Ghosts and Near Ghosts

I am just relating these anecdotes. You may or may not believe them. Your opinion (or mine) has nothing to do with the stern fact.

We are on this side of the curtain which is not drawn aside. We catch the echo. We see the shadow; the music is down far distant halls.

And these are strange experiences—for what, no man knows, unless it be for the uplifting of the soul; but this would be impossible to many and very vague to others.

My friend, whom I have no reason to doubt, told me that she was spending the summer in a village where there was an eccentric and very religious old lady. The old lady took a dislike to me, I thought, and invented many subtle ways of annoying me which she did very sweetly and gently, but the climax came after this episode.

She had a claim on the house in which I was staying and on one occasion decided to come there and stay all night, and horror to occupy my room. Of course, my mind instantly suggested a visit which was planned but alas! a violent storm kept me at home, so I prepared to give up with good grace, made my sanctum as easy as possible and retired early that the old soul might enjoy herself.

The room was furnished in this wise: two windows on the east, one on the north. The bed sat in that corner with the head to the north and by one of the east windows. The bureau was on the other side of the north window with the lighted lamp on it.

After a bit the lady came in giggling; she was dominant, she paltered about and sat by the fire a while, and then went to the window to brush her unusually long black hair.

I was in bed with my back to the east window half asleep, when I thought some one was standing by me. I roused up, there was no one there, but the hideously contorted reflection of the lady in the window came. The lady was rather good-looking. The reflection was like her and yet hideous.

I felt pretty uncanny but remembered that the bad glass of a window pane would probably make an ugly reflection, and as much as I hated for her to know I was awake, I must get up to see her.

The lady always struck me as being a bit too religious, soft spoken and affable. I never believed in her. I got up and spoke to her and as she turned to answer me—The Thing—Her Thought—Her Second—self turned also and both looked me squarely in the face.

I was struck silly with fright and never before or since have I ever hated so dreadfully to sleep with any one.

I saw her, my eyes saw what my intuition had told me.

But the sight of her soul has never done you or I any good.

I had an experience of that kind myself. I knew a man that lived in such a small world that no one thought anything of him. If he had ever done anything worth while it was lost in the oblivion of his nothingness.

At last when he came to die he did a noble deed. It was long drawn out and patiently borne. The thing set him up considerably in public opinion. He died. The afternoon of his burial, I went to spend the night with his sisters.

We sat in the gloaming on the long gallery; near us was a hammock that he always used.

Suddenly, I KNEW that he was in the swing as of yore. I was afraid to turn around and could not say anything of course.

In a few minutes or an aeon of time, I know not which, he hopped out of the hammock, and ran from behind me into the house, and up the stairs. He had been a bulky man of about five feet eight inches tall.

The next morning I saw his room for the first time.

The beautiful old mahogany table and chest of drawers were loaded with every old buckle, strap, screw, nail, horse shoe and broken iron that could be thought of. Under the "pine apple" bed were boxes loaded with the same. Around the walls were cracker and soap boxes filled with the same.

I saw his soul seeking its level, but at least the neighborhood must have been clean.

Aren't you glad when you "see the new moon over your left shoulder" so that your wish will come true, "And a golden shallop in the sky", riding high above church steeples, chimney stacks and tree tops, for Good Luck for your next 21 days.

What bride does not "put a piece of silver in her shoe," or put left foot first in the church door?

Friday the 13th—If the stork brings you on that day, see what the constellation will do for you.

We are not looking for 13 in hotel rooms, steamboat cabins, money to lend, or the 13th guest.

"Star light, star bright,
First star I've seen to-night.
Let me see my Love
Before to-morrow night."

Mammy always wore "the left hind foot of a grave yard rabbit and two black bone rings to skeer dem spirits." A rabbit crossing your path is "good luck." And if a black snake crosses your road you'd better turn back as a shiny snake "is a 'ticement of the debbel."

Inately, every man has his superstitions—Scotch, Irish, Swede, Norman, Indian, African—whatever bidthright we have.

