

# Some Real American Ghosts

By Various

## THE GIANT GHOST

(Philadelphia Press, Sept. 13, 1896)

A case in point is the Benton, Indiana, ghost, which is attracting much attention. It has been seen and investigated by many people with reputations for intelligence and good sense, but so far no explanation of the strange appearance has been found.

A farmer named John W. French and his wife were the first to see this apparition. They live in the country near Benton, and were driving home one night from a neighbor's. The road passed an old church, moss-covered and surrounded by a graveyard, overgrown with shrubbery and filled with the bones of hundreds who once tilled the soil in the locality. Ten years ago an aged man who lived alone not far from the old church and visited the graveyard almost daily to pray over the resting place of some relative was foully murdered for the store of gold he was supposed to have hidden about his hermit abode. The robbers and murderers escaped justice, and the luckless graybeard was buried in the graveyard where he spent so much time. Just as French and his wife drew within sight of the white headstones in the churchyard the horses reared back on their haunches and snorted in terror. French was alarmed, and suspecting highwaymen had been scented by the horses, he reached for a shotgun which lay in the bottom of the wagon for just such an emergency. But before his hand touched it he was startled by a scream from his wife. Clutching his arm she pointed straight ahead and gasped:

"Look, John, look!"

Far down the road, just beside the glimmering monuments of the old graveyard, he saw an apparition. It was that of a man with a long white beard sweeping over his breast. The figure appeared to be eight feet in height and in one hand it carried a club, such as the brains of the old man had been beaten out with ten years before. Slowly raising one arm the ghost with a majestic sweep beckoned French to come ahead. He was too startled to do anything except try to restrain the prancing horses, which were straining at the harness in attempts to break away and run. A cold sweat started out all over the body of the farmer as he realized that he was at last looking at a ghost and then the sound of his wife's voice came to him begging him to return the way they had come and escape the doom which seemed impending. French was still too much scared and excited to control the horses, and as he gazed steadfastly at the fearful white object in the road it slowly began to move toward the wagon. The club was now raised to its shoulder, as a soldier carries a rifle, and it seemed to move forward without touching the ground, like a winged thing.

Then the farmer recovered his faculties and, whirling his team around, he lashed the horses into a run and began the trip to the house of the friend he had just left. When they arrived there both the man and his wife were almost fainting from fright.

The next man to see the ghost was Milton Moon. He had the reputation for being not only a man of intelligence but one without fear. His experience was much the same as that of the Frenches and it brought about several investigations by parties of citizens. In each case they saw and were convinced of the actual presence of the ghost without being able to discover any satisfactory explanation.

SOME FAMOUS GHOSTS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL  
(Philadelphia *Press*, Oct. 2, 1898)

The Capitol at Washington is probably the most thoroughly haunted building in the world.

Not less than fifteen well-authenticated ghosts infest it, and some of them are of a more than ordinarily alarming character.

What particularly inspires this last remark is the fact that the Demon Cat is said to have made its appearance again, after many years of absence. This is a truly horrific apparition, and no viewless specter such as the invisible grimalkin that even now trips people up on the stairs of the old mansion which President Madison and his wife, Dolly, occupied, at the corner of Eighteenth Street and New York Avenue, after the White House was burned by the British. That, indeed, is altogether another story; but the feline spook of the Capitol possesses attributes much more remarkable, inasmuch as it has the appearance of an ordinary pussy when first seen, and presently swells up to the size of an elephant before the eyes of the terrified observer.

The Demon Cat, in whose regard testimony of the utmost seeming authenticity was put on record thirty-five years ago, has been missing since 1862. One of the watchmen on duty in the building shot at it then, and it disappeared. Since then, until now, nothing more has been heard of it, though one or two of the older policemen of the Capitol force still speak of the spectral animal in awed whispers.

Their work, when performed in the night, requires more than ordinary nerve, inasmuch as the interior of the great structure is literally alive with echoes and other suggestions of the supernatural. In the daytime, when the place is full of people and the noises of busy life, the professional guides make a point of showing persons how a whisper uttered when standing on a certain marble block is distinctly audible at another point quite a distance away, though unheard in the space between.

A good many phenomena of this kind are observable in various parts of the Capitol, and the extent to which they become augmented in strangeness during the silence of the night may well be conceived. The silence of any ordinary house is oppressive sometimes to the least superstitious individual. There are unaccountable noises, and a weird and eerie sort of feeling comes over him, distracting him perhaps from the perusal of his book. He finds himself indulging in a vague sense of alarm, though he cannot imagine any cause for it.

Such suggestions of the supernatural are magnified a thousand fold in the Capitol, when the watchman pursues his lonely beat through the great corridors whose immense spaces impress him with a sense of solitariness, while the shadows thrown by his lantern gather into strange and menacing forms.

One of the most curious and alarming of the audible phenomena observable in the Capitol, so all the watchmen say, is a ghostly footstep that seems to follow anybody who crosses Statuary Hall at night. It was in this hall, then the chamber of the House of Representatives, that John Quincy Adams died—at a spot indicated now by a brass tablet set in a stone slab, where stood his desk. Whether or not it is his ghost that pursues is a question open to dispute, though it is to be hoped that the venerable ex-President rests more quietly in his grave. At all events, the performance is unpleasant, and even gruesome for him who walks across that historic floor, while the white marble statues of dead statesmen placed around the walls seem to point at him with outstretched arms derisively. Like the man in Coleridge's famous lines he

“— walks in fear and dread,  
Because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread.”

At all events he is uncertain lest such may be the case. And, of course, the duties of the watchman oblige him, when so assigned, to patrol the basement of the building, where all sorts of hobgoblins lie in wait.

One of the Capitol policemen was almost frightened out of his wits one night when a pair of flaming eyes looked out at him from the vaults under the chamber of the House of Representatives where the wood is stored for the fires. It was subsequently ascertained that the eyes in question were those of a fox, which, being chevied through the town had sought refuge in the cellar of the edifice occupied by the national Legislature. The animal was killed for the reason which obliges a white man to slay any innocent beast that comes under his power.

