

The story of a night in a haunted house with wild noises all about, high words and pistol shots

THE IMPRISONED GHOSTS

By ELEANOR VAN HORN

Here is a ghost that is finally traced to its lair and forever laid at rest

LOCAL historians used to call it Whitehall. That was in the days when one of Washington's officers lived there. Then, for immemorial years, the village folk called it the Haunted House. It was a mansion of stately build, approached from the main road by a sweep of imposing driveway. It was large and square, with a pillared porch. Its lofty front windows looked out across a once-beautiful garden, laid out like the gardens of Italy and France. But in the years of mystery and desertion, the garden, like the house, had fallen from grand magnificence into gentle decay. There were tangled masses of exotic flowers run wild. The box borders had been eaten out at intervals by the hungry winners of the past. There was a battered sundial, a dead fountain, a moss-covered marble seat, and mysterious paths.

It was here that the village boys and I used to play when the sun shone cheerfully and the day was young. The house exerted its spell upon us. We peered fearfully in at the windows and shook the strong old doors, then scurried away with shrieks of half-frightened ecstasy. The house seemed to submit to these familiarities patiently, but it never lost, not even in the sunshine, that aspect of cheerless, unholly sorrow that made it awful.

Perhaps even then, subconsciously, I knew that I should spend a night of horror behind those white, unsmiling walls when I should have become a man.

II.

Here let me tell you something about the tragedy enacted there.

A quarter of a century before my birth, a wealthy bachelor, a grandson of that officer of Washington's already retired, came to live at Whitehall, with an old housekeeper as his only attendant. He was not well known in the village, for his youth had been spent in foreign lands, and only till he came to live at Whitehall had the village people ever seen him.

He was tall and imposing, but his handsome face bore clearly the marks of dissipation and fruitless life. A scar marked his cheek. He walked with a slight limp from some old wound. He dressed carefully, and with the aspect of a great gentleman—a man of the world, with an intangible something about him that baffled my

youthful analysis, but which marked him with distinction in sharp contrast to the gentle village folk.

Vague rumors filtered into the village as time went on, which gradually revealed the inhabitant of Whitehall to have been a man of much adventure. He had roamed the wide world over; been in wars as a soldier of fortune; had been imprisoned, and had made his escape; was once an ornamental figure at the court of France, and a destroyer of many a woman's happiness.

His manners were those of a Chesterfield, although he was reserved and taciturn to the last degree, and made no man his friend. He lived entirely within himself. He came and went about the village in that isolation of spirit that some are capable of building up for themselves, and which is as impenetrable as the heart of a Sahara. He received no letters, but many books and magazines and papers. He spent long days in his library. Occasionally he walked in his great garden, gathering the flowers as if he loved them.

Thus he lived until the day of a tragic visit.

In those days a stage-coach carried mails and passengers to and from the village. People came and went every day, and the coach was always sure to be well filled; so that when a mysterious stranger, with a striking face and a foreign accent, was a passenger alighting at the village there were many to carry the news. The stranger's fine, erect figure was set off by a military coat. His beard was cut after a foreign fashion. When he asked at the inn how he might reach Whitehall, the word swiftly passed about that the lonely bachelor was to have a distinguished visitor.

The stranger gave the innkeeper a princely fee and was, in consequence, driven out to Whitehall in the innkeeper's own private chaise by the innkeeper's son. This great door of Whitehall was opened by the old housekeeper, and the mysterious and attractive stranger swallowed from the sight of the youth, who looked longingly after him as he fingered the large silver coin in his hand.

And that night was a night of terror in the village. The old housekeeper had come running wildly to the nearest house in her nightgown, with her eyes staring from her head and her nightcap awry. She was incoherent with terror and exhaustion, but it was gained from her broken speech that a tragedy had taken place at Whitehall, and that the master and his visitor lay dead.

The room was in great disorder. Sure enough, both men lay dead, their faces bruised and marked. One, the stranger, had been strangled. As for the master, he had evidently shot himself. He lay within a large closet, the door of which stood wide open, and across the sill trickled a stream of crimson. Upon each victim was found a miniature of a woman of extraordinary beauty, her lovely face smiling out contentedly from within a frame of pearls in one case and a plain gold ring in the other.

Whitehall, after the tragedy, fell to some distant cousins, and they came to live there. They stayed but a short time, however, departing suddenly and leaving a caretaker in charge of the place. The caretaker, in turn, left hastily, declaring that he had heard weird sounds at night, accompanied by two pistol-shots, and that he knew that the ghosts of the two dead men enacted the tragedy every night in the old library.

