

The Groaning Ghost.

Some five-and-thirty years ago when I was a young man, my father's business experienced a sudden and severe check. We were many in family and the expenses of education were heavy. It was necessary to retrench. My father's place of business lay in the heart of the city. We had to keep horses, if only to take myself and my father to and from the city. The most important articles in our scheme of retrenchment were our horses and carriages. For all these reasons we resolved to move eastward to within easy reach of our place of business. My brother and myself were commissioned to find a suitable house.

After a long search we selected a house that stood at the corner of a quiet, sober-looking, very old-fashioned square. Being the corner house, it was larger than the other houses, and appeared just suited to the wants of our family.

The next day I was lunching at my usual chop house along with two or three acquaintances.

'Still house-hunting, Denton?' said one of these.

'No, thank heaven,' I said. 'We've got a house at last. In—Square.' 'Square,' echoed he, thoughtfully. 'Why, —Square is the— Which number have you got?'

'Number 45,' I said. He threw his head back and burst into a fit of laughter. The other men laughed, too. I looked from one to another for explanation.

'When you're done,' said I with dignity.

'Why, don't you know,' said my friend, recovering his gravity, 'Number 45—square is haunted? I saw the other men looking at me, so I put on a bold front.

'As if everyone didn't know that,' said I composedly. He was somewhat taken aback, but returned to the charge.

'Well, you'll have plenty of company there,' he said. 'We shall have you appearing in the city with a fine head of snow-white hair, acquired in a single night. Poor old boy!'

'Don't you be afraid,' I retorted. 'There are enough of us to frighten any ghost. We shall crowd him out.'

'I bet you a new hat you don't stop there a week,' said he.

'Done with you,' said I promptly. 'As often as you like. Any one else want to bet?'

No one volunteered, and the subject dropped. But I was extremely uncomfortable. In the course of the afternoon I took my brother aside and told him.

'Phew!' said he. 'That explains the low rent. But it's rather serious. The governor can't stand anything of the sort. You know how nervous he is.'

'Yes, I know,' I said. 'And it strikes me that the best thing we can do is to move into the house ourselves so that we can tell him the story is a myth if anyone lets it out to him. Just you and I.'

'Right,' said he. 'We have taken the house and we can't afford to lose the money. Besides, it's such a capital place.'

The whole family were to move in about three week's time. We had no difficulty in finding a pretext for preceding them, and it was arranged that some of the bedroom furniture should be immediately sent in to our new domicile. We were going to sell most of our furniture in the west end house, and the new furniture could be bought immediately and placed in Number 45. So at about 10 o'clock one evening, after a substantial dinner in town, we let ourselves into our new abode by means of the key, and took possession. A bright fire, lit by our landlady, was blazing in the kitchen. We had a plentiful supply of whisky and tobacco, and we made ourselves comfortable with our slippers and lounging coats, and prepared for a night of it.

Uncommonly comfortable, said my brother approvingly. 'Gad, the old lady knows how to make a fire!'

'And what a grate! And a chimney as big as a blast furnace. There is nothing like one of these old-fashioned kitchens for comfort.' Enconced in our chimney corners, we passed the time luxuriously enough. We had made up our minds to sit up all night and show the ghost what manner of men he had to deal with.

'We'll take the ghost by the horns,' said my brother. 'I only hope we shan't have to take the devil by his.'

I was not quite so complacent, for I inherited something of my father's nervous temperament. However I had company, and there was Dutch courage in the whisky bottle, so I kept up a stout heart. We were very cheerful and light hearted at first. We talked over various boyish escapades; we criticised the characters of our friends and relations; we got the fidgets; we found we could not smoke forever without burning our mouths. Finally, the fumes of whiskey and the heat of the fire had their inevitable effect and we began to doze.

'Hello!' he said. 'What's the matter? Why, I've been asleep! What's the time?'

'Two o'clock,' said I.

'Just the time for a ghost,' said he with unseemingly levity. 'Do you know, still, I don't think he'll come here, ghosts are uncomfortable things and don't like good fires. Got too much of them where they are, I suppose. Let's go and look for him.'

