

The Mystery OF Carney-Croft

By JOSEPH BROWN COOKE

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CHAPTER IX.

Two Ghosts.

As he spoke MacArdel reached for his cigar case and my eye followed his hand to the table beside which we both stood and where I had seen him lay it only a moment before.

It had vanished as completely as if the earth had swallowed it up.

Instinctively I sprang back and closed the door with a bang, while MacArdel was going through his pockets in a bewildered sort of a way that was ludicrous to witness.

"The thing's gone!" said MacArdel, as he finished his search. "I wouldn't have taken an even hundred for it!"

"These mysterious occurrences are usually explained in a very simple manner, when all is said and done," I observed, dryly. "Doubtless we'll have no trouble in finding out what became of it."

"Oh, dry up!" said MacArdel, impolitely, as was his wont.

"The door was only open about six inches," I continued. "Nobody could have come in."

"Or gone out," said MacArdel.

"Well," I went on, "it's shut now. Suppose we have a look about."

Without any apparent reason we searched the room high and low for the missing cigar case, peering into vases and jars, moving furniture about and disturbing things generally until the place looked like a curio shop in the middle of housekeeping.

Finally we gave up in disgust, and suddenly struck with the ridiculousness of our own performances, sat down in the chairs that we had formerly occupied by the side of the table.

The cigar case was lying under the lamp where MacArdel had first laid it down.

There was nothing to say, and so we said nothing. At length, MacArdel picked it up, examined it carefully, put it in his pocket and muttered: "Let's get out of here, Ware. I want some fresh air."

"Once outside the house, he continued: "That's the most remarkable occurrence I ever heard of. Ghosts don't walk by day, so it couldn't have been spooks, but how on earth do you explain it?"

"I don't explain it," I replied. "It's just like the note on the bed."

"Oh, hang the note on the bed!" cried MacArdel. "This happened right under our eyes and noses!"

"Well, what if it did," I persisted. "It isn't any more mysterious, and we've got to get to the bottom of the whole business before we can let Miss Carney come back. No vacation for us, my boy. We must stay here and find out what's going on."

We walked all around the house, investigating every nook and corner of its walls and shaking the cellar windows and other subterranean openings to assure ourselves that they were securely fastened. Not finding anything of interest on the outside we returned again to the interior and beginning at the top, inspected every square inch of space until we reached the basement and were ready to descend to the cellar. I had discovered two candles, which we lighted for this exploration, and I confess that my hand traveled instinctively to the revolver in my hip pocket as we started down the stairs.

The cellar, however, disclosed nothing of importance, though we examined it thoroughly. As we were about to ascend, I noticed the pile of empty whisky bottles, and, after finding that there were exactly two dozen of them, had not a doubt that they were the ones Mr. Carney had ordered and emptied during his short stay at Carney-Croft three years before.

In brief, there was nothing to indicate that the house had been disturbed in any way since it was closed by Miss Carney, and we strolled slowly along the road to Hoskins' for our luncheon, completely baffled at every point.

"Don't you keep a watchman here?" asked MacArdel at length.

"I wanted to," I replied. "But the Carneys didn't think it necessary."

That night we sat on the veranda, discussing the happenings of the day, while the full moon shone coldly in the zenith and the river splashed fretfully against its banks back of the trees.

The town clock in the distant village had just struck the hour of midnight and I was beginning to yawn openly after my long day of excitement and exertion, when MacArdel said laughingly:

"Now's the time to trot out your ghosts, Ware. The clock just struck 12, you know."

As he spoke I grasped his arm and pointed to the path leading to the river. Two filmy white figures, one larger than the other, were wafted along under the trees, as if they were part of the air itself, and from them came an odor, so faint and yet so overpowering in its fetid oppressiveness

that I could scarcely draw my breath. For an instant MacArdel sat as one petrified, and then, with a muttered cry, he sprang over the rail and followed the fleeting things into the blackness of the overhanging trees.

I was after him in a bound. Running with all our speed, we saw the creatures, whatever they were, sail majestically before us as on wings of air until they reached the river, where, in the full glare of the moonlight, they vanished suddenly under our very eyes.

When I overtook MacArdel he was leaning heavily against a tree trunk, gasping for breath.

"Ware!" he said, as soon as he could speak. "That odor was the smell of the grave. There's nothing else like it, I tell you, man! I was a coroner for too many years and have opened too many coffins not to know it."

He sank to the ground from sheer exhaustion.