Then the house was closed. The weeds sprang up in the garden and sprawled into the trim walks, and Whitehall, within a year, became that strange every thing—a haunted house.

III.

When my childhood had passed, and I had traveled about a good deal in foreign lands and learned what fine architecture really was, I realized that

the Haunted House was of rare beauty and excellence, a gem of architecture such as one does not often chance upon in our good land, and so I looked upon its imposing frontage with longing, loving eyes.

I spent several summers in its vicinity in my early thirties, and each day I made it the object of a pilgrimage. I walked about its choked and neglected gardens, and examined its poor, weather-worn door-carvings with a pity that would have penetrated to its heart—had it had one. For Whitehall seemed to me to be weighted down with mortification and despair. The sun might shine its brightest upon its windows, but they never could be made to have that smiling look that the windows of happier houses have.

The spring of the year that I became engaged to Lydia, I paid a visit of a week to the old town, and of course, to Whitehall. It was a lush season. Nature was doing her very bravest, and the old gardens of Whitehall were struggling to assert themselves. There were surprising clumps of fine, old-fashioned flowers here and there, holding up their beautiful heads, not proudly, but rather triumphantly after all the years of neglect. I grew more and more fascinated with the place; it appeared to me as never before. My being in love may have had a good deal to do with this, but each day I was drawn to the old house, and spent hours about it, and even ob-



tained the keys and wandered into all its rooms, gazing over the rare woodwork and the strong, firm frame; and before I went away I had responded to a sudden inspiration, and had rented the place for a year, with the privilege of purchasing. The price was ridiculously low, the haunting spirits that one was obliged to take with it being considered detrimental to the real-estate value.

I was to be married in July, and here I would bring my bride. I knew that a wonderful and joyful surprise it would be to Lydia—for she regarded all superstition with fine scorn. And what a place for a honeymoon! What romance that garden offered, what light was promised in those grand old rooms, still stocked with gems of antique furniture, moth-eaten and dust-laden to be sure, but not beyond restoration. I left directions for its setting in order, and hired a brave man to make trim the gardens.

At last, we came to our own. The joy of those first weeks will remain a honeyed memory forever. We arranged and admired and recovered and repolished to our own particular taste until our artistic gaze was completely satisfied. We worked and dreamed away the hours and talked much of the history of the place, laughing at the absurdity of the haunted idea and pitying the narrow beliefs of the simple people; but, at the same time, rejoicing over them because of the wealth and beauty they had contributed to our lives.

In September, Lydia was called to the bedside of her sister. She took the maid with her. The cook, who was left to take care of me, went to her own little home each night, so that I was quite alone in the house after nine o'clock. I was lonely, as a new bridegroom would be sure to be during such a separation, but I was happy enough in my own way.

The day before Lydia returned I received a call from one of the old residents of the town—the oldest inhabitant, I fancied, from his shriveled and faded condition. I welcomed him as a character. He came in the bright afternoon, but seemed wary about entering the house, even with the glorious sunshine pouring in at the windows in a flood, and said he preferred a seat in the garden. He walked feebly, leaning heavily on a stout stick, and breathlessly assured me that he would not have made so great an effort had he not been impelled by an overpowering curiosity as to whether we had been troubled by ghostly noises, and also by the desire to tell me that this was the anniversary of the tragedy.

It was a windy September night that it happened, he said, and he quite remembered how Aunt Sally White shivered and shook in her nightgown when she brought the horrible news.

I cheerfully assured him that we had not seen or heard anything of a disquieting nature, and had no fear whatever.

He waved his palsied fingers warningly, and feebly shook his head as he said impressively: "You will yet, young man, you will. It's never failed to come on the night of the anniversary. You'll hear and see things to-night. This house has been haunted for nigh onto fifty years, and them that's lived here has always heard wild noises—groans and curses, high words, struggling, pistol-shots—two pistol-shots!"

Then, with a dramatic fervor that seemed like the good old man's last effort on this earth, he graphically rehearsed every detail of the ancient tragedy. In spite of myself, I felt all its horror and its reality.

When he had finished, he departed, creeping slowly away with many a backward look and ominous shakings of the head. I have to confess that he left a depressing effect, and I felt very lonely without Lydia. The golden days that we had reveled in seemed very far away; and much as I disliked to think of the gruesome past, I could not refrain from dwelling upon it with an awful fascination.