Where does understanding come from? Spoken or written words do you think? If so we would be gulled by every hypocrite.

Why, when we meet two men do we like one better than the other? Electric currents, wireless messages, what difference what form we catch them in, since they are flung out.

I believe every outraged nun in the convents of France, with her bleeding heart and soul merged in prayer, stood in human shape at the horses heads of the allied armies and lead them on to victory. What other interpretation can you give? Thousands of soldiers saw them, "A nun at every bridal rein." The soldiers' blood of other faith cried out for revenge and the "code ofj blood" had come down with the ages—so their guardian angels carried on the message that the soldiers could "read as they ran." And again Joane D'Arc, the mailed maiden rode her great war horse with the allied armies to victory. It was the spirit of France making soldiers of her men. A message flung out and the armies read it.

S. T. S.

MAKE A COMPARISON

Why do you decry, belittle and abuse the plumber and the plumber business?

Do you know right now of anything in your home that is as essential to your health, comfort and cleanliness as your bath room?

Do you know of anything in your home that costs so little to maintain in first class serviceable condition?

Figure up how much in repairs your plumbing has actually cost you during a term of years—not the cost arising from abuse and misuse—but the cost arising from inferior work, or parts of the system wearing out.

Then compare that to the cost of your other upkeep expense—your furnace, your painting, rug replacements, housecleaning, draperies, automobile, etc.

You'll find that you have nothing that has cost you so little and given you so much as your plumbing.

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REVIEW OF BOOKS NEW AND OLD

(The following book reviews were submitted as assignments in Freshman English by students of the Louisiana State University, Misses Garig's classes.)

"The GOLDEN AGE," by Kenneth Grahame. Reviewed by Robbin Coons.

The most hardened and callous book reviewer should be stirred to enthusiasm by Kenneth Grahame's "The Golden Age," for it is far different from the conventional type of story with which that over-worked individual usually has to deal. The book is, to say the least, delightful, and in view of the fact that there is no organized plot, surprisingly interesting. In relating a number of incidents in the everyday lives of a group of chilren in old England, Mr. Grahame has succeeded in portraying all the glamour and the wonder of the golden age—that time in the lives of mortal when the most commonplace and ordinary occurrences become transformed into marvelous and perilous adventures, to be undertaken by hardy knights seeking the favor of fair ladies; when, for instance, humble and unobtrusive house-cats in a clump of weeds become in a moment prowling panthers in tropical jungles; when all things are enchanted by the magic glow of "make believe."

For those who like psychology, the book is an interesting study of the child mind and its workings; but the chief charm of the story lies in its refreshing simplicity and its sympathetic understanding of the child heart. A book such as this, read with the proper spirit, should do more than all the cheap musical shows in the world to rejuvenate the tired business man; for if not too far gone in indifference to all but worldly affairs, he may even re-live in its pages his own Golden Age, when he too possessed an Aladdin's lamp that could in a moment transport him from this workaday world into the fairy realms of fancy; and in appreciation of those golden days of his lost childhood, may say with the poet,

"When I was a beggarly boy,
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp.
When I could not sleep for cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded, with roofs of gold,
My beautiful castles in Spain."

"JANE EYRE," by Charlotte Bronte. Reviewed by Eva Clare Cox.

For the booklover who, for whatever reason, has not read "Jane Eyre" there are happy hours in store. There he will find thrilling romance and sensation mystery so skilfully recorded that he feels no strain upon his credulity.

The scene of the story is laid in England. Jane Eyre, the heroine, a shy and unattractive orphan girl, is sent by a cruel aunt to a miserly charity school. After four bitter years there she secures a position as governess to the protegee of a wealthy bachelor, Edward Fairfax Rochester, who lives alone except for the little protegee, a housekeeper, and several servants, in his gloomy ancestral home.

