

**The Ouija's Message**

By JACK LAWTON

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"When I see the way Letty treats Richard," Marta observed, "and watch his doglike devotion, I am mad all over. Why does he submit to it, Aunt Phyllis? Why doesn't he take his stand like a man? Last night at the Hunter's, Letty fairly flouted her admirers before him, and there our poor Dickie sat suffering in every line of his devoted face. Oh! I'd give the little flirt a lesson, I'd pay her back in her own coin. It's her sureness of him that makes Letty so reckless. And if Dick would just look at the pretty brunette who works in the office beside him, why she'd be happy for weeks, and it would give Letty the scare she deserves."

"I want to see him happy, and it gives me a warmer feeling for you, dear, to know that his little cousin does too," said Aunt Phyllis. "So there is a pretty brunette working in Richard's office? And where did you see her?"

"At luncheon at Weber's yesterday," Marta replied. "I was there with Helen, and Helen said: 'There is Dick's new stenographer who takes Richard's dictation. I'd hate to have as pretty a girl around my fiancée if I was Letty, but Letty won't worry, she is too sure of her own charms.' And just then Dickie himself, came into the restaurant, and as absent-mindedly as you please, his thoughts with Letty as usual, I suppose. Dickie took a chair opposite his stenographer and did not recognize her until he had given his order, then after a dignified nod, he began his meal. Dick is so terribly afraid of hurting Letty's feelings that he ignores girls in general. Well, Helen and I were behind him, and he never saw us, but the brunette kept glancing at him appealingly, and presently we could see her looking around for something, and when the waitress brought her luncheon check she got up and spoke to Dickie, and he nodded and took the check over, as she left the place. Evidently she had forgotten her purse and was borrowing the price. Helen wanted to wait and joke him about his dinner companion, but I hurried her on, knowing how sensitive he is. Oh!" added Marta, "how I did wish that Letty might happen in as they were eating."

Aunt Phyllis folded her knitting. "Marta," she said irreverently, "will you stop on your way home and ask Letty to come over and visit me this evening. Tell her I want to keep my boy at home, and that is the only way he will be satisfied. And you might ask Helen to drop in too, and bring her Ouija board. You, I know, have an engagement."

Letty came late that evening. Aunt Phyllis, pretty skeptical, took her place opposite Helen, while Letty languidly joined them. Richard did not have to be coaxed to a seat by her side.

"I hear," Letty said, "weird spirit whisperings; let us begin."

There was a message for Aunt Phyllis, vague and confusing, a rebuke for Helen concerning propensity for fickleness, and one sinister word for Letty; the word was "beware." Then rapidly the Ouija demanded "Richard." Silent and lenient Richard waited.

"Who," asked the Ouija abruptly, "is the pretty brunette?"

Letty laughed after the last intricate word, but to her astonishment Richard's face flushed crimson.

"I wonder," he answered jauntily, his manner was uneasy. With a quick glance in his direction Helen withdrew.

"I am going to get out of this," she said, "the thing is uncanny."

Letty studied her thoughtfully. "Why uncanny?" she drawled.

"Well," Helen admitted, "Dad has a pretty brunette stenographer in his office, and he says she takes Dick's dictation."

"Continue the message," she said impulsively.

"Tuesday," the Ouija spelled. "The girl Richard took to lunch."

"Letty faced her abject lover. 'Did you?' she asked sharply. Richard floundered."

"It was an accident," he excused. "You paid," the Ouija accused.

"Did you pay for the luncheon," demanded Letty. Richard was miserable.

"She had forgotten her purse, then—oh, hang it all," he ended unexpectedly. "What if I did?" The evening party disbanded quietly.

"I think," said Helen from her far corner, "that I will go home."

"We will go with you," Letty promptly offered. Aunt Phyllis was peacefully knitting when Richard returned at a late hour. His face was radiant, his voice had the ring of triumph. "Letty has consented to marry me soon—at once," he cried joyously.

"The Ouija wishes you happiness," Aunt Phyllis said demurely, then she kissed him.

