

# SPOKE TO A GHOST

### Queer Incident In Which Bishop Wilberforce Figured.

## THE STORY THE SPIRIT TOLD.

Singular Disclosure That Was Said to Have Been Made by the Quiet Clerical Specter That Had Long Haunted an English Country House.

The following remarkable incident in the life of the late Samuel Wilberforce, bishop of Oxford and afterward of Winchester, is related as absolutely authentic, and the good bishop himself is said to have many times rehearsed the story to his friends:

On a certain occasion the worthy bishop had accepted an invitation to stay at a country house not far from London. Entering the drawing room previous to dinner on the evening of his arrival, he noticed a clergyman sitting by the open fire and taking no part in the general conversation. The bishop was somewhat surprised at not being presented to the clergyman, and his astonishment was great when a few moments later, dinner being announced, the guests retired, leaving the clergyman at his place by the fire. The hostess having assigned Bishop Wilberforce the seat of honor at her right hand, as soon as an opportunity offered he remarked:

"I beg your pardon, madam, but may I inquire who was the clergyman we left sitting in the drawing room?" "Ah, you have seen him, then?" replied the lady. "It is not every one who has that privilege. I cannot tell you who he is or whence he comes. For many years this specter has haunted the house and grounds. It has, in fact, been a tradition in the family. He seems to do no harm, and, although he appears only occasionally, we have become quite accustomed to our friendly ghost."

"How very singular!" remarked his lordship. "But have you never addressed your specter?"

"Indeed, I have had no opportunity, nor the desire, for that matter," replied the hostess, growing pale.

"May I take the liberty now?" inquired the dignitary.

"With all my heart, your lordship," replied the lady. The bishop arose and, returning to the drawing room, found the clergyman where he had left him a few minutes before. Having no fear, the bishop said kindly:

"Who are you, my friend, and why are you here?"

The specter seemed to sigh deeply and say as though to itself, "At last!"

Then in a hollow voice, addressing the bishop, it continued: "I am the spirit of a clergyman who left this world some eighty years ago, and I am here to impart to any one who will receive it a secret which died with me. I could not rest in my grave while a great wrong was being done which it was in my power to right. I have been returning all these years in the hope some one would address me, for it was not given to me to be the first to speak. All men have shunned me until now, and it is your mission to do my bidding. I was called to this house eighty years ago to receive a confession from a dying man. He was the sole possessor of a secret the knowledge of which would alter materially the entail of this vast estate, and in his death he wished to repair the terrible wrong upon his kin."

"At his request I wrote down the confession word for word as he gave it to me, and when he finished he expired in my arms. It was very important that I should return to London that night, and in passing through the library to leave the house I concluded it would be safer not to carry the paper on which was written the confession away with me, but to place it in some secure, unseen spot, where I could obtain it the following day and deliver the document to the person for whom it was intended. Mounting the steps to the bookshelves, I took out a copy of Young's 'Night Thoughts,' which was the first book upon the uppermost shelf nearest the last window, and, inserting the paper carefully between its leaves, I replaced the book and departed. A horse was awaiting me at the door, but ere we reached the entrance of the grounds he took fright. I was thrown and instantly killed. Thus died the secret with me. No one has disturbed that book in all these years, and no one has had the courage to address this messenger from the unknown. The paper will be found as I have stated, and it remains for you to correct the injustice which has so long been upon this noble family. My mission is over, and I can rest in peace."

At the close of this remarkable speech the specter faded gradually from sight, and the bishop was left gazing into space. Recovering from his astonishment, Bishop Wilberforce went at once to the library and found the book exactly as indicated by the specter. In its secluded corner upon the top shelf, thick with the dust of ages, evidently the book had remained unmolested many years. There was the document just as described, but now faded and yellow. The secret of the confession never became known to the world. The good bishop regarded it as a confidence from the spiritual world and always ended the story with the assurance that the priestly specter was never again seen.

It is a fact, however, that about the time of this extraordinary occurrence the magnificent estate in question passed into possession of a remote member of the family who until then had lived in obscurity.—London Standard.

## A DROP OF WATER.

There Are Times When It May Become a Source of Real Terror.