As night came, I found myself a prey to all the terrors of my youthful imaginings. Whitehall again became the Haunted House; and in spite of all my efforts to stave it off, I was fast falling into a fit of the blues. By the time that the clock left I was genuinely depressed. The wind sprang up and moaned and sobbed dolefully about the house, sighing in the chimney and shrieking wildly under the eaves. I read very late, plunging into the lively action of the spirited *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, and hoped, like Stevenson, to carry the thread of that epic into my slumbers.

When midnight struck, the brands of the fire flashed up. Then went out I laid down my stirring romance, stretched and yawned, and decided to go to bed and sleep off my hapless mood.

I got up and moved about the room noisily, whistled and sang, swept up the hearth, locked the doors and windows, and tried not to hear the fiendish wind. But I could not deny it. I was the victim of such a disquieting nervous tension, as I had never before experienced in all my life. When I got to bed I huddled under the blankets and watched the cold moonlight flooding across the floor—the very floor, I thought, upon which the tragedy took place; for my bedroom had been the unfortunate master's library. I was happy to find myself really growing drowsy, and was just on the verge of slumber when I was suddenly shocked wide-awake by a sharp report near at hand.

"A pistol-shot!" I whispered, my flesh creeping with an anomalous species of terror; for the sound came from the large closet in which the unfortunate inhabitant of Whitehall had died. It was now used as a storage-closet.

I had half decided that my over-stimulated fancy had been playing me a trick, and was about to settle back upon my pillow, when another report, louder, clearer, sharper, came from the region of the closet, and made me jerk back to my sitting position.

"Two pistol-shots," I said to myself in an ominous whisper, recalling the old man's words.

All of a sudden I grasped hold of my senses and got back my manhood, a keen disgust of myself hastening my actions. I jumped out of bed, lit the lamp, and made my way toward the closed door of the closet. I held the lamp rather high, and its light shed itself sharply downward upon the floor where my eyes were attracted to something within its rays. I stooped—spreading slowly out across the sill from beneath the door was a crimson stain.

"Blood!" I whispered hoarsely, and my own raw cold. My terror returned. I felt a sudden ghastly faintness, and I nervously moistened my dry lips with my tongue. The hand holding the lamp shook as with an ague, and this seemed to arouse me to a sense of my weakness. I felt as if I had disgraced myself by the weak fears and nervous vacillations of this night, and, suddenly atung back into strength and courage by shame, I put out a steady hand and turned the knob. The door was locked. I shook it loudly and peered into the keyhole. There was no key within.

However, I was now determined to fathom the mystery, and, shivering in my thin nightclothes, I gathered keys from various doors upstairs and tried them in the lock. The last one grated a little and then slid back, and the door was unlocked. I set my teeth a little and held my breath with excitement, as I swung back the door, holding the light well forward and peering within. For a moment I could see nothing, and then meeting my eager gaze was a row of preserve-jars, two of which had broken from fermentation and sent forth a crimson stream of fruit-juice!

"Lydia preserves!" I said, and, netting the lamp down on the shelf, I gave myself up to a fit of uproarious laughter.

It is Lydia's chief story. She reveals in the telling of it, but I do not mind. It gave me an interesting night, and we pride ourselves upon being the owners of one of the most beautiful old houses in the land.

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No Weakness Develops In Financial Market

New York, Sept. 23.—The financial markets presented evidence during the earlier days of the week of a tendency on the part of some of the large interests to take profits that had accrued as a result of the recent sustained rise in the stock exchange price level. Selling of this character, not uncharacteristically, served as a temporary check upon the enthusiasm and strength that so distinctly were the features of the preceding week. But definite weakness, however, did not develop. Neither was there a corresponding reaction in the volume of business. The market seemed, for the moment, to have lost its sparkle and declined moderately, a change suggestive of a necessary readjustment that did not essentially alter more distant prospects. That such a view was justified was indicated by the sharp and general advances that subsequently took place.