But, speaking of the steps which follow a person at night across the floor of Statuary Hall, a bold watchman attempted not long ago to investigate them on scientific principles. He suspected a trick, and so bought a pair of rubber shoes with the aid of which he proceeded to examine into the question. In the stillness of the night he made a business of patrolling that portion of the principal Government edifice, and, sure enough, the footsteps followed along behind him. He cornered them; it was surely some trickster! There was no possibility for the joker to get away. But, a moment later, the steps were heard in another part of the hall; they had evaded him successfully. Similar experiments were tried on other nights, but they all ended in the same way.

Four years ago there died in Washington an old gentleman who had been employed for thirty-five years in the Library of Congress. The quarters of that great book collection, while housed in the Capitol, were distressingly restricted, and much of the cataloguing was done by the veteran mentioned in a sort of vault in the sub-cellar. This vault was crammed with musty tomes from floor to ceiling, and practically no air was admitted. It was a wonder that he lived so long, but, when he came to die, he did it rather suddenly. Anyhow, he became paralyzed and unable to speak, though up to the time of his actual demise he was able to indicate his wants by gestures. Among other things, he showed plainly by signs that he wished to be conveyed to the old library.

This wish of his was not obeyed, for reasons which deemed sufficient to his family, and, finally, he relinquished it by giving up the ghost. It was afterward learned that he had hidden, almost undoubtedly, \$6000 worth of registered United States bonds among the books in his sub-cellar den—presumably, concealed between the leaves of some of the moth-eaten volumes of which he was the appointed guardian. Certainly, there could be no better or less-suspected hiding-place, but this was just where the trouble came in for the heirs, in whose interest the books were vainly searched and shaken, when the transfer of the library from the old to its new quarters was accomplished. The heirs cannot secure a renewal of the bonds by the Government without furnishing proof of the loss of the originals which is lacking, and, meanwhile, it is said that the ghost of the old gentleman haunts the vault in the sub-basement which he used to inhabit, looking vainly for the missing securities.

The old gentleman referred to had some curious traits, though he was by no means a miser—such as the keeping of every burnt match that he came across. He would put them away in the drawer of his private desk, together with expired street-car transfers—the latter done up in neat bundles, with India-rubber bands.

Quite an intimate friend he had, named Twine, who lost his grip on the perch, so to speak, about six years back. Mr. Twine dwelt during the working hours of the day in a sort of cage of iron, like that of Dreyfus, in the basement of the Capitol. As a matter of fact, Dreyfus does not occupy a cage at all; the notion that he does so arises from a misunderstanding of the French word “case,” which signifies a hut.

However, Twine's cage was a real one of iron wire, and inside of it he made a business of stamping the books of the library with a mixture made of alcohol and lampblack. If the observation of casual employees about the Capitol is to be trusted, Mr. Twine's ghost is still engaged at intervals in the business of stamping books at the old stand, though his industry must be very unprofitable since the Government's literary collection has been moved out of the Capitol.

Ghosts are supposed to appertain most appropriately to the lower regions, inasmuch as the ancients who described them first consigned the blessed as well as the damned to a nether world. Consequently, it is not surprising to find that phantoms of the Capitol are mostly relegated to the basement.

Exceptions are made in the case of Vice-President Wilson, who, as will be remembered, died in his room at the Senate end of the building, and also with respect to John Quincy Adams, whose nocturnal perambulations are so annoying to the watchmen. Mr. Wilson is only an occasional visitor on the premises, it is understood, finding his way thither, probably, when nothing else of importance is "up," so to speak, in the spiritual realm which now claims him for its own. It is related that on one occasion he nearly frightened to death a watchman who was guarding the coffin of a Tennessee Senator who was lying in state in the Senate Chamber. The startle was doubtless un contemplated, inasmuch as the Senator was too well bred a man to take anybody unpleasantly by surprise.

There was a watchman, employed quite a while ago as a member of the Capitol police, who was discharged finally for drunkenness. No faith, therefore, is to be placed in his sworn statement, which was actually made, to the effect that on a certain occasion he passed through the old Hall of Representatives—now Statuary Hall—and saw in session the Congress of 1848, with John Quincy Adams and many other men whose names have long ago passed into history. It was, if the word of the witness is to be believed, a phantom legislative crew, resembling in kind if not in character the goblins which Rip Van Winkle encountered on his trip to the summits of the storied Catskills.

But—to come down to things that are well authenticated and sure, comparatively speaking—the basement of the Capitol, as has been said, is the part of the building chiefly haunted. Beneath the hail of the House of Representatives strolls by night a melancholy specter, with erect figure, a great mustache, and his hands clasped behind him. Who he is nobody has ever surmised; he might be, judging from his aspect, a foreigner in the diplomatic service, but that is merely guess. Watchmen at night have approached him in the belief that he was an intruder, but he has faded from sight instantly, like a picture on a magic-lantern slide.

At precisely 12.30 of the clock every night, so it is said, the door of the room occupied by the Committee on Military and Militia of the Senate opens silently, and there steps forth the figure of General Logan, recognizable by his long black hair, military carriage, and the hat he was accustomed to wear in life.

Logan was the chairman of this committee, and, if report be credited, he is still supervising its duties.

A GENUINE GHOST  
(*Philadelphia Press*, March 25, 1884)

Dayton, O., March 25.—A thousand people surround the grave yard in Miamisburg, a town near here, every night to witness the antics of what appears to be a genuine ghost. There is no doubt

about the existence of the apparition, as Mayor Marshall, the revenue collector and hundreds of prominent citizens all testify to having seen it. Last night several hundred people, armed with clubs and guns, assaulted the specter, which appeared to be a woman in white. Clubs, bullets and shot tore the air in which the mystic figure floated without disconcerting it in the least. A portion of the town turned out en masse to-day and began exhuming all the bodies in the cemetery.

