They had been in the house four days, and there had been neither sight nor sound of the ghost. The very mention of it was enough to start them all to laughing, for they were thoroughly practical people, with a fondness for inquiring into anything that seemed mysterious to them and for understanding it thoroughly before they let it go.

David was soon sleeping the sound sleep of healthy boyhood and all was silent in the house, when Margaret stole softly into his room and touched his arm. He was not easy to wake and several minutes had elapsed before he sat up in bed with an inarticulate murmur of surprise. "Hush," said Margaret, in a whisper, with her hand on his lips. "I want you to come into my room and listen to a sound that I have been hearing for some time."

"Doors creaking," said David, as he began to dress. "Nothing of that kind," was all she said; and they softly stole into the next room and listened.

The chirping of an insect in the trees outside was the only sound they heard for so long a time that David was beginning to think what a laugh he would have on his sister next day. Then all at once it started again. It was the sound of a chain, dragging back and forth across the floor of the room. Sometimes it was dragged slowly, sometimes rapidly; and sometimes it seemed to fall in a heap. A strange sound it was in the middle of the night, when everything else was still. Even the chirp in the trees had ceased; and nothing was now to be heard but that chain, dragging about the floor of the upper room.

"We'll go and look into it," said David softly, and in a moment he had lighted a lamp and was leading the way.

They walked up the stairway, and along the upper hall to the door of the unused room. Something was wrong with the lock, and the door would not stay fastened, as it have said. Something that was not fear thrilled

their hearts as they pushed the door further ajar, and stood where they could see every foot of the vacant room. One of their own boxes stood in the middle of the room; but aside from that, nothing was to be seen, and they looked at each other in silence.

"Hold the lamp a minute, Margie," David said, at last, and he went all over the room, and looked more particularly at its emptiness, and even felt its walls. "Secret panels, you know," he said, with a smile, but it was a puzzled smile, indeed.

"I don't see what it could have been," Margaret said as they went down the stairs.

"No, I can't see, either, but I'm going to see," said David. "That was a chain, and chains can't drag themselves around, you know. A ghost could not drag a chain, if it were to try."

"The conventional ghost very often drags chains," said Margaret, as she closed the door of her room.

And then she lay awake and listened for the conventional ghost that dragged a chain, but it seemed that the weight of the chain must have wearied him, for he was not heard again.

The mother had slept through it all, and next morning they gave her a vivid account of the night's adventures.

"Perhaps it was some one in the house," she said in alarm. There were no ghosts within the bounds of possibility, so far as she was concerned, but burglars were very possible indeed.

Then Margaret and David laughed more than ever.

"What fun it would be," said David, "for a burglar to get into this house and try to find something worth carrying away."

So they went on to the next night, all three fully determined to spend the night in listening for the ghost, and running him to earth if possible.

But it was Margaret that heard the ghost, after all. She had been sleeping, and was suddenly startled wide awake, and there, overhead, was the sound of the chain dragging; and just as she was on the point of springing out of bed to call her brother, she chain seemed to go out of the room. She lay still and listened; and in a moment she heard it again.

It was coming down the stairs! There was no carpet on the stairs, and she could hear the chain drop from step to step, until it had come the whole way down. There it was, almost at the door of her room, and something that was strangely like fear kept her lying still, listening in horrified silence.

Then it went along the hall, dragging close to the door; and then further away; and back and forth for awhile; and then it began dragging back up the stairs again. Step by step she could hear it drawn over the edge of every step—and by the time it had reached the top she remembered herself and called David.

Again did the brother and sister make a tour of the upper room with the lamp. Not only that, but they looked into every nook and corner of the upper part of the house, and at last came back baffled. They had seen nothing extraordinary, and had not heard a sound.

"I'm going to see that ghost tonight," David said to his sister the next evening. "How?"

"I'm going to sit up all night at the head of the stairs. Don't say anything about it to mother; it might make her uneasy."

So, after the household were all quiet, David slipped into his place at the head of the stairs, and sat down to his vigil. He had placed a screen at the head of the stairway so that it hid him from view—as if a ghost cared for a screen—and he established himself behind it and prepared to be as patient as he could.

It seemed to him that hours so long had never been devised as those the town clocks tolled off that night. He bore it until midnight moderately well, because, he argued with himself, if there were any ghosts about they would surely walk then; but they were not in a humor for walking; and still the hours rolled on without any developments. He took the "nidgets," and had nervous twitches all over him; and at last he could endure it no longer, and had leaned his head back against the wall and was going himself to sleep, when—

He heard a chain dragging just beyond the open door of the unused room!