'Anything for a change,' said I, although the thought of preambulating that great lonely mansion in the dead of the night was anything but agreeable. 'I am wide awake.'

'So am I,' said he; and taking up the brass candlestick, he went toward the door. I followed him close. We passed along the passage, our stealthy footfall making a faint sound on the uncarpeted floor. We examined the rooms on the ground floor. We heard and saw nothing. We ascended the stairs. Every individual stair creaked horribly, but that was all. No ghost.

My brother suddenly opened the door of a bed room on the first floor. Instantly a gust of air blew the candle out. And as we stood there in the cold we distinctly heard—a groan. It was a low drawn, wailing moan of indescribable horror and pathos. It died away in a despairing cadence. It seemed like the sorrowful lament of a soul in torment. As we stood their grasping each others hands, with our hearts throbbing in great pulsations, it came again. Oh the horror of it! It seemed to be in the room and close to us. The cold was deathly, the silence broken only by that wailing and awful moan. Once more it rose and fell—and somehow or other, the next moment we found ourselves in the kitchen, with shaking limbs and aching faces, relighting our extinguished candle. Then we looked at each other.

'That was no fancy, Will,' said my brother.

'Fancy—no,' I replied, my teeth chattering in my head. 'What are you going to do?'

For my brother had relit the candle and was moving away.

'I'm going to have another look,' he said.

'But perhaps the ghost extinguishes the light.'

'I'll give him another chance. Come along you chattering idiot! I was too shattered to resist the unflattering description. This time we opened the door more cautiously and holding the candle on high we looked around. Pure vacuity. And the sound came no again.

We examined the room carefully, but there was nothing to be seen, neither was there anything to be heard. So we gave up and went to bed. After a night of tossing and fever, I awoke unrefreshed, and mighty glad to find myself in broad daylight.

At noon that day I had to run the gauntlet of my friends. And I'm bound to say, I lied like Ananias. As the day drew on I grew more uncomfortable, and fairly dreaded the ordeal of the ensuing night. We agreed that at 2 o'clock precisely we would again visit the haunted room.

The whiskey ebbed fast, but not so fast as my courage. My brother, cool and practical was deep in thought. He was not likely to indulge the wild speculations that cross my brain. He was seeking some material explanation of the wierd phenomenon. At last the hour began to sound. At the first stroke my brother arose and took up the candle. I had provided myself with a second candle on my own account. We examined the rooms on the ground floor, without success. We ascended the stairs, and paused outside the haunted chamber. The passages and the stairs above us, were thick with shadow. My brother turned the handle—and the wierd sound died away as we entered.

In a moment it came again. It rose and scalded and died sorrowfully away. It was singularly human. Yet it was beyond all description unearthly. No banshee could wail in sadder or more thrilling tones. We stood there like Dante and Virgil, except that the author of the "Inferno" and his guide did not wear carpet slippers, or carry brass candlesticks. Neither had they such extraordinarily rough heads of hair as we had. I felt mine growing gray fast. And a cold stream of terror trickled down my back. My brother stood still and listened intently. The ghost groaned again, and yet again. In fact he kept on groaning. It was frightful. The wail began in a whisper; it swelled into an acute pitch; it died away in a note of woe that thrilled one's heart; it was awful to stand there waiting for the sound to come again. My matter-of-fact brother spoke.

'He's in good voice, tonight,' said he, approvingly. 'A bit hoarse, but I don't wonder at that. Still I wish he'd try another key. He's been at this long enough. And he might get him; self turned—hush! I quite expected some supernatural visitation to rebuke this ill-timed levity. None came. My brother, having politely waited until the ghost had finished began—'

'All these groans are exactly alike,' he said, considering. 'That's odd, isn't it?' Will, I tell you what. The ghost's up the chimney.' Once more the sound came, as though to confirm his words. And it certainly did appear to proceed from the region of the first place.

