

The Mystery OF Carney-Croft

By JOSEPH BROWN COOKE

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CHAPTER I.—Continued.

"That's more'n I know," said the man, turning and looking me squarely in the face, "but they said they seen two ghosts, one for the old man, an' one for the boy, aout under the trees in front of the house right where ole Carney fell off his hoss! Every one of 'em seen the same thing, an' when nine men agrees to a dot on a thing o' this kind it's pretty hard, even for a church member, not to believe it.

"They'll all tell ye the same story. The boy was a-swayin' back an' forth, jest as he did after the hoss kicked him, an' the ole man kind o' hoverin' an' bendin' over him like he was in the saddle a-cussin' him again. The figgers was perfectly plain, all in white, but them that stayed to look long enough said ye could see the trunks o' the trees an' other things right through 'em, too."

"I suppose they all came back to Hoskins' after seeing this wonderful sight," I remarked.

"You bet they did, an' they come a-runnin', too," said the man. "I never seen a scarier lot o' men in my life."

"Made pretty good business for Hoskins that night, eh?" I ventured.

"Wal, I guess it did!" he rejoined, with a grin. "An' it'll keep right on makin' good business for him, too! Them fellers won't git over talkin' o' that fur a month o' Sundays!"

"How did they get home that night?" I continued persuasively.

His grin broadened as he chuckled. "Them as couldn't walk had to ride home in this 'ere rig. Haow I ever piled so many in is more'n I kin tell!" and he laughed immoderately at the thought.

"So when business is good with Hoskins it's likely to be good with you, too, eh?" I went on.

"Most generally," he replied. "Most generally, 'less Hoskins gits all their money 'fore they're ready fur me an' their credit ain't no good."

"And when the men aren't working at Carney's they spend a good deal of time at Hoskins', don't they?" I asked.

"Yes, an' a good deal o' money, too," he rejoined. "Ole Carney allus paid 'em well; nobody can't deny that."

"So it's a good thing for Hoskins and a good thing for you, to get them away from the place every little while," I suggested warily.

"I s'pose it is, an' I s'pose we can't neither of us help it if they want to leave," he returned sullenly and with sudden suspicion as he pulled his horse up sharply at the station platform.

My train arrived in a few moments, and as I was about to step aboard I drew the fellow toward me and said to him in a low tone, that others might not hear:

"The men were quite right about the ghosts. I saw them myself, from my window, perfectly distinctly and exactly as you have described them."

The car was already moving and I swung up on the step and left him standing bewildered.

CHAPTER II.

Two Letters.

My Dear Mr. Ware:

My apologies for not replying to your letter of nearly two weeks ago are weakened by the fact that I am now writing to you in great distress.

My brother will be here day after tomorrow, and it has just occurred to me that I have made a most dreadful blunder and I need your advice more than ever before.

You know, I asked Miss Weston, my old school friend, to come here and stay with me for a time at least, and she did so, understanding, as I have since learned, that Jack was away and not to return.

She is here now and seems to me to be quite ill again, but the embarrassing part of it is that she and Jack was once great sweethearts, and his going away to Honolulu was really due to some disagreement that they had nearly three years ago. I never knew just what the trouble was, as Annie was my dearest friend in school and afterwards, too, I quite overlooked the whole matter in my anxiety to have someone with me when I was so awfully alone. You remember, I merely telegraphed her to come, and she did not even know of father's death and supposed, of course, that Jack was away.

Now she is too ill to go home again, and Jack is coming so soon that I don't know what to do. It is a frightfully embarrassing position to be placed in, especially as there was so much mystery over their separation.

You see, under the circumstances, I cannot possibly adopt your suggestion to close the house and come to town for the present, and, anyway, I feel that I ought to stay here till Jack comes to keep an eye on father's things.

Miss Weston is, I am sure, quite too ill to be moved, and with Mrs. Remsen, our old housekeeper, I feel perfectly safe. Please write me at once and advise me in my present predicament.

Very truly yours, FLORENCE CARNEY.