The remains of the Buss family, composed of three people, have already been exhumed. The town is visited daily by hundreds of strangers and none are disappointed, as the apparition is always on duty promptly at 9 o'clock. The strange figure was at once recognized by the inhabitants of the town as a young lady supposed to have been murdered several years ago. Her attitude while drifting among the graves is one of deep thought, with the head inclined forward and hands clasped behind.

### THE BAGGAGEMAN'S GHOST

"The corpses of the passengers killed in the disaster up at Spuyten Duyvil was fetched down here and laid out in. The room was darkened and I could just make out the out-that storage room," said a Grand Central depot baggage man. "That's what give it the name of morgue. Some of the boys got scared of going in after that, 'specially in the dark; and a lot of stories was started about spooks. We had a helper (a drunken chap that didn't know whether he saw a thing or dreamed it), and he swore to the toughest of the yarns. He says he went in to get a trunk. It was a whopper, and he braced himself for a big strain; but, when he gripped it, it come up just as if there wasn't nothing in it more'n air or gas. That unexpected kind of a lift is like kicking at nothing—it's hurtful, don't you know?"

"I should think so."

"Well, Joe felt as light-headed as the trunk, he says, but he brought it out. When he was putting it down he was stunned to see a ghost sitting straddle of it."

"What did the ghost look like?"

"Joe was so scared that he can't tell, except that it had grave-clothes on. And it went out of sight as soon as he got out into the daylight—floated off, and at the same instant the trunk became as heavy as such a trunk generally is. Some of us believe Joe's story, and some don't, and he's one of them that does. He threwed up his job rather than go into the morgue again."

### DRUMMERS SEE A SPECTER

(*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Oct. 6, 1887)

[The last man in the world to be accused of a belief in the supernatural would be your go-ahead, hard-headed American "drummer" or traveling-man. Yet here is a plain tale of how not one but two of the western fraternity saw a genuine ghost in broad daylight a few years ago.—ED.]

Jackson, Mo., October 6. At a place on the Turnpike road, between Cape Girardeau and Jackson, is what is familiarly known as Spooks' Hollow. The place is situated fours miles from the Cape and is awfully dismal looking where the road curves gracefully around a high bluff.

Two drummers, representing a single leading wholesale house of St. Louis, were recently making the drive from Jackson to the Cape, when their attention was suddenly attracted at the Spooks' Hollow by a white and airy object which arose in its peculiar form so as to be plainly visible and then maneuvered in every imaginable manner, finally taking a zigzag wayward

journey through the low dismal-looking surroundings, disappearing suddenly into the mysterious region from whence it came.

More than one incident of dreadful experience has been related of this gloomy abode, and the place is looked upon by the midnight tourist and the lonesome citizen on his nocturnal travels as an unpleasant spot, isolated from the beautiful country which surrounds it.

#### DR. FUNK SEES THE SPIRIT OF BEECHER

(New York *Herald*, April 4, 1903)

While he will not admit that he is a believer in spiritualism, the Rev. Dr. Isaac Funk, head of the publishing house of Funk & Wagnalls, is so impressed with manifestations he has received from the spirit of Henry Ward Beecher that he has laid the entire matter before the Boston Society for Psychical Research, and is anxiously awaiting a solution or explanation of what appears to him, after twenty-five years' study of the subject, the most remarkable test of the merit of the claims of spiritualists that has ever come within his observation.

Although he has resorted to every means within his power to discover any fraud that may have been practiced upon him, he has been unable to explain away not only messages to him from the great minister, but the actual appearance to him of Mr. Beecher in the flesh.

Dr. Funk and Mr. Beecher were intimate friends, and it would be difficult to practice deception as to Mr. Beecher's appearance. When the apparition appeared to Dr. Funk at a séance a short time ago Dr. Funk was less than three feet distant from it, and had plenty of opportunity to detect a fraud if it was being perpetrated, he believes.

"Every feature stood out distinctly," Dr Funk said yesterday, in describing his experience, "even to the hair and eyes, the color of the skin and the expression of the mouth, lines of the body, but it was still light enough to make the face plainly visible. I had a short conversation with the embodied spirit, and then it appeared to sink to the floor and fade away."

#### MYSTERY OF THE COINS

Dr. Funk was especially anxious to have an opportunity to see and talk with Mr. Beecher, in the hope that light would be thrown on the mystery which surrounds a previous manifestation. Through the spirit of one "Jack" Rakestraw, who says he used to lead the choir in one of Mr. Beecher's churches, but frankly admits that he cannot remember exactly where the church was located—even spirits have a way of forgetting things, spiritualists declare—Dr. Funk was informed that Mr. Beecher was troubled because the publisher had failed to return a coin, known as the "widow's mite," which he had borrowed some years ago, from the late Professor Charles E. West, a well known numismatist, to make a cut to illustrate a dictionary. Dr. Funk supposed the coin had been returned a long time ago, but upon looking the matter up found it in a drawer of a safe, among some old papers, exactly as Mr. Rakestraw maintained.

When Mr. Beecher appeared to him in person, so far as he could determine, Dr. Funk asked him several direct questions, to which the replies, he admits, were somewhat sublime. Although Dr. Funk has found the long-lost coin—which, by the way, is said to be worth \$2,500—he is not certain to whom it should be returned, now that Professor West is dead and his collection of coins sold. Should the "widow's mite" go to Professor West's heirs or to the purchaser of the collection? is a question which has as yet remained unanswered.

“That is a matter I am leaving to be determined by the Society for Psychical Research and Mrs. Piper, who ought to be able to learn from the spirit world what disposition Professor West wishes to have made of the coin,” said Dr. Funk. It is at any rate a matter that does not appear to concern the spirit of Mr. Beecher.

