

BROTHERS.

Spider.
At my window spinning,
Weaving cities wider, wider,
From the debt beginning.

Running.
Wheels and spokes until you
Build your silken deathtrap cunning,
Shall I catch you, kill you?

Sprawling.
Nimble, shrewd as Cteson,
Death's your only aim and calling—
Why should you have mercy?

Strike them!
Not for rapine wilful,
Man himself is too much like them,
Only not so skillful.

Rife in.
There lives our Creator,
Thou'rt a shape to hold a life in;
I am nothing greater.

—George Horton in Harper's.

MY GHOSTLY COMPANION

"Come at once. Mr. Thomas Warrington is dangerously ill and wishes to see you."

This was a telegraphic message which I received one cold January morning about six years ago. Surprise was my chief feeling at the moment. For Mr. Thomas Warrington had never been more than a name to me, although he was my uncle. I had never seen him, and had never felt any particular desire to do so, not from any dislike or grudge I bore the old man, but simply because I had forgotten all about him.

Certainly he was my uncle, my father's elder brother, but for years before my father's death there had been a fond between them relating to a small estate which my father claimed, and which my uncle, though a rich man with much property, also claimed. A court of law settled the matter after much delay and anger on either side. My uncle was able to pay for expert counsel, my father was not, for, except this small estate which caused the quarrel, he had nothing but the precarious income of an author. My uncle fought hard, grasping old man that he was, and won his case. But this had all happened so long ago, in the days of my extreme youth, that I had never given a second thought, certainly never a serious one to the story. Hard words had passed between the brothers, I believe, very hard words, and my uncle had sworn loudly and deeply that he would never set eyes on him or his again as long as he lived.

Perhaps you think it was unusual for a young man of no means never to give a second thought to an uncle who was the possessor of money and lands, but it really is a fact, and although my uncle was rich and childless, I knew that he detested me and my connections, and his estate was unentailed. I myself was a very young barrister, with enough to think about, and up to the present, as much as I could do to get through my examinations.

Some friends of mine were talking the other day about strange things which had happened to them, and it set me thinking about the only really strange thing that ever happened to me, and I record the circumstances, hoping that some reader may be able to afford me an explanation.

Well, to go back to the telegram. I was certainly very much surprised, and for a minute or two stood staring at the slip of pink paper in an absent minded sort of way. Then it occurred to me that I was wasting time. The telegram demanded my presence, and I had no time to waste. I looked at my Bradshaw, found that I had an hour before the next train started, so at my breakfast calmly, and packed a portmanteau, feeling glad for the first time since I had become a full blown barrister that no pressure of work detained me in town.

I soon found a corner seat in a smoking carriage, and resigned myself to a fairly long journey on this cold January day. I had taken my place in very good time, so amused myself by watching the people hurrying to and fro, and was a good deal attracted by a white haired old gentleman who slowly passed backward and forward at short intervals before the carriage in which I sat, and who, every time he passed, seemed to look at me with a far away expression in his eyes. I was beginning to feel interested in the old fellow, when the train started, and I soon forgot all about him.

By bad luck the train which I had managed to catch was a terribly slow one, which stopped at almost every station big and small, and I was surprised always to see the same white haired old gentleman passing to and fro on the platform every time we stopped. He never passed without looking at me with the same faraway expression in his eyes. At the first few stations I scarcely noticed him, but after a bit I began to wonder who he was and why he paraded about in that manner, and took a sort of lazy interest in him, pitying the poor old fellow for having to travel on such a bleak day.

The journey was certainly a tedious one, but I found a good deal to occupy my thoughts—my uncle, whom I had never seen; the old quarrel; the chances of his relenting in the matter of my father's estate, for surely he would not summon me from London for no other purpose than that I might make personal inquiries as to his health.