Money is abundant. Fundamental conditions have not changed. Our national activities are expected to be the stimulus of advanced inflation. Gold that is not needed is coming forward in a steady stream in partial payment for the products of American factories. These are being manufactured at such favorable prices that they leave large profits, not alone in the hands of the manufacturers but in those of labor and of all interests connected with them from the point of production to that of final delivery abroad, including land and sea transportation, insurance and other charges. This money is circulating freely and is available for luxuries and necessities at home, in this way becoming responsible for a domestic demand of a magnitude quite in keeping with that from foreign sources. Eventually a severe check must come to this nation-wide inflation. When it will occur must be governed very largely by the duration of the war and the conditions that will confront the world at large after the present stupendous massacre ends. At the moment, unfortunately, there is but slight encouragement for any expectation that peace is in sight. In turn this suggests an absence of inducement to believe that a fitful movement to which I have just referred is subsiding. More likely it will proceed still further and in the long run include to a more general extent than at present securities as well as commodities in its influence. The iron and steel industry never has been so active. A local trade authority, reviewing steel trade conditions, declares that the drift not only is toward higher prices but toward greater difficulties in delivery. The situation, it adds, is that Europe will take whatever amount of steel American mills will agree to deliver when wanted, and that domestic buyers are providing for their wants in the first half of 1917 at prices they were unwilling to consider two months ago. Consumers are acting on the more definite signs that with the war pro-

longed into 1917 the steel mills of the country will continue to have to choose between buyers. Trade authorities as a whole seem to agree with this view. An almost identical position seems to apply to copper and, in fact, to nearly all of the various divisions of the metal market, which is so representative of industry as a whole.

Wall Street Wants Tariff. The national political campaign is beginning to attract attention as a market factor of importance. The tariff is being accepted from the market standpoint as the chief feature of contention, and the prospects of the rival candidates, so far as many of the industrial stocks are concerned, acquire importance in proportion as they suggest the election of a high or low tariff advocate with a national legislature so proportioned as to support him. Our country is very fortunate this year in having a choice between two such good candidates, men who already have served the people and who are well known by their acts. It also is pleasant to recall that the campaign is not one of freak issues represented by the various "isms" that have been such disturbing features of presidential campaigns in the past.

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a broad proposition, used in the immediate localities; they must be shipped where needed and must pay for the service. There appears to be quite a reaction from the fears that first were entertained as to the real effect of the new eight hour railroad law. Railroad employees are beginning to see that the new conditions are not all in their favor, and that, for example, a literal interpretation of the new law may mean a cancelling of favored positions occupied by many of the older men in the service.

New Eight Hour Law. This new law does not become effective until January 1. It is not impossible that some attempt may be made at the short session of congress, which convenes in December, to give this subject the attention its importance merits. There will not at that time, at any rate, be an incentive for hasty action based on political expediency. A similar crisis has just been satisfactorily settled in the affairs of the British railways by

State of Ohio, City of Toledo, ss. I, Frank J. Cheney make oath that he is senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, Ohio and State of Ohio, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of FRANK J. CHENEY'S Catarrh Cure.

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granting to employes an additional bonus to continue throughout the period of the war instead of permanently advancing wages. In this way the post-bellum railroad situation can be handled on its merits. This plan might be a reasonable compromise to adopt as a substitute for the eight hour law.

Copper stocks have been favorably influenced by reports that announcement is soon to be made of large additional sales by American producers to Europe. The strength and activity in United States Steel are suggestive of the importance of the interests who are buying these securities. The third quarter of the year is now about closing and there seems every reason to believe that the quarterly statement, when finally published, will show an even greater degree of profitable activity on the part of the corporation than was the case in the June quarter.

Colonel Will Talk at Battle Creek, Michigan

By J. P. Yoder. (United Press staff correspondent.)

New York, Sept. 29.—Colonel Roosevelt, ex-president, will appeal for votes for another man—Charles E. Hughes—for the place of president, in a speech tomorrow at Battle Creek, Mich.

Some consideration is also given to a Pacific coast tour.



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Dr. Richard C. Cabot, who is head of the Massachusetts General Hospital, has been writing for the *American Magazine* April and May, on the subject of "Better Doctoring for Less Money."

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This is just what Dr. Pierce has been doing at the Invalids' Hotel in Buffalo, New York. Dr. V. M. Pierce has associated with him Dr. Lee H. Smith, who is vice president and head surgical director and operator, and there are a dozen other physicians and specialists, as well as four chemists, and the poor and the very rich get the best medical attention. As Dr. Cabot has properly said, "When you go to a doctor's office you may complain of nothing more abstruse than a headache or a stomach-ache, yet for the solution of the problem represented by your suffering there may be needed an X-ray examination, chemical tests such as very few experts are capable of making, the consultation of experts in diseases of the eye, the ear and the

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