In spite of himself a shiver ran down his back. There was no mistaking it; it was a real chain, if he had ever heard one. More than that, it had left the room and was coming straight toward the stairs. The hall was dark, and it was impossible for him to see anything, although he strained his eyes in the direction of the sound. And even while he looked it had passed behind the screen, and was going down the stairs, dropping from step to step with a clank.

Half way down a narrow strip of moonlight from a stair window lay directly across the steps. Whatever the thing was, it must pass through that patch of light; and David leaned forward and watched.

Down it went step by step; and presently it had slipped through the light, and then was down; and a little later it came back again, through the light, and up the stairs, and back into the unused room.

And then David shined his knees jubilantly, and ran down stairs to his own room, and slept all the rest of the night.

Next morning he was very mysterious about his discoveries of the night before. "Oh, yes, I saw the ghost," he said to Margie. "There, don't ask so many questions; I'll tell you more about it tomorrow, maybe."

And that was all the information she could get from him. It was provoking. That day David made a purchase down town and brought home a bulky bundle, which he hid in his own room and would not let his sister even peep at.

"I'm going to try to catch the ghost tonight," he said, "and you know how it is; if I brag too much beforehand, I shall be sure to fail."

He was working with something in the hall after the others had retired; but he did not sit up this time. He went to bed, and Margie listened at his door and

found that he was soon asleep.

But away in the night they were all awakened by a squealing that brought them all into the hall in a great hurry; and there, at the head of the stairs, they found the huge rat trap that David had set a few hours before; and in the midst of the toils was a rat.

"Why, David," exclaimed his mother; "I didn't know that there were any rats in the house."

And then, all at once, she saw that there was a long chain hanging from a little iron collar around the creature's neck, and she and Margaret cried together:

"And this was the ghost!"

Such a funny ghost, when they came to think of it—this poor rat, with a nest in some hole of the broken chimney. He had been some one's pet, once, perhaps; and now, the households he had broken up, the nights he had disturbed, the wild sensations he had created; it made his captors laugh to think that this innocent creature had been the cause of the whole trouble.

"I'll set a cage for him, and take care of him for the rest of his life," said David. "We owe him so much that we can't afford to be ungrateful."

The next morning he took the ghost-in-a-cage and showed him to the agent and gave him a vivid account of his capture.

"So you have a good house for about half price, all on account of that rat!" exclaimed the agent grimly. "Young man—but never mind, you deserve it. What are you working for now? Six dollars a week? If you ever want to change your place—suppose you come around here. I think you need a business that will give you a chance to grow."

And the agent and David shook hands warmly over the capture of the "ghosts."

TO CURE A COLD IN ONE DAY

Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund the money if it fails to cure; 50c. For sale by Charles Rogers.

THAT RIDDLE.

The following riddle from last Sunday's Astorian is here repeated, with the answer given below:

If of man's thoughts I'm not a part
And absent from his mind,
Within the intellect and heart,
I dwell with all mankind.

With friends in peace and foes in strife
I'm ever to be found,
While, clinging to the last in life,
To death I'm also bound.

Earth claims me first, although in heaven;
I'm centered in the deep,
While, in midocean tempest driven,
You'll find me wrapt in sleep.

I'm part of every racing steed,
And in his swiftest pace,
Yet, strange to say, whate'er his speed,
I'm last in every race.

With numbers, when I masquerade,
I count two-fifths of seven;
Three times repeated, and I'm made
To stand for half eleven.

If in ten times I'm only twice,
What may seem more absurd
Is that in twice ten I'm only once,
And of one I'm but one-third.

The answer is the letter "E."

To heal the broken and diseased tissues,
to soothe the irritated surfaces, to instantly relieve and to permanently cure is the mission of DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve. Charles Rogers.

SEASIDE.

F. F. Kendall and family have also closed their cottage.

Plenty of salmon trout are still being caught in the Necanicum.

Mrs. C. W. Knowles has made some improvements to her cottage.

Judge T. A. McBride put in Sunday last fishing and caught a fine string of trout.

W. H. Morrow and family, of the Portland metal works are occupying the Morgan cottage.

Mr. M. J. Gust is laying the foundation for a new building on the north side of the shell road.

John Garner was in town on Thursday last. His mother is stopping at Mrs. Goodell's for a week.