The day wore on, and the short winter afternoon began to close in. We had passed most of the larger and busier towns, and were coming to villages and small stations. All my fellow travelers had left the carriage, being mostly busi-

ness men they had reached their several destinations in the larger towns, and I sat alone in my corner, when the old white haired gentleman, whom I was beginning to look upon as rather eccentric, turned the handle of the carriage door, came in, and sat down in the corner opposite to me. He said not a word, but gazed out at the landscape in a dreamy manner, while I took the opportunity to examine his appearance more closely. He was tall, thin and looked emaciated, with clearly cut features of a waxen color, and wonderfully blue eyes. He wore an old fashioned, low crowned silk hat, and a long, thick coat with a fur collar. The expression of his face reminded me of some one, but I could not remember of whom. I did not notice all this at once, for I did not like to stare too long at the old gentleman, but I need not have troubled myself, for he never turned his eyes from the window.

The evening drew on, the daylight faded and the lamps were lighted, and still he kept his eyes fixed and gazed out of the window into the darkness, while the dim light of the oil lamp shone down on his pale features, and I smoked hard and said nothing.

I think I must have dozed for a little while, then I heard the guard calling "Ashbridge road! Ashbridge road!" and I started up, grabbed at my portmanteau and prepared to get out of the carriage, for I had reached my destination, but my companion also rose, turned and looked me full in the face with a look which seemed to make my blood grow chilly, stepped out before me and I followed.

The station was certainly very badly lighted and the night was pitch dark, but I was rather surprised when I got outside neither to see nor hear any sign or sound of my fellow passenger. However, I thought it did not matter to me where he had gone, so finding a carriage awaiting me I got in and in the rush of other thoughts I soon forgot him.

"How is Mr. Warrington by this time?" I asked the coachman.

"He died this morning, sir," was the reply. And then followed the details of his illness and death, which lasted until we reached Ashford Hall, my uncle's house.

I rang the bell, and was soon admitted by a stout, comfortable looking woman, who showed me to my room, where I began to wonder what I had better do. It was rather an awkward position to come, a perfect stranger, at the bidding of another stranger, and find him dead on arrival.

At length I went down stairs, and the same kindly looking woman met me in the hall and gave me more details of my uncle's illness and his great desire to see me. Then she supposed that I should like to see the corpse, and so evidently expected me to answer in the affirmative that I did so, and she led the way up the broad staircase and down a long passage.

At the end of this passage she opened the door of a dimly lighted room and we entered, she carrying a candle. We went together to the bedside, and she, holding the candle high with one hand, gently lifted the sheet with the other and disclosed—the white, clear cut features of my traveling companion.

This was the first and last thing of the kind that ever happened to me, and is still unexplained.

I stayed on at Ashford Hall for the funeral, and found myself, on the reading of my uncle's will, sole heir to all his possessions.—True Flag

A Typical Nonsensical.

"Do I believe in signs and luck, and superstitions and all that blooming nonsense? Of course not," said fat and jolly Henry Thornburgh at Hurd's hotel to a group of philosophers. "I have some sort of respect for the people whose superstition is a religion. The Egyptians, who worshipped the dog and cat and even the crocodile; the Romans, who put their faith in divination and oracles and magical powers of amulets; the Greeks, who deified bees and ants; even the mysteries and absurdities of astrology and chemistry all have my sympathies and at least respectful consideration."

"But the horrors of the dreadful figure 18 and the fears some people have of making one of that number; the refusal to start a journey or undertaking on Friday; all sorts of ghosts and spectral warnings, with second sight, etc., have my supreme contempt. I have known men to shudder upon seeing two magpies at the same time; a friend of mine left my table not long ago because one of my children spilled some salt while moving his plate; one of the firm in our house would rather suffer fine and imprisonment than to put on his left shoe first when he gets up in the morning. And in most respects these people are all sensible people."

"Stop! Don't walk in front of me; there's a pin on the floor right there with its head toward me. You say what of it? Why don't you know it is a sign that—What's that? Superstition? Oh, well, you know there are some things—Well, all right. Shut up! What'll you have?"—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Some argue that light, the astronomer's only basis of search in the unfathomable regions of space, expands and decomposes in its progress, and that at best it gives us only very imperfect data upon which to base calculations.

Placer county, Nev., lays claim to a valuable specimen of petrified vegetation. It consists of two pieces of rock which are believed to have been watermelons, as they have the exact shape and appearance of that fruit.

ON THE VERGE OF THE UNKNOWN.

An Experiment That Makes Us Ask, "What Is Coming?"