#### MR. BEECHER APPEARED

“When what seemed to be Mr. Beecher’s embodied spirit appeared to me,” Dr. Funk said, “I asked that very question. He smiled and replied that it was not a matter that concerned him especially, and that the whole thing was in the nature of a test, to prove to me that there actually are spirits and that it is possible to have communication with them when all the conditions are favorable. He remarked that he was glad the old coin had been found, but seemed consider the disposition of it a matter of minor importance. He told me he was glad I was taking interest in the subject, as he believed it would result in good for the world and then, excusing himself on the ground that he had an engagement which it was necessary for him to keep, the apparition disappeared.”

Dr. Funk borrowed the coin from Professor West’s collection, as a lighter colored one he already had was of doubtful authenticity. Both coins were sent to the government in Philadelphia and the lighter one was declared to be the genuine one. By the spirits it is now declared, however, that a mistake was made and that the darker one belonging to Professor West has the greater value.

“I found both the light and the dark one in the drawer,” said Dr. Funk, “and remembered distinctly that it was the darker of the two which I had borrowed from Professor West. I went to the next séance, and when Rakestraw’s spirit arrived I asked him to find out which one was to be returned. After a brief interval his voice came to me.

“ ‘Return the dark one, of course,’ he said. ‘That is the genuine coin and is the one you borrowed from Dr. Beecher’s friend.’

“While I do not wish to be classed as a believer in Spiritualism, I certainly am open to conviction after what has come under my personal observation,” Dr. Funk concluded. “I am confident that no fraud was practiced on at the séance at which I was told about the old coin. The medium is an elderly woman living in Brooklyn, who never appears in public, and the only persons present were members of her family and known to me. But none of them knew any more about the coin being in my safe than I did.”

#### MARYLAND GHOSTS (*Baltimore American*, May, 1886)

For forty years the Rev. Dr. B. has been the rector of a prominent parish on the Eastern Shore. He had, when the scenes recorded below happened twenty-two years ago, a mission charge sixteen miles distant from the town in which he resided, and he was therefore constantly traveling between these two places. About six miles distant was the country residence of Judge S., a well-known and venerable parishioner of the worthy doctor. The sod had been turned above this gentleman’s grave only about six weeks, when Dr. B. chanced to be returning from his mission charge in company with a friend. It was broad daylight, just about sunset, and not far from Judge S.’s gate, when a carriage, drawn by a white horse, passed them rapidly from behind and was soon out of sight.

“That fellow must be in a hurry to reach C., remarked the doctor.

“Did you notice anything peculiar about that vehicle?” inquired his companion.

“Only that it moves very quietly. I heard no sound as it went by.”

“Nor did I,” said his friend. “Neither rattling of wheels nor noise of hoofs. It is certainly strange.”

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The matter, however, was soon forgotten in other conversation, and they had traveled perhaps a mile, when suddenly, the same horse and carriage passed them as before. Nothing was discernible of the driver except his feet, the carriage curtains hiding his body. There was no cross road by which a vehicle in front could possibly have got behind without making a circuit of many miles and consuming several hours. Yet there was not the shadow of a doubt as to the identity of the vehicle, and the two gentlemen gazed at each other in blank amazement, and with a certain defined sense of awe which precluded any discussion of the matter, particularly as the horse was to all appearances the well-known white habitually driven by the deceased Judge. A half mile brought them in sight of Judge S.'s gate, when for the third time the ghostly team dashed by in the same dreadful mysterious silence. This time it turned in full view into the gate. Without a word of comment the doctor quickened his horse's speed, and reached the gate only a few yards behind the silent driver. Both gentlemen peered eagerly up the long, open lane leading to the house; but neither carriage nor wheel-track was visible, though it was still clear daylight, and there was no outlet from the lane, nor could any vehicle in the time occupied accomplish half the distance. The peculiar features of this strange incident are that it was equally and simultaneously evident to two witnesses, both entirely unprepared for any such manifestation, and differing widely in temperament, habits of life, mental capacity and educational attainments, and by mere accident making this journey together, and that to this day both of them—witnesses, be it noted, of unimpeachable credibility—attest it, and full corroborate each other, but without being able to suggest the slightest explanation.

#### THE GHOST OF PEG ALLEY'S POINT

Peg Alley's Point is a long and narrow strip of wooded land situated between the main stream of Miles river and one of the navigable creeks which flow into it. This little peninsula is about two miles long, from fifty to three hundred yards in width and is bounded by deep water and is overgrown with pine and thick underbrush. There is extant a tradition to the effect that many years ago a party of Baltimore oystermen encamped on the point, among whom was a man named Alley, who had abandoned his wife. The deserted woman followed up her husband, and found him at the camp. After some conversation had passed between them, the man induced her, upon some unknown pretext, to accompany him into a thicket. The poor wife never came out alive. Her husband cruelly murdered her with a club. The point of land has ever since been known by Peg Alley's name, and her perturbed spirit has been supposed to haunt the scene of her untimely taking off. About twelve years ago a gang of rail-splitters were at work on the point, and one day the foreman flatly refused to go back, declaring that queer things happened down there, and that he had seen a ghost. Mr. Kennedy, his employer, laughed at him and dismissed the matter from his mind. Some time after this Mr. Kennedy had occasion to ride through the woods to look after some sheep, there being but one road and the water on either side. As he

approached the point his horse started violently and refused to go on, regardless of whip or spur. Glancing about for the cause of this unnatural fright, he saw a woman rise up from a log, a few yards in advance, and stand by the roadside, looking at him. She was very poorly clad in a faded calico dress, and wore a limp sun-bonnet, from beneath which her thin, jet-black hair straggled down on her shoulders; her face was thin and sallow and her eyes black and piercing. Knowing that she had no business there, and occupied in controlling his horse, he called to her somewhat angrily to get out of the way, as his animal was afraid of her. Slowly she turned and walked into the thicket, uttering not a syllable and looking reproachfully at him as she went. With much difficulty he forced his horse to the spot, hoping to find out who the strange intruder might be, but the most careful search failed to reveal the trace of any one, although there was no place of concealment and no possible way of escape, for which, indeed, there was not sufficient time.