The fear of silence and loneliness not seldom attacks busy miners who, for that reason, refuse to work alone in distant drifts. In China the very refinement of torture is to confine a condemned criminal in a place where sound cannot reach him and over the plank to which he is bound to place a vessel of water, so regulated that once every few moments a single drop shall fall upon his brow. There is no light and no sound to distract his attention, and the thoughts of the poor wretch become so concentrated on the expectation of the next drop of water that when it falls it seems to strike him with the impact of a bomb, and reason cannot long withstand the strain. In his book, "In Lotus Land—Japan," Mr. H. G. Ponting says he came to understand the strange dread of silence through an experience in a California mine at midnight.

Five hundred feet into the crust of the earth I went and felt no new sensations except one of disappointment as the shaft echoed with my footsteps—600 feet, 700 feet, 800 feet and the bottom of the mine.

But as I stood there a creepy feeling came over me. What was this consciousness that suddenly oppressed me and made my blood seem chilled? I had felt nothing like it before. My candle gave but a feeble glimmer, and I found myself peering furtively into the shadows with a feeling almost akin to dread. All at once I knew. It was the silence—the immense, oppressive silence. Hitherto when I had been down in the mine there had always been the regular beating of the hammers on the drills. Now there was nothing but thick, velvety silence.

Then a sudden sound, like the crack of a stock whip, put every sense on the alert. Was I not alone, then, after all? In a moment the instinct of self-preservation reminded me that I was unarmed. Who could be down here at this hour, and what could be his object? Had I been followed? Without a weapon I was at the mercy of any ruffian. All this rushed through my brain in a moment, and as I tried to pierce the shadows my candle only served to make the darkness visible. Another crack, almost like a pistol shot, and then enlightenment and relief flashed upon me. It was nothing but a drop of water falling from the hanging wall in the sump below, yet in this dread silence it struck with almost the noise of a fulminating cap.

## ONCE A WIDE CANAL.

Broad Street, New York, Where the Curb Brokers Now Operate.

The curb brokers of New York, who now operate on Broad street, would have been forced to conduct their business from gondolas or canal boats had they made use of that thoroughfare in early days, for where solid pavement now stands there was a wide canal.

Many people nowadays, wandering through the narrow streets of lower Manhattan, have wondered at Broad street's unusual width. Still more peculiar was such breadth of thoroughfare in the olden times, when streets were nearly all narrow, and to distinguish it from the alley-like byways that surrounded it the thoroughfare was referred to as "the broad street." The Dutch called it the "Heere Graft." (The latter word had a far different meaning in those days.) It was not at first a street, but the principal canal of the city. This canal, wide enough for heavy boats to pass each other, ran into Broad street at the southern end and continued north almost to Wall street. A similar but smaller canal ran through Beaver street.

Peter Stuyvesant in 1657 had the canal's sides planked, and a few decades later the waters were gradually replaced by a street. As that street perforce followed the canal's former lines, it was much the widest thoroughfare in all lower Manhattan and well merited its name of Broad street. Had New York real estate been worth one-twentieth as much then as at present Broad street would probably have been shaven down to the width of Nassau or Wall street.—New York World.

## A Romance Shattered.

An Atchison young lady in trying to discipline her little brother has a habit of saying, "Now, don't you dare to do that or I'll have a fit." The little brother confided to one of his sister's admirers the other night that there were lots of things he couldn't do "because," he said, "you know sister has fits." Now the young lady is wondering why her most ardent suitor has not been near her for two whole weeks.—Atchison Globe.

## Went Through.

"And you were in that horrible railway accident?"

"Yes."

"I hear that one train completely telescoped the other. How did you ever escape injury?"

"I was on the through train."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## Two Methods.

When a man has to get busy he rolls up his shirt sleeves. When a woman really gets down to work she ties up her hair in a knot at the back.—Detroit Free Press.

## Economics.

Klunker—Does Jones understand the purchasing power of a dollar? Bocker—Yes. What troubles him is the purchasing power of his wife.—New York Sun.

Give me a seat and I will make room to lie down.—Spanish.