'Still resumed my brother, thoughtfully; a ghost in a chimney is an uncomfortable sort of a thing. Will, we'll have that chimney swept. Fancy a ghost coming down with the soot, we'll see about it the first thing tomorrow.

This awful threat appeared too much for our uncharitable visitor, for he gave tongue no more that night. We went to bed, and I dreamed that the spirit of a chimney-sweep appeared to me and confessed to the murder of one of the little boys, who were still employed in those days in his profession. However, I got some sleep. I got none the previous night.

We left the office early in the afternoon. We secured the services of an intelligent sweep and a sharp little bright-eyed boy. The chimney was amply wide for the youngster to climb and up he went. We waited in suspense. When he came down he reported that he had found nothing. We questioned him eagerly, but he had seen no ghost, or anything belonging to one. We sent him up again. This time he found out something. This chimney communicated with the one next door. 'That will be the kitchen chimney next door,' said my brother. 'We must explore that.' Our landlady was considerably amazed when we presented ourselves and asked to be allowed to explore. After a little demur, however, she consented. There was but a small fire in the grate and this was taken out.

'I don't make it up until eleven o'clock at night,' she exclaimed. 'Not until my master comes home tired after his day's work. Then we have our bit of supper and drink our grog, and we like to see a cheerful blaze. But in the day I don't trouble about it.' The boy went up smartly and shortly re-appeared.

'Why, you've got a smoke-jack up there, missis,' said he.

'What's a smoke-jack?' said my brother hastily. The sweep explained.

'It's a h-apparatus for roasting meat, fixed in the chimney. It has little sails like, just like a windmill, only they are laid flat instead of being upright. The hot air comes up from the fire and blows these sails round. Then there's a cog-wheel and that communicates the motion to a fly-wheel. A chain passes round the fly-wheel, coming down to the grate, and turns the spit.'

'But where are the chains?' 'Oh, they've been taken off, I suppose. It isn't used now.'

'I didn't know it was there,' said our landlady.

'Doesn't it make a noise?' asked my brother, with a quick look at me.

'We don't hear it,' replied the landlady indifferently.

'Will,' said my brother, 'just run back to the bedroom, and listen. I believe we've got it. I'm going to send the boy up to turn the thing. I did as he requested. When I got into the room, the ghost was groaning in splendid form. He was going far faster than I had ever heard him before.

The mystery was solved. We kept our secret. He was the admiration of every one who knew the story of the house. And for a very substantial reduction in the rent of a very comfortable house we had to thank the Groaning Ghost.—*Belgrave*

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For Dysentery, Diarrhoea and Cholera Morbus. This Carminative, founded on just medical principles, is the most positive remedy offered to the public; hundreds have been cured by it when other remedies have failed. A fair trial will prove its efficacy. FOR CHILDREN TEETHING, it is the most pleasant, reliable and safe remedy for children in cases of Griping, Pains, Colic, Cholera Morbus, Diarrhoea, &c., now before the public. A trial will prove the truth of this assertion. No mother should be without it; FOR DYSENTERY. The most violent cases of Dysentery have speedily yielded to the magic power of carminative. If taken according to directions success is certain.

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for children teething greatly facilitates the process of teething, by softening the gums, reducing all inflammation—will allay ALL PAIN and spasmodic action, and is sure to regulate the Bowels. Depend upon it, Mothers! it will give rest to your-selves and RELIEF and HEALTH to your INFANTS. We have prepared and sold this valuable Medicine for many years, and can say in confidence and truth THAT IT HAS NEVER FAILED IN A SINGLE INSTANCE TO EFFECT A CURE when timely used. We have never known of dissatisfaction by any one who used it, on the contrary all are delighted with its operations, and speak in terms of highest commendation of its magical effects and Medical virtue in almost every instance when the infant is suffering from pain and exhaustion, relief will be found in fifteen or twenty minutes after the CARMINATIVE is given. This valuable Medicine has been used by MOST EXPERIENCED and SKILFUL NURSES with never-failing success. It not only relieves the child from pain, but inv