### AN APPARITION AND DEATH

The old family seat of the T.'s, one of the most prominent names in the community, is not far from the scenes of the above-mentioned adventure. In all this region of lovely situations and charming water views, its site is one of the most beautiful. The brick mansion, with all the strangely mixed comforts and discomforts of ancient architecture rears its roof up from an elevated lawn, while the silvery thread of a land-locked stream winds nearly around the whole. Over the further bank dance the sparkling waters of a broad estuary, flashing in the glance of the sunshine or tossing its white-capped billows in angry mimicry of the sea. The gleam of white sails is never lacking to add variety and picturesqueness to the scene. In the dead, hushed calm of a summer evening, when the lifted oar rests on the gunwale, unwilling to disturb with its dip the glassy surface, one has a strange, dreamy sense of being suspended in space, the sky, in all its changing beauties, being accurately reflected in illimitable depth by the still water, until the charm is broken by the splash and ripple of a school of nomadic alewives or the gliding, sinuous fin of a piratical shark. In this lovely home it was wont for the family to assemble on the occasion of certain domestic celebrations, and it was at one of these that the following incident occurred: All were present except one member, who was detained by sickness at her residence, fifteen miles away. It was in early afternoon that one of the ladies standing at an open window, suddenly exclaimed: "Why, there's Aunt Milly crossing the flower garden!" The party approached the window, and beheld, in great surprise, the lady, in her ordinary costume, slowly strolling among the flowers. She paused and looked earnestly at the group, her features plainly visible; then turned and disappeared amidst the shrubbery. No trace of her presence being discoverable, it was natural that a gloom fell upon the company. A few hours later a messenger arrived with the intelligence of her death. The time of her apparition and the time of her death coincided.

### AN IDIOT GHOST WITH BRASS BUTTONS

(Philadelphia Press, June 16, 1889)

In a pretty but old-fashioned house in Stuyvesant square—ghosts like squares, I think—is another ghost. This house stood empty for several years, and about six years ago a gentleman, his wife and little daughter moved in there, and while fitting up allowed the child to play about in the empty attic, which had apparently been arranged for a children's playroom long ago. There was a fireplace and a large fireboard in front of it.

When the house was about finished down stairs the mother began to pay more attention to the little girl and tried to keep her down there with her, but the child always stole away and went back up stairs again and again, until finally the mother asked why she liked to go up there so much. She replied that she liked to play with the funny little boy. Investigation showed that it was utterly impossible for any person, man or child, to get in that place or be concealed there, but the little girl insisted and told her parents that he “went in there,” pointing to the fire-board.

The parents were seriously concerned, believing that their daughter was telling them an untruth, and threatened to punish her for it, but she insisted so strongly that she saw and played with a “funny little boy, with lots of brass buttons on his jacket,” that they finally gave up threatening and resolved to investigate.

The father, who is an old sea captain, found out that this house had been occupied by an Englishman named Cowdery who had had three children—two boys and a girl. One of the boys was an idiot. This idiot was supposed to have fallen into the East River, as his cap was found there, and he had always shown a liking for the river when his nurse took him out. Soon after this Mr. Cowdery moved West.

This was enough for my friend’s friend, who had the fireboard taken down, and short work in the wall by the side of the chimney brought the body of the unfortunate idiot boy. The back of his skull was crushed in. He still had the dark blue jacket on, with four rows of buttons on the front. The poor little bones were buried and the affair kept quiet, but the captain left the house.

#### A MODEL GHOST STORY (*Boston Courier*, Aug. 10)

A very singular story which forms one of the sensational social topics of the day is the best authenticated of the many stories of the supernatural that have been lately told. Only a short time ago a young and well-known artist, Mr. A., was invited to pay a visit to his distinguished friend, Mr. Izzard. The house was filled with guests, but a large and handsome room was placed at his disposal, apparently one of the best in the house. For three days he had a delightful visit; delightful in all particulars save one, he had each night a horrible dream. He dreamed he was—or was really—suddenly awakened by some person entering his room and in looking around saw the room brilliantly lighted, while at the window stood a lady elegantly attired in the act of throwing something out. This accomplished, she turned her face toward the only spectator showing a countenance so distorted by evil passions that he was thrilled with horror. Soon the light and the figure with the dreadful face disappeared, leaving the artist suffering from a frightful nightmare. On returning to his city home, he was so haunted by the fearful countenance which had for three consecutive nights troubled him, that he made a sketch of it, and so real that the evil expression seemed to horrify every one who saw it. Not a great while after, the artist went to make an evening visit on Mr. Izzard; that gentleman invited him to his picture gallery, as he wished to show him some remarkable, old family portraits. What was Mr. A.’s surprise to recognize among them, in the likeness of a stately, well-dressed lady, the one who had so troubled his slumbers on his previous visit, lacking, however, the revolting, wicked expression. Soon as he saw it he involuntarily exclaimed, “Why, I have seen that lady!” “Indeed!” said Mr. I., smiling, “that is hardly possible, as she died more than a hundred years ago. She was the second wife of my great-grandfather, and reflected anything but credit on the family. She was strongly suspected of having murdered her husband’s son by a former marriage in order to make her own child heir to the property. The unfortunate boy broke his neck in a fall from a window

and there was every reason to believe that he was precipitated from the window by his stepmother.” The artist then told his host the circumstances of his thrice-repeated experience, or dream, and sent for his sketch, which, so far as the features were concerned, was identical with the portrait in Mr. Izzard’s gallery. The sketch has since been photographed, but from its hideous expression is not very pleasant to look upon.

A GHOST THAT WILL NOT DOWN  
(Cincinnati *Enquirer*, Sept. 30, 1884)

Grantsville, W. VA., September 30.—The ghost of Betts’ farm will not lay. Something over a year ago the *Enquirer* contained an account of an occult influence or manifestation at the farm house of Mr. Collins Betts, about three miles below this town, in which story were delineated a number of weird, strange instances of ghostly manifestations, all of which were verified by the testimony of honest, brave and reliable citizens, the names of many of whom were mentioned. That story went the rounds of newspapers all over the country and resulted in the proprietor of the place receiving hundreds of letters from all over the country.