**Could Be Overdone.**

The husband and wife were enjoying the play from the first row of the parquet. Now, it happened that the piece in question was of the type known as "blood curdling," and the trials and misfortunes of the heroine were too much for the wife, who every now and again furtively wiped her eyes. "What yer blubbering about?" inquired her husband. "Well," she answered with a sob, "I can't help showing a bit o' feelin' for her." "Feelin'?" he echoed with a cynical snort. "Yer needn't wash yer face in it."

**Violin Wood.**

The value of a violin is in the sound-producing qualities of the wood used in making it. Wood consists of fibers which may be compared to strings either parallel or interlaced. The most of those of spruce are parallel, hence their fine musical qualities. Most other woods have shorter fibers and they may not be arranged so that they can vibrate freely, one interfering with another.

**IOWA NEWS BRIEFS**

Emanuel Brandt, 19, a farmer near Decatur was recently burned to death in his home.

Paul Beardsley, newly elected sheriff of Woodbury county, is a veteran of the world war.

The jury disagreed in the case of E. B. Wells charged with fraudulent banking at Marathon.

Delos Whiteman, of Northwood arrested for attempted blackhanding, has been discharged, L. A. Helny not prosecuting him.

Frank Degier, convicted of the murder of his father twelve years ago, says he will kill himself before he goes to prison for life.

Elmer VanBrockland of Decatur is being held for the murder of his older brother, Charles, 21 years old, and the latter's wife, 18 years old.

President W. W. Young and Cashier Sam E. Lehnen have been vindicated in connection with the failure of the North Liberty Savings Bank.

James Lee who died recently at Newton left \$25,000 to be divided to various sections of the Christian church. The estate amounts to \$225,000.

A seven-mile drainage project, situated near Griswold, has been completed at a cost of \$60,000. It is ten miles long and required eight months to construct.

The state can collect inheritance tax from an adopted child the Iowa Supreme court decided. Decision was in the case of the state versus Philip Goettelman of Winneblesh county.

The Independent Telephone company exchanges at Nevada, Story City, Roland, Cambridge and Maxwell will take corn from farmers for phone rental at 5 cents over the market.

Iowa will have a good part of \$600,000 for the fighting of tuberculosis in cattle which has been appropriated by the Senate. The appropriations committee favored \$400,000 but Senator Kenyon got the amount raised. Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace wanted \$900,000.

Another big drainage project, the Indian Creek, has been completed in Cass County. Formal acceptance was made recently by the board of supervisors. The project cost \$132,000. It is fifteen miles long and straightens the course of Indian Creek, incidentally reclaiming thousands of acres of valuable farm land.

The Delaware County fair, unlike almost every other fair in Iowa, made money this year. The receipts for the year were \$35,222.10 and the disbursements \$34,836.70, leaving a balance of \$385.40 as well as a large increase in the permanent improvements on the grounds.

Paul Roberts of Lamoni was badly burned while overhauling his car. A torch which he was using set fire to the gasoline in the engine, and in endeavoring to smother it with sacks the blaze was transmitted to his clothing. In his frenzy he ran across the street, the breeze fanning the flames all the way. His clothing was ruined and his body badly burned.

Earl Throst, 26 years old confessed to the slaying of Miss Inga Magnusen a school teacher near Dorchester recently. Throst had been an attentive suitor and was to have married Miss Magnusen Dec. 17th. Throst admitted her ardor for him had cooled and that they had quarreled after finding her in the school alone, and at that time he struck her over the head with a stick.

Senators Cummins and Kenyon and Representative Dowell recently called on the public health service with a committee from Knoxville headed by M. L. Curtis, to urge that the government buy the hospital now leased there for hospitalization of veterans. It is proposed to make it a permanent institution for the treatment of mental and nervous diseases of former soldiers, and to have it enlarged and improved.

Black Hawk county banks won a victory in the District court in a decision handed down by Judge George Wood, overruling the action of the board of supervisors in increasing the valuation and taxes on bank stocks. After the banks had paid the first half of their assessment in 1919, the county auditor, acting under instructions from the board of supervisors, increased the value of the stock 15 per cent.

Judge George W. Cullison sentenced "Bill" Bullis to twenty-five years in Fort Madison prison, after overruling a motion for a new trial. He was sentenced under the habitual criminal act. Bullis was arrested in a room with Mrs. Eva King, so-called "bandit queen," the night after the gun battle near Council Bluffs in which her husband and Officer Murray were killed. He was tried on charges of receiving stolen property.