Mr. W. H. Preece, chief engineer and electrician to the postoffice, has put up a wire a mile long on the coast near Lavernock and a shorter one on Flatholm, a little island three miles off in the Bristol channel. He fitted the latter wire with a "sounder" to receive messages, and sent a message through the former from a powerful telephonic generator. That message on the mainland was distinctly heard on the island, though nothing connected the two, or, in other words, the possibility of a telephone between places unconnected by wire was conclusively established.

There is a possibility here of interplanetary communication, a good deal more worthy attention than any scheme for making gigantic electric flashes. We do not know if we can communicate by telephone through the ether to New York or Melbourne with or without cables, but we do know that, if we cannot, the fault is in our generators and sounders, and not in any prohibitory natural law.

Will our habitual readers bear with us for a moment as we wander into another, and, as many of them will think, a suprasensual region? The thought in a man's brain which causes him to advance his foot must move something in doing it, or how could it be transmitted down that five or six feet of distance? If it moves a physical something, internal to the body, why should it not move also something external, a wave, as we all agree to call it, which on another mind prepared to receive it—fitted with a sounder in fact—will make an impact having all the effect in the conveyance of suggestion, or even of facts, of the audibility of words? Why, in fact, if one wire can talk to another without connection, save through ether, should not mind talk to mind without any "wire" at all.

None of us understands accurately, or even as yet approximately, what the conditions are, but many of us know for certain that they have occasionally, and by what we call accident, been present to particular individuals, and that, when present, the communication is completed without cables, and mind speaks to mind independently of any machinery not existing within itself.

Why, in the name of science, is that more of a "miracle" than is an occurrence prohibited by immutable law—the transmission of Mr. Preece's message from Lavernock to Flatholm?—London Spectator.

A Rainmaker to Be Depended Upon.

Frederick W. Root is a good deal of a hoodoo. He gracefully acknowledges the charge himself. It is a singular fact that whenever he appears to deliver a lecture the rain begins to fall. He is so good a rain producer that he has seriously considered the idea of utilizing his talents for that purpose in the arid regions of the west.

While at Silver Lake Assembly, in New York state, he delivered a lecture on musical tastes or a kindred subject. He had delivered the same lecture a half dozen times in the west, and the refreshing shower came along each time before he had half finished it.

But when he reached the Silver Lake Assembly grounds the sky was bright, and Mr. Root congratulated himself upon having shaken off his evil spirit. He mounted the rostrum, cleared his throat, and when he had got as far as "Friends and fellow citizens" the rumble of distant thunder grated harshly upon his ears. Yet he gathered up his courage and went on, and before he had delivered a quarter of his lecture the rain came down in torrents.

"Indeed," said Mr. Root, "I never saw it rain so hard before." After the address a witty young Chicago woman who knew of the hoodoo business suggested, for the convenience of the public, that next year Mr. Root should write a lecture upon a dry subject.—Chicago Post.

Burial Customs in Kentucky.

In the mountains of Kentucky when a husband dies his funeral sermon is not preached until after the death of the wife, nor that of a wife until the husband also is dead. Then a preacher is sent for, friends and neighbors are called in, and the respect is paid to both together.

More peculiar is the custom of having the services for one person repeated, so that the dead get their "funerals" preached several times months and years after their burial. I heard the pitiful story of two sisters who had their mother's "funeral" preached once every summer as long as they lived.

In strange contrast with this regard for ceremonial observances is their neglect of the graves of their beloved, which they do not seem at all to visit when once closed or to decorate with those symbols of affection which are the common indications of bereavement.—"Blue Grass Region of Kentucky."

Dull Eyed Scientists.

Mrs. Hayman—Who are those gentlemen rummaging into our barn to get out of it?

Daughter—They are a party of scientists who are staying at the hotel. They've been out on some expedition or other.

Mrs. Hayman—I don't see where their eyes was last night. Anyone might 'a known from 't' now moon it was going to rain. It was tipped up so it couldn't hold water if it tried.—New York Weekly.

AN AFRICAN THERMOPYLE.

A Natural and Impregnable Fortress in Mashonaland.