Since then the old house has been torn down, the family of Mr. Betts rebuilding a home place on a different portion of the farm. This act, it was believed, would lay or forever quiet the ramblings and queer doings of the inexplicable mystery. But such has not been the case. Since the building has been razed the mysterious manifestation has made itself visible at places sometimes quite a distance from the scene of its former domicile.

At a distance of several hundred yards from the old Betts place a neighboring farmer had erected a house in which he intended to reside, and in fact did reside a short time, but the “Cale Betts ghost,” as the manifestation is commonly called for a distance of many miles, was no respecter of persons and oblivious of distance, and it so annoyed and frightened the farmer and his family at untoward times that he has removed his house to the opposite end of the farm, leaving his garden, orchard and all the improvements usually made about a farm-house to take care of themselves.

This in itself was considered strange enough, but the ghostly visitant did not stop there. The high road, running some distance away, has been the theater of almost numberless scenes of frights and frightful appearances. Among those who have lately seen the ghost is a young man named Vandevener, whose father had once been frightened nearly to death, as related in a former letter. Young Vandevener had frequently made sport of the old man’s fright, but he does so no more—in fact, the young man is willing to make affidavit that the old man’s story was mildly drawn.

The young man was driving along quietly one night about half a mile from the Betts place, when he saw a strange being, which, in the pale light of the moon, he took to be a man walking at the head of his horses. A few minutes later the man, or whatever it was, glided, without making a particle of noise, around the horses’ heads and got into the wagon and took a seat by his side.

Young Vandevener says it rode along with him several hundred yards, and spoke to him. It first told him not to be afraid, as it did not intend to injure him in the least. What it said he will not tell, except that it admonished him not to say anything about it until a certain time. After it had spoken to him Vandevener says it got up and glided off into the woods and disappeared. He says the shape was that of a headless man, and that while it was with him he felt a cold chill run

over him, although it was a warm evening, and this chilly feeling did not leave him until the disappearance of the shape.

Since then Vandevener can not be induced to go over the ground after night. He still persists in the same story, and as he is a truthful young fellow, the people who know him are satisfied that he really saw what he claims to have seen.

Only one day last week another young man, Henry Stephens I believe, on his way past the same place, saw a peculiar shape rise out of the brush by the side of the road and glide along by the side of the wagon. Stephens got out of his wagon and gathered together a handful of rocks, which he threw at the object. Some of the stones appeared to go through it, but did not seem to affect it in the least. It still continued to float along at a short distance away until Stephens became frightened and whipped up his horses until they flew at a two-minute gait down the road, the object following at some distance until quite away from the scene of its first appearance, when it disappeared like a cloud of vapor. There are dozens of authentic stories of the ghostly peculiarities of the Betts ghost which are new and peculiar.

It appears, since the destruction of the Betts homestead, to have taken up its quarters near the highway, and here it appears to people who have generally scoffed and laughed at the former stories. That it is bullet-proof does not need testimony, located, as it is, in a section of country which has for years been noted for its fearless men—such as the Duskeys, Downs and others of national fame as sharpshooters, scouts, etc., during the late war. None of these men have succeeded in “laying” or putting a quietus to it. There is a story that a couple of men had been murdered or disappeared in this vicinity, and that the ghost is the uneasy spirit of one of these men, but there is no real evidence that anybody was ever killed there.

There is no doubt that Calhoun County has a mystery which neither time, bullets, courage nor philosophy can either drive away or explain. It has come to stay. If you meet a Calhouner just mention it, and he will tell you that the “Betts ghost” is a county possession which it will gladly dispose of at any price.

#### TOM CYPHER'S PHANTOM ENGINE (*Seattle Press-Times*, Jan. 10, 1892)

Locomotive engineers are as a class said to be superstitious, but J. M. Pinckney, an engineer known to almost every Brotherhood man, is an exception to the rule. He has never been able to believe the different stories told of apparitions suddenly appearing on the track, but he had an experience last Sunday night on the Northern Pacific east-bound overland that made his hair stand on end.

By the courtesy of the engineer, also a Brotherhood man, Mr. Pinckney was riding on the engine. They were recounting experiences, and the fireman, who was a green hand, was getting very nervous as he listened to the tales of wrecks and disasters, the horrors of which were graphically described by the veteran engineers.

The night was clear and the rays from the headlight flashed along the track, and, although they were interested in spinning yarns, a sharp lookout was kept, for they were rapidly nearing Eagle gorge, in the Cascades, the scene of so many disasters and the place which is said to be the most dangerous on the 2,500 miles of road. The engineer was relating a story and was just coming to the climax when he suddenly grasped the throttle, and in a moment had “thrown her over,” that is, reversed the engine. The air brakes were applied and the train brought to a standstill within a few feet of the place where Engineer Cypher met his death two years ago. By this time the

passengers had become curious as to what was the matter, and all sorts of questions were asked of the trainmen. The engineer made an excuse that some of the machinery was loose, and in a few moments the train was speeding on to her destination.

“What made you stop back there?” asked Pinckney. “I heard your excuse, but I have run too long on the road not to know that your excuse is not the truth.”

His question was answered by the engineer pointing and saying excitedly:

“There! Look there! Don’t you see it?”

“Looking out of the cab window,” said Mr. Pinckney, “I saw about 300 yards ahead of us the headlight of a locomotive.”

“Stop the train, man,” I cried, reaching for the lever.

“Oh, it’s nothing. It’s what I saw back at the gorge. It’s Tom Cypher’s engine, No. 33. There’s no danger of a collision. The man who is running that ahead of us can run it faster backward than I can this one forward. Have I seen it before? Yes, twenty times. Every engineer on the road knows that engine, and he’s always watching for it when he gets to the gorge.”