## HOGARTH'S RURAL HOME.

His Tomb and Garrick's Tribute to the Great Caricaturist.

It may not be generally known that Hogarth's country house at Chiswick is preserved entire to his memory. A brass plate over the door is to this effect: "This house was purchased in 1802 by Lieutenant Colonel Shipway in order to save it from being demolished, and by restoring the building he has preserved it to the nation and to the art world in memory of the genius that once lived and worked within its walls."

It was in 1749 that Hogarth acquired the house at Chiswick, his town residence being at the corner of Leicester Fields. Between these two houses he spent most of his life, usually passing the summer months at Chiswick. The garden as it stands is somewhat abridged of its former dimensions. The stable and painting room have disappeared, but one important feature remains. This is the mulberry tree, under whose shade he entertained the little foundlings put out to nurse at Chiswick. Hogarth's marriage was childless, and his affection went out to stranger children.

Hogarth died at the age of sixty-seven at his house in Leicester Fields, where he had gone in a weak state after an illness. The funeral was at Chiswick. His tombstone bears the following inscription:

Farewell, great painter of mankind, Who reached the noblest point of art, Whose pictured morals charm the mind And through the eye correct the heart!

If genius fire thee, reader, stay; If nature touch thee drop a tear; If neither move thee turn away, For Hogarth's honored dust lies here.

These lines were written by his friend David Garrick.—Architectural Review.

## AFRICA'S GREAT DESERT.

Sahara Is Not All Barren and Has Two Distinct Populations.

The Sahara, that vast expanse of country lying to the south of Algeria, is commonly called "the desert" by Europeans. The name Sahara in Arabic, however, means "desert." It is simply the Arab appellation of this extensive tract, mainly composed of great plains, which are even well populated in certain districts. It is quite a mistake to imagine that all is barren and sterile, for there are to be found large date palm plantations as well as numerous flocks of sheep and great numbers of camels which man must tend and care for.

The Sahara contains two distinct populations—the one sedentary, the other nomad. The former live in the towns and villages, cultivating the soil and tending the date palms. The latter are shepherds, roaming from place to place in search of pasture for their cattle. How few are there in the whole land who have any idea of the Sahara or of the Arab tribes who live there! Travelers to these regions are comparatively rare, but all are amply repaid for a visit.

Life among the moving tents of the nomads is deeply interesting in its primitive simplicity. The country itself has a grandeur and beauty which is quite unique. Its rolling dunes, painted with orange and crimson and gold against violet and purple shadows at sunrise and sunset; its green oases, its wild sandstorms, its lovely mirages, once seen are never to be forgotten. While the solemn silence strikes the soul with awe, one almost realizes why the Arabs call all this "the garden of Allah."—Christian Herald.

## Possibilities of Translation.

An English writer made an experiment once of the gain and loss of translation.

I heard that L. would write my "life" When I gave up my breath, I felt that this indeed would add A new delight to death.

This was translated into another language, then from that into another, and so on until a dozen versions had been made. Of course there was a different translator each time. The last version reads as follows:

Dear, in my song you still shall live, Though under earth you lie, Ah, had you now that grace to give I should not need to die!

## The Sewing Machine.

Did you know a lighted match or taper would do wonders with the sewing machine? Try it some day. Light a candle or just a match and apply it to different parts of the wheels and cogs. Lints and threads will burn, the char can be wiped off, and the machine will run twice as easily.

When a machine gums it is advisable to remove the head, place it in a tub and cover with gasoline. It makes a new machine from an old one.

## Heroic War Measures.

Chaka, a great African native chief, trained a powerful army which was famous in war. If a regiment was beaten it was slaughtered on its return to the king's palace. If any man lost his weapon in war he was killed for cowardice. If the chief wanted to go what kind of weapons were most successful he would order a sham fight with them in which real lives would be lost.

## Worse Than the Upper Ten.

"Only the upper ten go to your church, don't they?" inquired the plain person.

"Yes," replied the organist of the swell church, "but they're not a circumstance to the uppleb tenor in our choir."—Philadelphia Press.

## For Cause.

He—Why are you always throwing your money in my face? She—Because I can't keep it out of your hands.—Railtime American.



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