The inevitable happens. Rochester, whose name has become a synonym for dark browed and forbidding type of lover, finds in the quiet and unobtrusive Jane so many unusual qualities of head and heart that he falls in love with her, and finding his love returned, wins her consent to their engagement.

In the meantime certain incidents force Jane to the conclusion that there is a mystery connected with the home of her employer. Several times she is awakened in the night by peculiar and unnatural noises, and sometimes a mirthless laugh, of which she can never learn the source, echoes through the old house. Her love affair progresses happily, however, and the two lovers think only of the time when they shall always be together. Finally the wedding day comes, the bride and groom are at the altar,—when fate intervenes. The incidents that follow are such as to furnish a succession of thrills, and the most blase of readers will breathlessly follow the story to its conclusion.

The chief interest of the novel lies in the struggles of two strong characters, who, though widely different, are essentially complementary; and who, in spite of their many abnormal traits, more logically in their respective orbits. The clash of Rochester's character against the quiet foreceful-ness of Jane Eyres is indeed the product of a great pen.

"The COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO," by Alexandre Dumas. Reviewed by T. T. Dunn.

"The Count of Monte Cristo," by Alexandre Dumas, is the recital of a stirring romance which occurred in southern Europe between the years 1815 and 1838. The story is written in the most admirable manner, and though at times it becomes rather dull for lack of action, one cannot afford to skip any part, for each incident has a bearing upon something else. The reader who perseveres will be rewarded by sudden bursts of interest which will more than repay him for his patience.

The hero of the story is Edmond Dantes, a lad of humble birth and little education, who had procured, through his own merits, the position of captain on a ship. He was in love with a pretty Catalane girl, whom he had planned to marry, but on his wedding day he was cast into prison for political reasons. There he remained for eighteen long years. Imprisoned in a cell about fifty feet from that of Dante's was an old monk whom the keeper of the prison considered insane, but on account of his docile spirit he was sometimes allowed privileges which were not accorded the other prisoners. With the aid of the handles of some kitchen utensils which had been given him he managed to construct, in about five years, a tunnel leading to Dante's cell. A great friendship grew up between the two prisoners, and through this friendship Dante received a liberal education and also learned the hiding place of an enormous treasure. After several years, the priest died and his body was put into a canvas bag to be carried out. Dantes exchanged places with the body of the monk and in this way made his escape.

The rest of the book tells of his return to his native land, and of how, after securing the treasure, he carries out his long cherished plans for rewarding his friends and punishing his enemies.

The plot of the story is well developed and the descriptive passages are very clearly written. The author goes a little too far in emphasizing the power and greatness of the hero, for though this exaggeration tends to secure interest, it at the same time arouses the suspicion that it is unnatural for a man to be so perfect in every respect. "The Count of Monte Cristo" is, on the whole, well worth reading.

"FRANKENSTEIN," by Mrs. Shelley. Reviewed by Nancy Stumberg.

After having read "Frankenstein," by Mrs. Shelley, one has a feeling that nothing is impossible. The gruesomeness of the story is explained by the fact that it was written on a wager as to who could write the most blood-curdling tale. Needless to say to readers of the book, Mrs. Shelley received first honors.

The story deals with a scientist whose ruling ambition is to create with his own hands a human being. After years of patient experimenting he begins the task; but though he spares no pains in the hope of creating a perfect being, the thing that comes from his hands proves to be a soulless, uncanny monster. Murdering friends and relatives of his creator, this fiend in human shape haunts Frankenstein, the creator, with the hope of securing a mate. Not until Frankenstein realizes his mistake and determines to destroy the evil genius does he realize the power of the satanic, soulless being.

Much of the interest of the story lies in the setting. An explorer, on an expedition in the land of ice and snow, meets Frankenstein, who is pursuing the abhored wretch that he has created, and hears the tale from him. Half dead of cold and fatigue, Frankenstein goes aboard the explorer's ship, where, after finishing his story, he dies. Immediately afterwards the monster appears on the ship, and, not knowing of Frankenstein's death, entreats the explorer to obtain padon for his crimes from his maker. A bit of pathos enters into the story here as we realize that though the creature is soulless, he has nevertheless suffered in sinning.