“The engine ahead of us was running silently, but smoke was puffing from the stack and the headlight threw out rays of red, green, and white light. It kept a short distance ahead of us for several miles, and then for a moment we saw a figure on the pilot. Then the engine rounded a curve and we did not see it again. We ran by a little station, and at the next, when the operator warned us to keep well back from a wild engine that was ahead, the engineer said nothing. He was not afraid of a collision. Just to satisfy my own mind on the matter I sent a telegram to the engine wiper at Sprague, asking him if No. 33 was in. I received a reply stating that No. 33 had just come in, and that her coal was exhausted and boxes burned out. I suppose you’ll be inclined to laugh at the story, but just ask any of the boys, although many of them won’t talk about it. I would not myself if I were running on the road. It’s unlucky to do so.”

With this comment upon the tale Mr. Pinckney boarded a passing caboose and was soon on his way to Tacoma. It’s believed by Northern Pacific engineers that Thomas Cypher’s spirit still hovers near Eagle gorge.

## GHOSTS IN CONNECTICUT

(N. Y. *Sun*, Sept. 1, 1885)

“There is as much superstition in New-England to-day as there was in those old times when they slashed Quakers and built bonfires for witches.” It was a New York man who gave expression to this rather startling statement. He has been summering in Connecticut, and he avers that his talk about native superstition is founded on close observation. Perhaps it is; anyhow he regaled the *Times’s* correspondent with some entertaining incidents which he claims establish the truth of his somewhat astonishing theories.

Old Stratford, the whitewashed town between this place and Bridgeport, made famous by mysterious “rappings” many years ago, and more recently celebrated as the scene of poor Rose Clark Ambler’s strange murder, is much concerned over a house which the almost universal verdict pronounces “haunted.” The family of Elihu Osborn lives in this house, and ghosts have been clambering through it lately in a wonderfully promiscuous fashion. Two or three families were compelled to vacate the premises before the Osborns, proud and skeptical, took possession of them. Now the Osborns are hunting for a new home. Children of the family have been awakened at midnight by visitors which persisted in shaking them out of bed; Mrs. Osborn has been confronted with ghostly spectacles, and through the halls and vacant rooms strange

footsteps are frequently heard when all the family are trying to sleep; sounds loud enough to arouse every member of the household. Then the manifestations sometimes change to moanings and groanings sufficiently vehement and pitiful to distract all who hear them. Once upon a time, perhaps a dozen years ago, Jonathan Riggs lived in this house, and as the local gossips assert, Riggs caused the death of his wife by his brutal conduct and then swallowed poison to end his own life. The anniversary of the murderous month in the Riggs family has arrived and the manifestations are so frequent and so lively that "the like has never been seen before," as is affirmed by a veteran Stratford citizen. There is no shadow of doubt in Stratford that the spirits of the Riggses are spryly cavorting around their former abode.

Over at the Thimble Islands, off Stony Creek, is an acre or two of soil piled high on a lot of rocks. The natives call it Frisbie Island. Not more than a hundred yards off shore it contains a big bleak looking house which was built twenty years ago to serve as a Summer hotel when Connecticut capitalists were deep in schemes to tempt New Yorkers to this part of the Sound shore to spend their summers. New Yorkers declined to be tempted, and the old house is rapidly approaching decay. It has recently assumed a peculiar interest for the residents of Stony Creek. Midnight lights have suddenly appeared in all its windows at frequent intervals, fitfully flashing up and down like the blaze in the Long Island lighthouses. Ghosts! This is the universal verdict. Nobody disputes it. Once or twice a hardy crew of local sailors have volunteered to go out and investigate the mystery, but when the time for the test has arrived, there somehow have always been reasons for postponing the excursion. Cynical people profess to believe that practical jokers are at the root of the manifestations, but such a profane view is not widely entertained among the good people who have their homes at Stony Creek.

Over near Middletown is a farmer named Edgar G. Stokes, a gentleman who is said to have graduated with honor in a New England college more than a quarter of a century ago. He enjoys, perhaps, the most notable bit of superstition to be found anywhere in this country, in or out of Connecticut. He owns the farm on which he lives, and it is valuable; not quite so valuable though as it once was, for Mr. Stokes's eccentric disposition has somewhat changed the usual tactics that farmers pursue when they own fertile acres. The average man clears his soil of stones; Mr. Stokes has been piling rocks all over his land. Little by little the weakness—or philosophy—has grown upon him; and not only from every part of Middlesex County, but from every part of this State he has been accumulating wagonloads of pebbles and rocks. He seeks for no peculiar stone either in shape, color, or quality. If they are stones that is sufficient. And his theory is that stones have souls—souls, too, that are not so sordid and earthly as the souls that animate humanity. They are souls purified and exalted. In the rocks are the spirits of the greatest men who have lived in past ages, developed by some divinity until they have become worthy of their new abode. Napoleon Bonaparte's soul inhabits a stone, so does Hannibal's, so does Cæsar's, but poor plebeian John Smith and William Jenkins, they never attained such immortality.

Farmer Stokes has dumped his rocks with more or less reverence all along his fields, and this by one name and that by another he knows and hails them all. A choice galaxy of the distinguished lights of the old days are in his sesession, and just between the burly bits of granite at the very threshold of his home is a smooth-faced crystal from the Rocky Mountains. This stone has no soul yet. The rough, jagged rock on its left is George Washington. The granite spar on the right is glorified with the spirit of good Queen Bess. The smooth-faced crystal one of days is to know the bliss of swallowing up the spirit of good farmer Edgar Garton Stokes. It was not until recently that mystified neighbors obtained the secret of the vast accumulation of rough

stones on the Stokes farm. Mr. Stokes has a family. They all seem to be intelligent, practical business people. There may be a will contested in Middletown one of these days.

THE SPOOK OF DIAMOND ISLAND  
(St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, Sept. 18, 1888)

Harden, Ill., Sept. 18.—For some time past rumors have been circulated in Hardin to the effect that Diamond Island, in the river about two miles from this place, was the home of a ghost. The stories concerning the movements of the alleged spook were, of course, not given any credence at first, but later, when several reputable citizens of Hardin announced that they had positively seen an uncanny looking object moving about on the island at night, the rumors were more seriously considered. Now, after investigation, the mysterious something is no longer considered a myth.