Improvements are still going on. Mr. A. Gilbert's new building is fast approaching completion.

Brenham Van Duzen and family, who spent two weeks on the beach, returned to Astoria on Saturday last.

D. N. Trullinger and wife have returned from their wedding trip and take up their residence in Mrs. Austin's cottage.

Prof. John McCue, of Astoria, in charge of the Seaside school, opened the same on Monday last with a good enrollment of pupils.

G. C. Crawford, assistant keeper of Tillamook Rock light, and wife, who spent their honeymoon here, have returned to Portland.

P. J. Colban, who during the summer worked for Mr. Johannsen, will on the first of October take charge of Mr. Logan's store.

Surveyor Heickman and Viewers J. C. Adams and F. Warren left on Tuesday to survey the new road to Elk Creek by way of the Necanicum.

Judge Jerome Dillon, who has been manager of the Holiday property for a good many years, will leave for the Alaska country in a short time.

J. H. Johannsen on Wednesday last sold to Superior Sister Baptiste of Portland, a fine lot in Hermon Park. The sisters intend building in the near future.

F. E. Warner, who some time ago sold out his merchandise business to Mr. Logan, will shortly leave Seaside and in the spring of next year will go to Klondike.

Mrs. C. W. Knowles is still in her cottage. She has been entertaining her sister, Mrs. C. Thomas, of San Francisco, and Mrs. Sampson, of Portland, during the week.

A. E. Butterfield and family, of Portland, who generally are the last to leave the beach, departed on Thursday for Astoria, where they took the steamer for San Francisco.

The season of 1897 has closed for good and the rainy season (which makes this place quite a contrast to what people know it to be in summer) has set in. A few cottages are still occupied.

Road Supervisor Dillon reports the work on the upper Nehalem road (which connects with the Tillamook road) all finished. An eight foot wide road has been slashed and the logs rolled out of the way.

Manager Johnson, of W. U. T. Co., spent Sunday last on the beach. He would like to see the telegraph office continued, which would be of great benefit to the people here. It is to be hoped that some arrangement can be made by which the office will be kept open summer and winter. It would seem that the railroad company has had sufficient business to continue an agency here.

CROUP QUICKLY CURED.

Mountain Glen, Ark.—Our children were suffering with croup when we received a bottle of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. It afforded almost instant relief.—F. A. Thornton. This celebrated remedy is for sale by Estes-Conn Drug Co.

WARRENTON.

Sam Harris was a visitor in town on Friday.

Miss Maude Warren is absent on a trip to Portland.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Hill visited Warrenton last week.

Mr. F. W. Preston killed a sea lion in Skapanon creek on Friday.

Mrs. Bruce, of Seaside, is in town, the guest of Mrs. J. M. Carver.

There was held a meeting of the Warrenton Athletic Club Saturday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Colton have established themselves in their new residence.

Miss Daisy Dwan has gone to Astoria to engage in the dress making business with Miss Grandee.

Mrs. Scott and the Misses Scott have returned to their home after a short visit with Mrs. O. P. Graham.

Mr. John F. Wilson who has been at Warrenton during the past month, sails on the Glenloch to Vladivostok.

Mrs. C. P. Upshur and other lady friends of Mrs. Crain were visiting that lady one day during the past week.

The "Bicyclist's Best Friend" is a familiar name for DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve, always ready for emergencies. While a specific for piles, it also instantly relieves and cures cuts, bruises, salt rheum, eczema and all affections of the skin. It never fails. Charles Rogers.

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NO HILLS TO CLIMB IN SUNNYMEAD

The surface of the whole tract is absolutely level, and there is no grading to be done before a lot is in readiness for building. Convenient to Astoria by motor or regular passenger trains on the Astoria & Columbia River Railway, it makes a most desirable place for a home. Property is cheap, considering the choice location, and the surroundings are both healthy and pleasant. One can reach Sunnymead from the Astoria depot in 15 minutes time by motor and the fare is so reasonable that it makes it possible to live

IN BEAUTIFUL SUNNYMEAD

and do business in Astoria. The plat is well watered by fresh water streams and the main streets are now being laid with wooden pavement. A neat little depot is located on the property, where all trains stop.

For the next few days a limited number of lots will be placed on the market at a reduced price, and the terms of sale made so easy that they are within the reach of all.

For particulars call on or address

JOHN ADAIR, Astoria, Oregon

See the Astoria Land & Investment Company's Advertisement