South Africa is now the land of romance and Anglo-Saxon enterprise. All east Africa indeed is the land on which England's eyes are fixed, for though the Germans hold part of the coast, and consequently have a "sphere of influence" back of it, Englishmen complacently assume that Germany will not long be in their way. Egypt is now England's, and thence far to the southward, while from Cape Colony she already rules far to the northward, and the intervening desert is not so wide as the alleged desert between our Iowa and California was when the overland telegraph was set up.

A telegram from Cairo to Cape Town! It is a proposition that almost takes one's breath, but Englishmen say they will soon have it. The first difficulty in their northward march is Mashonaland, not so much on account of the present hostility of the black savages as on account of the awful possibilities in case of future troubles. There is one natural fortress at Zimbabwe which is approachable only by a narrow cleft, a great fissure in the rock, and it is Thermopylae indeed! A handful of men could hold it against the armies of the world till starved out—no easy task, as the savages would have an open country behind them till an immense army could surround them. Captain Jack and the lava beds were not in it for comparison.



APPROACH TO THE FORTRESS.

Mr. J. T. Bent, F. S. A., and a scientist of ability, has just published an account of the "Ruined Cities of Mashonaland," which he lately visited, and it is fascinating as any novel. Long, long ago the gold mines were worked by a people who built fortified towns. They were evidently constructed by a people who came from a great distance for a special purpose and took the most elaborate precautions to secure themselves against attack. There seems to be no reason to question the conclusions of ethnologists that these ancient sojourners in Mashonaland burrowed for gold, which they carried back to Arabia. Their monuments are extremely primitive, and they were so thoughtless as to leave no inscriptions for the benefit of the speculative theorist. The most interesting discovery is the trace of Semitic blood in the population today, a track of inquiry which may carry the Mashona pedigree back to Ham.

All railroads in South Africa are owned and run by the government, and it is now pushing a line northward into Mashonaland at considerable expense, as some of the mountains have to be tunneled, and the occasional swamps are very unhealthy for white men. The natives are described by Mr. Bent as remarkably moral and honest, and the great chief, Khama, is a sincerely religious man, who prohibits the brewing of beer, holds services twice every Sunday, rigorously enforces the observance of that day, regulates the price of every commodity, and when he sells a horse which subsequently falls ill always returns the money to the purchaser. The explorer humorously suggests that Khama send missionaries to England. The greatest lack in all that region is a permanent supply of water.

Obesity, Leanness and Beauty.

Some persons are born with a normal tendency to become fat, others with a tendency to leanness. It is the same among the lower animals. The hog is a sort of machine for transforming the odds and ends of food into fat, but the farmer knows beforehand that a little pig with long legs and snout will work off the fat as fast as it can be made. So a long legged person seldom inclines to obesity.

Temperament has much to do with the bodily condition in this respect. In lymphatic people the life processes are slow, and the fat is largely deposited rather than burned. This temperament furnishes some of the best types of surface beauty. The person of nervous temperament, on the other hand, by excessive activity of body and mind, and by predisposition to haste, worry, fret and impatience, naturally remains lean; but while the features of such a person will probably lack softness and roundness of outline, they may exhibit in a marked degree the higher beauties of mind and soul.

People who incline to obesity may hold the tendency in check by appropriate food and stirring exercise in the open air, thus both lessening the amount of fat forming food taken into the system and causing a more rapid consumption of such fat as is produced, and those who incline to undue leanness, by pursuing the opposite course, may largely increase the amount of fat deposited.—Youth's Companion.

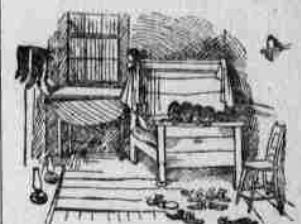
Silent Evidences of a Tragedy.

H. Johnson and J. Bishop, who have been prospecting for minerals in the wild mountainous region south and east of Mount Rainier, Wash., found in a wild and almost inaccessible place the remains of a camp, with cooking utensils and some tinned provisions scattered about, and shortly after, about a mile away, they discovered the bones and antlers of an elk and the remains of a human being mixed together and scattered about on the bottom alongside of a small creek. They judged that the man was a hunter, as the barrel and half decayed stock of a gun were found near the bones, and it is supposed that he had wounded the elk and it had killed him.