Clarence Hanson, 30, of Sioux City, alleged to have been playing the "Peeping Tom" at windows of women living near his home, was shot and probably fatally wounded by a policeman who was called to chase him away. Hanson ran when ordered to halt.

J. P. Flick of Bedford, former Iowa congressman has been ill. Congressman Flick, who is 76 years old, represented Taylor county in the Seventeenth general assembly, and was later elected to congress from the eighth district. He is well known by old time politicians of the state.

**At Anchor in the Bay of Yeddo.**

The evening we dropped anchor in the bay of Yeddo the moon was hanging directly over Yokohama. It was a mother-of-pearl moon, and might have been manufactured by any of the delicate artisans in the Hanchodori quarter. It impressed one as being a very good imitation, but nothing more. Nannikawa, the cloisonné-worker at Tokio, could have made a better moon.—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

**OLD AND NEW CHRISTMAS DAY**

Nobody Has Been Able to Decide Whether January 6 or December 25 is Correct Date.

CHRISTMAS day seems wedded to December 25. A summer or a springtime Christmas, with no holly, no mistletoe, no frost, no snow, would not be the real thing at all, observes London Answers.

The majority of our beautiful Christmas carols, too, redolent as they are of the winter—"Sung Amid the Winter's Snow"—would be hopelessly incongruous. Emigrants to Australia from the mother country have confessed that it has taken them many years before they could get in any way used to what is practically a mid-summer Christmas.

Yet December 25 is merely an accommodation date for the birthday of Christ—Christmas day. The year, too, is wrong. Most people would take it for granted that Christ was born in A. D. 1—literally, of course, the year of our Lord, No. 1.

But our chronology is four years out. This should be 1925 and not 1921, because Christmas day could not, on indisputable historical testimony, have been later than February B. C. 4.

That settles the year of the first Christmas, but all attempts to fix the actual day and month of Christmas have failed.

And, as regards the present date, Christmas, like Easter, took some centuries before a settlement was arrived at. In the first centuries of Christianity several important Eastern churches observed January 6 as Christmas day. The Armenian Christians do so still.

Gradually, however, uniformity was attained, but not before the Fifth century. In that connection it must be remembered that for quite a long period this country was divided on the question of Christmas. Some people persisted in observing "old" Christmas day.

But all will agree that December 25, even if it is not the actual date of Christ's birth, is a happy choice.

Our present-day Christmas, festival and holiday, breaks the long winter, and what better time could there be for family reunions? The cold and unpleasantness outside make it all the more agreeable to keep warm and snug inside. It keeps us together in every sense.

**THE CHRISTMAS TREE CUSTOM**

Use of the Young Evergreens is Regarded More as a Matter of Sentiment, Not of Economics.

VERY early some mathematical calculator figures out that this country would be several billions richer if, as a nation, we abolished the good, old custom of the Christmas tree. Yes, in actual dollars and cents valuation of our natural resources the United States probably would be more wealthy for the continued growth of the evergreens. However, we believe no better return ever came from trees than the true joy which all mankind gets from Christmas trees at this the greatest of all holiday seasons.

Nearly 5,000,000 young evergreens go upon the Christmas-tree market each year, 1,500,000 in New York and the New England states alone, and it is an easy matter for an enthusiast who is quick with the pencil to figure up the waste in our natural resources by the annual loss of this embryo timber. The economic consideration is not entirely indefensible, for in the Northeastern states particularly a big proportion of the trees come from pasture land or that which would be cleared in the ordinary course of improvement. Later, these trees would be cut anyway. Of course, wholesale destruction over watershed areas should be discouraged as in any forestry activity, but it must be remembered that the Christmas-tree custom is one of sentiment, not of economics.—American Agriculturist.

**Honey Drop Cakes.**

One cupful of sugar, two cupfuls of honey, one-half cupful of shortening, four eggs, two cupfuls of milk, two teaspoonfuls of vanilla, one-half teaspoonful of salt, four cupfuls of flour, four teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Cream the honey, sugar and shortening together; add well-beaten eggs and vanilla; sift dry ingredients and add alternating with the milk. Mix well; bake in greased muffin tins. These are good if flavored with chocolate, using four squares of baking chocolate or ten tablespoonfuls of coco for this large recipe. They are good uniced.