The weirdness of the story lies not so much in the crimes as in the mind of the scientist. The author has portrayed his feelings in such a way as to make the blood run cold, and as one reads, more and more is it borne in upon him that torture of the mind is far more unbearable than torture of the body.

Though the story fascinated me, I do not think it would appeal to many readers. However, everyone should read the book, for the name "Frankenstein," which has become a synonym for rash creators of unmanageable entities, is often met with in familiar allusion. It may be well to add here a word of caution against applying the word "Frankenstein," which is the name of the scientist, to the creature, a mistake that is sometimes seen in newspaper columns.

"CLAYHANGER," by Arnold Bennett. Reviewed by L. T. Phelan.

To a mind saturated with the sensational literature of to-day, replete as it is with stirring adventure and passionate love, it seems incredible that a story devoid of these elements should have any appeal; but Arnold Bennett's "Clayhanger" refutes this supposition. The usual type of story projects on our mental screen a series of swiftly changing pictures, brightly colored, perhaps, and full of action, yet so ephemeral that they fade with the closing of the book, their mission, the beguilding of an idle hour, accomplished; but in "Clayhanger" the author creates flesh and blood characters and dissects their mental processes with the delicate skill of a surgeon, thereby revealing truths that affect the very nucleus of human relations.

The close bond of affection that links mother and son has been the inspiration of poets from time immemorial, but looming darkly beside it is the tragic misunderstanding that only too often separates father and son. Bennett portrays vividly the gulf that divides Clayhanger and his Son, Edwin, and makes it very clear that the existence of this chasm is emphatically not due to the wish of either, but wholly to the lack of mutual understanding. The boy fails entirely to perceive that his father, this middle-aged man with flabby skin and graying hair, in reality is, in the essence of his being, still the lad of thirty years before—a youth at heart, who sees in his son a companion to share the joy of joint enterprises, young blood to infuse new life into his father's work. And blinded by his high hopes for his son, the elder Clayhanger enforces his will on all occasions, not realizing that Edwin, no longer a child, is himself capable of forming opinions and making decisions, and now desires freedom to follow his inclinations. The maturing boy, confused by the lack of sympathy with his views and chafing under the yoke of restraint, mutely resents the situation. Misled by physical appearances and confused by the decades between them, he fails to discover in his father the hidden boy, his potential friend and confidant, with the tragic result that instead of being affectionate comrades, father and son too often assume the roles of harsh master and cringing slave.

When the gulf, ever widening thru the passage of years, seems about to be made impassable by death, the father's mighty love overcomes his restraint, and he tries pitifully and inadequately, to express his affection before his lips are sealed forever. There follows a scene calculated to arouse poignant regrets in the most case-hardened of ingrates, a scene which focuses the misunderstandings of a lifetime in one of those homely, seemingly trivial incidents, which though seldom mentioned in real life, and almost never recorded in print, leave scars that throb and burn as long as life itself exists. To tell in detail the suffering which this pitifully inadequate manifestation of a great love causes the dying parent, and to delineate the varying emotions experienced by the son, would be to rob a future reader of much of the scene's effectiveness.

The book clearly shows that if the average father and son could but break down the wall of restraint, the masucline stoicism that shrinks from the expression of feeling, who knows but that their love would become a relation as beautiful as that of son and mother? To the prospective reader I promise that he will find in "Clayhanger" not only a story of wasted, love-hungry lives, but universal truths that if recognized and followed will lead him to a deeper understanding not only of others, but of himself as well.

WOMEN EXCEL MEN

OBREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.—The girls of O. A. C. are better shots with rifle than the men. Competition has been keen during the year, with the men holding a slight lead until recently. Miss Beryl Jarman, brought the girls to the front this week by scoring 95 out of 100. This is one more than the highest score made by any man in the R. O. T. C.

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