Feminine Tact.

Hostess (at dinner)—You own a very fine telescope, I understand, Mr. De Science.
Guest—Yes, madam, I was fortunate enough to secure a most excellent instrument.
Hostess—Are you interested in microscopes?
Guest—No, madam; I never had one.
Hostess—Marie, pass Mr. De Science the cheese.—New York Weekly.

Christmas Eve—An Alarm.



Chorus—What was that? Didn't you hear snuffin'—Life.

Unsatisfactory.

"We had depended on you for a Christmas story," said the publisher, "but listen to this from the manuscript you gave us: 'It was a moist drizzling day, the clouds had obscured the sun all morning, and there hadn't been a snowflake within seventeen miles of the place for a week. The sleighs had last year's rust on their runners, and the inhabitants wouldn't have known the sound of sleigh bells from the explosion of a Gatling gun. It was just a common every day Christmas, on which Santa Claus had to take off his skates and drag out his overshoes.' It won't do; I don't think the reading public will have it."

"And yet," sighed the author as he rolled up his copy and put it into his pocket, "you said you wanted something a little different."—Washington Post.

Keeping Him a Lover.

Mrs. Sharpington—D'ye mean t' say you've been married ten years, an' never had a quarrel with y'r husband?
Fair Stranger—That is true, madam.
"And ye always let him have the last word?"
"Yes, madam; I wouldn't for the world do anything to lessen my husband's love for me. He might get careless."
"Careless?"

"Yes. We are jugglers by profession, and at two performances every day I stand against a board while he throws the knives."—New York Weekly.

Good West.

"My friend George has gone to Seattle," said the obituary editor to the funny man quite seriously.

"Ah," twittered the funny man. "What has he gone to see a little for?"

"I should say," responded the obituary editor with great solemnity, "that he has gone to Seattle, Wash."

And the funny man felt the gray matter in his brain slowly congealing.—Washington Star.

A Transparent Lie.

Friend—If you are so bad off why don't you apply to your rich brother in Boston for assistance?

Poor Man—I did write to him to assist me, and what answer do you suppose I got?

"I have no idea."
"He wrote me that my letter asking for assistance had never reached him."—Texas Sittings.

An Artful Girl.

She—You men have canes and gloves to carry, but tell me, Mr. Cassimere, what can we girls do with our hands?

He—Really, I don't know. (With a sudden inspiration) Why, give 'em away, of course! Evelyn, darling, I love you; slip this ring on yours, and I'll run up and strike the old man!—American Grocer.

Knew Him at Once.

"You are from New York, sir," remarked the barber to the man who had just left the chair.

"How did you know?"
"For the reason that you didn't kick because you were the seventeenth man I used the same towel on."—Philadelphia Times.

They Are a Necessity.

The Boston Transcript recommends the arrest of any store boy who sweeps off the sidewalk of a crowded street between 8 and 9 o'clock in the morning. "The Transcript is perfectly right. The boys must leave the sidewalks where they are.—Lowell Citizen.

A Faulty Proverb.

Gryce—That old Indian rascal, Dough face-full-of-prunes-up-to-the-neck, is on the rampage again, I see. I guess it's true that the only good Indian is a dead Indian.
Bryce—But did you ever know a real mean Indian to die?—Spirit.

Absent Minded.

Professor (a little distracted)—I'm very glad to see you. How's your wife?
"I regret it, professor, but I'm not married."

"Ah, yes, then, of course, your wife's still single!"—Fliegende Blätter.

A Reason for Everything.

Walker—Weeks has got fearfully round shoulders, hasn't he? He never does any work, does he?

Wentman—No, but you ought to see the load of debts he has to carry!—American Grocer.

The search for the golden fleece had not for its sole object the conquest of a mine, or a precious fleece, or to rob the treasure so carefully heaped by the avaricious Aetes.

Champagne owes its quality to the soil, a mixture of chalk, silica, light clay and oxide of iron, and to the great care and delicate manipulation in manufacture.

A book of a thousand pages could be written on "Wonders and Curiosities Respecting the Crab Family," and each chapter made apropos to the title too.