**Christmas.**

If we were to fancy a wholly Christianized world, it would be a world inspired by the spirit of Christmas—a bright, friendly, beneficent, generous, sympathetic, mutually helpful world. Let us cling to Christmas all the more as a day of the spirit which in every age some souls have believed to be the possible spirit of human society.—George William Curtis.

**Toys Made in Sweden.**

Toys are manufactured to a considerable extent in Sweden and are almost entirely the finest kinds of painted wooden toys. Their making was formerly a house industry, but of later years the great bulk of the output comes from a few factories.

**His Only Hope.**

"Madam," said the poor but ambitious fiddler, "please don't interrupt me in the midst of my labors to dum me for my board. You don't seem to realize that music is food and drink to me." "Well, all I've got to say," replied his landlady, as she turned away, "is just this young man: If you don't pay up, them tunes you play is all the food and drink you'll get in this house."

**MAIL ROBBER SUSPECT HELD**

George Lewis, Wanted for \$1,000,000 Holdup and Murder, Taken Near Chicago.

**FLED FROM TORONTO JAIL**

Wanted by Police of San Francisco, Detroit and Other Cities—Chicago Sleuths Capture Alleged Bandit at Palos Park, Ill.

Chicago, Dec. 21.—Government agents and a squad of men from the city detective bureau swept down on Palos Park and arrested George Lewis, alias George Rogers, alias George Davis, thirty-two years old, wanted in a half score cities, but particularly as a suspect in the \$1,000,000 mail robbery at Toledo, February 17 of this year.

Lewis is wanted by the police of San Francisco, having escaped from prison there while awaiting an appeal after having been convicted of murder and sentenced for life. Detroit police would like to get their hands on him as a suspect in several daring holdups there, and he is said to have a police record in a score of other cities.

**Escaped With Two Others.**

Lewis was arrested and convicted in the Toledo mail wagon robbery, but escaped with Joseph Urbaitis and Charles Schultz. Rev. Anthony Gorski, former pastor of the Polish Catholic church at New Chicago, Ind., was arrested in connection with the case. He was said to have met Miss Wanda Urbaitis, a brother of one of the fugitives, who gave him a package containing \$72,000 worth of bonds for safe keeping. The Urbaitis girl later was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison.

Lewis, Joseph Urbaitis and Schultz escaped from the county jail at Toledo September 5, and a reward was offered by John Taylor, sheriff of Taylor county.

Police and federal agents here were warned to take every precaution in attempting the arrest, as it was known that Lewis would shoot until he dropped rather than be taken again. The case was considered equally as dangerous as would be the capture of Tommy O'Connor were he known to be heavily armed.

**House Surrounded in Dark.**

The squad from the detective bureau comprised Detective Sergeants Cusack, Hackett, O'Neill, Ferrone and O'Connor. The squad carried riot guns and the federal agents also were similarly armed.

While the skies were still dark the men completely surrounded the house in Palos Park. Every precaution was taken that no man be unduly exposed and finally one of the number rapped on the door as others of the party covered it with their artillery.

Lewis was forced to leave with hands up, and immediately was locked up in an out-of-the-way police station. Other developments in the case are expected during the day.

**JAPAN LAUNCHES WARSHIP**

Dreadnaught Tosa, Slated for Scrap Heap, Last to Take to Water Before Holiday.

Tokyo, Dec. 21.—The dreadnaught Tosa was launched at the Mitsubishi shipyards at Nagasaki. Like its sister ship, the Kaga, launched a month ago, the Tosa is slated to be scrapped under the naval limitation plan agreed to at the Washington conference. An immense crowd attended the Tosa's launching, the last in Japan prior to the "naval holiday." Vice Admiral Prince Hiroyasu Fushimi officiated, acting as proxy for the regent. The Tosa and Kaga were estimated to cost upward of 73,000,000 yen (\$36,500,000) each to complete. In their present state they represent one-third of that sum. Each is 700 feet long, has normal displacement of 40,600 tons and was to be equipped with special antitorpedo protection and armed with a main battery of 16-inch guns.

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