P. S. There is a rumor that Carney-Croft is haunted, and some of the village people even go so far as to say that you saw a ghost when you were here. Have you heard anything of this sort? It is ridiculous, of course, but it makes me nervous.

F. C.

My Dear Miss Carney: Your letter of yesterday is at hand. I would not worry, if I were you, about your brother and Miss Weston. It was probably some childish affair that they have both forgotten by this time.

I am sorry to hear that Miss Weston is ill again, for it must add to your cares materially, but all your house servants are reliable and trustworthy I suppose you are managing fairly well.

I expect your brother in town to-day or tomorrow and he will probably stay here over night and go on to Carney-Croft the

next day. Either he or I will telegraph you as soon as he arrives. I thought you knew about the ghosts or I should have written you before. There were two large pieces of mosquito netting in my room which were apparently intended for covering portraits. I threw them over a chair-back near the window and they blew out during the night and caught in the branches of the tree in front of the house. I knew that some of the men from the village had seen them and taken them for ghosts, but as I myself saw your brother pulling them down early the next morning I supposed the whole story had been explained to the satisfaction of everybody. Very sincerely yours, FREDERICK WARE.

CHAPTER III.

John Carney.

As Mr. Carney was ushered into my private office I rose to greet him, and stepped from behind my desk with outstretched hand; but as he raised his face to mine I drew back in amazement and disgust and motioned him to a chair with scant ceremony.

"Drunk! the beast!" I muttered to myself, as he shambled drowsily to the seat I had indicated and dropped into it with a thickly uttered "Thank you."

He seemed to fall asleep for a moment, and I eyed him steadily for some time before I could bring myself to speak. And so the handsome, straightforward, manly fellow of three years ago had sunk to this! A sudden, degraded wretch, unfit to associate with pigs in a sty, and yet the heir to a vast estate and the sole legitimate protector of the sweet-faced orphan at Carney-Croft who awaited his coming with the impatience born of love and hope and confiding trust! God help the poor girl now, and God help the accursed wretch that sat opposite me!

His heavy breathing wheezing in and out of his throat; his listless, stupid face, flushed and mottled from the effects of his excesses; his body, dripping with perspiration which stood out in beads on his forehead and glistened on his hand as it lay in the sunlight; and his drooping, blood-shot



"I Am Going to Carney-Croft To-Night."

eyes, now half closed and again wandering aimlessly about the room; all combined to make a disgusting picture. It was with the utmost difficulty that I could restrain my feelings sufficiently to address him with ordinary civility. Finally, my judgment prevailed over my indignation, and I remembered that I was the legal adviser, only, of the house of Carney, and not in any way concerned with the moral conduct of its head.

"You had a comfortable journey, I hope," I remarked icily.

"As comfortable as such a journey can be," he wheezed, turning his bleary eyes toward me as he spoke. "The conditions which made my homecoming necessary did not make my trip enjoyable, and I traveled with the greatest possible haste, as there are certain matters that I want you to arrange for me at once."

He spoke his words with a force and precision unusual in a man in his condition, but he was evidently controlling himself to the utmost degree and, as he talked, his face flushed in great blotches, his blood-shot eyes seemed almost bursting from his head, and the perspiration oozed from his body and trickled in little streams down his cheeks and neck.

"Do you wish to hear any of the details of your father's death?" I asked in a most matter of fact tone.

"No, thank you," he said, with some effort. "I found a long letter from Florence at my hotel this morning and she has told me everything. I wish merely to arrange some money affairs with you and make my will, and I wish to do so at once."

"How much money do you need for the present?" I asked, sarcastically.

"How much money do I need?" he repeated, in a bewildered tone. "Why, I don't need any. I have all the ready cash that I want. I only want to arrange for the future, you know."

"Very glad to hear it," I observed dryly. "Now, as to your will. Do you think, Mr. Carney, that your state of mind to-day is such that you are quite ready to make a will? Would it not be better for you to wait a day or so until—er—until you have had an op-

portunity to rest from your journey and your—ahem—your health has improved somewhat?"