Along toward midnight a peculiar light is seen at the foot of the island. It has the appearance of a huge ball of fire, and is about the size and shape of an ordinary barrel.

A few nights ago a party of young men from this place determined to visit the island and fathom the mystery if possible. Equipped with revolvers, knives, shotguns, and clubs, the party secured a boat and were soon cutting through the water at a good speed for a point on the island near where the specter usually made its appearance. Arriving at the landing place, the skiff was hauled up on the shore and the young men took up a position in a clump of trees close at hand to watch and wait.

Suddenly the whole point of the island was as a bright red object rose apparently from the water glided up into the air. Ascending probably to a height of forty yards, the watchers saw the lurid ball fade away.

The investigating party had seen all they wanted. They made a mad rush for the boat, but, just as they reached the place where it had been left, they were horrified to see the little craft moving out on the water from the island. At first its only occupant seemed to be the red ball of fire, but the next moment the watchers saw the crimson object gradually take the form of a man, and they saw him, too, dip the oars at regular intervals and pull a long, steady stroke. The man's features were fully concealed by a wide-rimmed slouch hat, which was drawn over his face. A peculiar light illumined the boat and the waters around it, making the craft and its mysterious occupant perfectly discernible to the party on the shore, who stood paralyzed with fear, unable to speak or move, their eyes riveted by some mysterious influence they could not resist on the spectral object before them.

The boat was now about in midstream, and suddenly the group of watchers saw the skiff's occupant change again into the crimson ball. Then it slowly began to move upward, and when it was about parallel with the tops of the trees on the island it disappeared. Next instant the watchers looking across the river saw nothing but the flickering lights in Hardin.

The cries of the crowd on the island awakened a sleeping fisherman on the opposite side of the river, and he kindly pulled across and rescued the ghost-seeking youths.

The fiery spook, it is said, still makes its nightly trips to Diamond Island, but no more investigating parties have ventured across to solve the mystery.

It is said that some years ago a foul murder was committed on this island, and by the superstitious the crimson object is believed to be the restless spirit of the slain man.

THE GHOST'S FULL HOUSE  
(N. Y. *Sun*, April 10, 1891)

The Bleecker street ghost drew as large a "house" last night as Barnum's Circus or any of the theaters. There was a bigger crowd about "Cohnfeld's Folly" than there was three weeks ago when the flames gutted the building from Mercer to Greene streets and did damage away up in the millions. The wraith was not due till midnight, but the street was packed with watchers as early as 9 o'clock. The crowd was so dense that pedestrians with difficulty forced their way through it and twice a squad of blue-coats descended on the mob and routed it. Five minutes after the police had retired the street was as impassable as before.

In the midst of the ruins of the big fire a single wall towers away above the surrounding brick partitions. It looks feeble and almost tottering and the shop-keepers in the vicinity say that when there is a high wind it sways to and fro and threatens to come down in a heap. After dark the outlines of the summit of this wall are very indistinct. The detail of the wreck could not be made out even in last night's bright starlight. There is a sheet of tin, however, on the top of the wall, which was probably a cornice before the fire. Only one side of it is attached to the brickwork, and when there is any wind it trembles in the breeze and rattles with an uncertain sound. It may have been that the sheen of the tin in the starlight or a windy night first suggested the idea of a ghost to some weird imagination.

There is an old Frenchman living in the vicinity, however who avers that three nights ago he saw with his own eyes a lady in white standing out against the darkened sky on the very summit of the tottering wall. Her long, flowing robes fluttered in the breeze, and even while he watched there came a low, wailing sound, and the wraith dissolved into air. He kept his eye fixed on the spot for a full minute, but the vision did not reappear, and as he turned to walk away he thought he heard groaning as of a lost spirit. The sound, he says, made his blood run cold and kept him shivering the whole night through.

The alleged appearance of the ghost has set the whole neighborhood a talking, and some of the "old residents" have recalled a murder which took place in the vicinity many years ago, when A. T. Stewart lived there and the street was one of the fashionable places of residence of the town. There was a wealthy old gentleman of foreign birth who lived in the street and was quite a recluse. He would pass the time of day with his neighbors when he met them in the street, but he was never known to enter into conversation with any one. The blinds were always drawn in his front windows, and at night there was not a ray of light to be seen about the house. His only servants were a couple somewhat advanced in years, who were as foreign and uncommunicative as himself. The master of the house would be away for months at a time and the neighbors had all sorts of theories as to his disappearances. Some thought he was engaged in unlawful business, others suggested that his absence might be attributed to the supernatural, but those who were less flighty concluded that he simply went off on periodical visits to his native land.

On his return from one of these visits, however, the old gentleman brought with him a beautiful young girl. She was little more than a child in appearance, and had the soft eyes, olive complexion and lithe, graceful figure of a Spaniard. She was never seen alive after she passed the shadow of the old man's doorway. A few weeks later the old gentleman disappeared as mysteriously as if he had been snatched up into the clouds. The old couple who kept his home walked away one day and never returned. There was an investigation, and in a hole dug in the cellar was found the body of the beautiful young girl. There were no marks on her body, and it

was supposed she had been smothered. The exact date of this tragedy is not fixed. Inspector Byrnes says that if it ever occurred it was before his time.

The ghost, if ghost there is, is undoubtedly the spirit of this unfortunate and nameless young woman. A *World* reporter watched the Bleecker street ruins with the crowd last night and was there at the midnight hour, but never a sign of a ghost did he see. There were those in the crowd, nevertheless, who thought or pretended to think that they did. Once there was a rattling sound in the ruins, which caused a commotion among the lookers-on, but it was only because a small boy had shied a brick at the old wall. The living spirits boomed the liquor business in the saloons of the vicinity. A skull and cross-bones over one of these bars was surmounted with the somewhat appropriate legend freshly painted:

“In the midst of life we are in debt.”