I regretted my words on the instant. In spite of the man's condition, they seemed to have cut him to the quick. An expression of anguish, pitiful to see, passed over his face and his whole body trembled. After a moment he said slowly with the same wonderful self-control:

"My health, as you choose to call it, Mr. Ware, will not improve to any appreciable degree, and my mind is, at this moment, as clear as it will ever be. I wish you to draw up a will leaving everything I possess to my sister, Florence Carney, and I wish, also, to give you power of attorney so that from this time on, you can conduct the estate in my stead and supply her with such funds as she may need. I do not expect to spend much time at Carney-Croft and I want these matters attended to now, before I go there at all."

His ideas were so thoroughly in accord with his duty to his sister that I was now anxious to carry them out at once as he requested, lest another opportunity might never occur. It took but a short time to arrange the details of the will, and then it and the power of attorney were signed by him in a trembling hand and witnessed by members of my office staff.

When these formalities were over and we were alone again, Mr. Carney said abruptly:

"I am going to Carney-Croft to-night and have wired Florence to have a carriage for me at the midnight train and not to sit up. I don't expect to stay there long, and I should think it would be better to close the place and have her take a house here in town where she would be more comfortable."

"I made the same suggestion myself," I replied, "but she wrote that she felt perfectly safe at home, and

While Myer Hansei, a farmer living north of Friend, was attending church Sunday his residence was broken into and thoroughly ransacked. About \$3 in cash, two suits of clothes, a suit and some other articles were taken. It was soon discovered that the probable thieves were hiding in some bushes in his pasture. They were arrested.

While playing about the house the little child of Mr. and Mrs. Silas Breckenridge of Plattsmouth fell and struck one eye against a nail which had been driven through a board. The child was taken to Omaha, but physicians could give but little encouragement in saving the sight of the wounded member.

The Beatrice Commercial club is considering the advisability of asking the city council to remove the occupation tax from insurance companies doing business in the city. A proposition was recently submitted to the club by the insurance companies offering to deduct five per cent off the insurance rate in the city providing the tax is removed.

The story has gone out that the Johnson County Fair association has decided definitely to participate in the Nebraska Driving association's circuit this year. When approached upon the subject, Secretary Charles Wilson of the local association said it had not yet been determined by the officers of the fair whether or not Tecumseh would be in the race circuit.

Miss Sarah Riechers of Humboldt had a narrow escape from death by poisoning while sewing at the home of Mrs. J. E. Buell. In mistake for a medicine which she was taking she got hold of a bottle containing tincture of belladonna, and swallowed a spoonful of the mixture. Only prompt and efficient medical attention prevented, the dose from proving fatal.

In the new stone quarry which was opened at Nehawka a freak of nature was discovered which will probably never be witnessed again by any of the inhabitants of that vicinity. It is an old oak and a cherry tree growing from the same stump. They are perfectly fused together and to all purposes grew from the same root. It is a matter of considerable speculation how two of these trees, that are so different in habits, came to be linked together.

A meeting of the board of health of Grand Island was called to take action upon the recurring importations of smallpox. A few weeks ago the first case made its appearance. A laborer arrived on an early morning train from the northwest, where the Burlington is having considerable construction work done. He walked through the entire city, the stage of the disease being that in which it is most contagious and called at the St. Francis hospital which can take no contagious diseases.

Nebraska City has several bright stars on the theatrical stage and the indications are that it will soon have another and one that will perhaps shine brighter than the others. Miss Sue Andraesen was born there, graduated in the high school and some two years ago went to Chicago to study for the stage. The college she attends selects two students by competition to be an understudy with one of the leading theatrical companies. Out of a class of forty-eight Miss Andraesen was first chosen.

H. R. No. 220, the Knowles mileage book bill, was passed by the senate. The measure provides that the railroads shall sell 1,000-mile mileage books for \$20, good in the hands of the bearer and for any number of persons.

Dr. and Mrs. Randall, physician and matron of the soldiers' home, Grand Island, will leave for the southeastern part of the state for a visit with relatives and will thence go to Julesburg, Colo., where they will make their home. Dr. Dunsan, of the southern part of the state succeeds Dr. Randall.

NEBRASKA MATTERS

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS NOTES HERE AND THERE.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Social, Agricultural, Religious and Other Matters Having Reference to This Commonwealth Alone.

Louisville went dry at the late election.

Hon. W. V. Allen, former senator from Nebraska, has been secured to deliver the oration at Wisner on Memorial day.

At Sterling, careful examination of fruit buds reveals the pleasing fact that none of the fruit has been injured by the recent severe frost.

The body of Robert Romans, a railroad employe, who has made his home in Blair for fifteen years, was brought from Cheyenne, where he died of spotted fever.

John F. Mahoney has sold 440 acres of land in the western part of Otoe county for \$25,000. This is the largest land sale made in the county within the past thirty days.

Fire in the roof of the West school building, Fremont, was extinguished with little trouble and the damage will not exceed \$50. The children marched out of the building without much excitement.

Rev. Albert E. Ricker, former pastor of the First Congregational church, Aurora, departed for Indianapolis, Ind., where he will have his headquarters as superintendent of the Congregational home missionary society for Indians.

Arizona's Copper Production. In 1906 Arizona had the largest increase in production of copper of all the copper states. The output was 284,228,252 pounds, against 239,848,000 pounds in 1905.

Important to Mothers. Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Chas. H. Fletcher*. In Use For Over 30 Years. The Kind You Have Always Bought.

Study of theatrical stars has nothing to do with astronomy.

HONEST MEDICINE

TRY DR. WILLIAMS' PINK PILLS FOR STOMACH TROUBLE.

Convincing Evidence Supported by a Guarantee That Must Convince The Most Skeptical.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a doctor's prescription, used by an eminent practitioner, and for nearly a generation known as a reliable household remedy throughout the United States. Needless to say, no advertised medicine could retain popular favor for so long a period without having great merit and it is the invaluable curative properties of the pills that have made them a standard remedy in every civilized country in the world.

Added to this is the absolute guarantee that the pills contain no harmful drug, opiate, narcotic or stimulant. A recent evidence of their efficacy is found in the statement of Mrs. N. B. Whitley, of Boxley, Ark., who says:

"I had suffered for a good many years from stomach trouble. For a long time I was subject to bad spells of faintness and lack of breath accompanied by an indescribable feeling that seemed to start in my stomach. Whenever I was a little run-down or over-tired, these spells would come on. They occurred frequently but did not last very long.

"I was confined to my bed for ten weeks one time and the doctor pronounced my trouble chronic inflammation of the stomach and bowels. Since that time I have been subject to the fainting spells and at other times to fluttering of the heart and a feeling as though I was smothering. My general health was very bad and I was weak and trembling.

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REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.

CARE OF THE SICK ROOM.

Above All Things the Walls Should Be Kept Dry.

When the bedroom becomes a sick room there is an added reason why extreme precautions should be used to keep the room in a thoroughly sanitary condition.

Above all things, the bedroom should never be damp. It should be nice and dry, always warm and comfortable in winter, cool and airy in summer, and bright and sunny some parts of the day.

If there is any suspicion of dampness in a bedroom it is probably due, if there is wallpaper on the wall, to the absorption of water by the paper which frequently acts as a blotting paper and holds quantities of water in it.

The use of wallpaper on walls is to be deplored; it means disease, ill health and unhappiness. It is frequently the cause of lung trouble, not only because of its dampness but also because of its power to retain infection of many kinds.

The desired method of treating a bed-room wall is to tint it for the alabaster wall is a perfect wall. It never flakes off, chips or peels. It absorbs moisture and expels it, it opens the pores of the plaster and makes a room livable and breathable.

The floor in the bedroom should have light, cleanable, dainty rugs that can be easily shaken and a floor that is thoroughly oiled or varnished, that will not absorb moisture. The cracks in the floor should be thoroughly filled and covered. Woodwork in the bedroom should be attended to carefully. Window sills should be thoroughly varnished or waxed, and the window casings kept in perfect order. The doors should be wiped off frequently as also should be all the standing woodwork in the bedroom, as the presence of dust on woodwork is a menace to health as well as an evidence of poor housekeeping.

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