A moment later I heard a crackling in the underbrush not far away and, with a shout, I dashed into the bushes, followed by MacArdel. Suddenly there was a glimpse of white through the leaves, and, with a warning cry, I drew my revolver and fired twice with careful aim. The object in white fell to the ground, and we were upon it in an instant, while the continued crackling of branches showed that some one was escaping at the top of his speed.

The white object was a bundle of towels and odd pieces of bed linen and the articles were permeated by the same indescribable odor that we had noticed as we pursued the fleeting creatures in white down the path to the river.

MacArdel poked the parcel open with a stick and spread the pieces about in the moonlight as it filtered in through the branches overhead, making bright

We decided that we were quite equal to this task, and, proceeding to the stable, undertook to "hitch up" on our own account.

MacArdel did the driving, and I sat on the seat behind him in all the glory of an escorted guest. As we turned the corner into the road that led to the station, a sudden gust of wind wafted into my face the indescribable odor that had on my nostrils the night before.

"Mac!" I said, "there's something wrong here! I can get that confounded smell again!"

He pulled up his horse with a jerk and, springing to the ground, began, with me, to peer under the seats of the vehicle. A moment later he extracted from a pile of blankets and laprobes, a bundle of white cloths similar in appearance to those we had discovered on the previous night, and exhaling the same odor.

"Put them back!" I exclaimed suddenly, "and cover them up again, too! After we get the trunk we can take them to the house and see what they are."

"Great idea!" muttered MacArdel, "only I was on the point of suggesting it myself. Get in here with me. The air's better up front."

I clambered into the seat by his side and we proceeded on our way to the station.

"Who is it that owns this turnout?" asked MacArdel. "Do you know anything about him?"

"Nothing more than that he makes regular trips to and from the trains," I replied. "Runs a sort of local express, you know, between the station and Hoskins' hotel. Carries the mail and passengers, if there are any."

"Did you ever see him and talk to him?" continued MacArdel.



They Were Wafted Along as If Part of the Air Itself.

patches here and there under the trees. Whether because of his startled remark that this was the smell of the grave, or perhaps on account of the nervous strain to which I had just been subjected, I was forced to view this operation from a respectful distance and was glad when the investigation was completed.

Leaving the rags, for such they were, strewn about as MacArdel had scattered them, we returned in silence to the house and reseated ourselves on the veranda.

"Mac," I said abruptly, a moment later, "do you know that we left this place standing wide open and that some one may be inside by this time?"

"Not much danger of that," said MacArdel slowly. "Whoever was around here is as far away by this time as he can possibly get. Make no mistake about it, Ware, those pieces of cloth down there have been around a corpse!"

I shuddered in spite of myself, and we slept in the same room that night, with the doors and windows bolted, and a revolver under each of our pillows.

CHAPTER X.

Courtship and Business.

We breakfasted at Hoskins'. As we were rising from the table, MacArdel said: "I've got a trunk up at the station. I suppose I can get somebody around here to take it down to the house."

"There's an old fellow here who drives what he calls an 'express,'" I replied. "I expect he'll attend to it for you."

Hoskins was standing by the door as we left the room and I asked him where we could find the stage driver, but his reply was far from encouraging.

"Ye can't find him at all," he said. "He didn't git in till nigh mornin', an' he's abed yet. His wagon's aout teh th' barn, an' ef ye want teh hitch up yerselves an' git th' trunk ye'd better come to, fur all I can see. I'd send one o' my boys fur it ef I could, but they're all workin' to-day, an' I can't git hold o' one now."

"Oh, yes!" I said. "He was the first to tell me about the ghosts at Carney-Croft; all that story of the Bruce woman's prophecy that the place would be haunted, you know."

"Humph!" said MacArdel, thoughtfully. "And where's the Bruce woman now?"

"She lievs on the place yet," I replied. "Miss Carney gives her the use of a little house and about 20 acres of land rent free, and some man about here works the property on shares for her. It's that hilly land about a mile east of the house, where the big elm is. You remember, I told you the new gold links would take in that tree and the land around it."

Our return trip from the railway station took us past Hoskins' again, and that individual was sunning himself in front of the house as we drove up.

"By the way, Hoskins," said MacArdel, stopping his horse and beckoning the man toward him, "what's the name of the fellow that owns this outfit?"

"Jenks," said Hoskins, briefly. "Sam Jenks, th' lazy cuss."

"When is he going to marry the widow?" asked MacArdel, in a most matter-of-fact way.

"That's jest it!" replied Hoskins in obvious disgust. "You tell me an' I'll tell you. Goodness knows; he's ben a-sparkin' her long enough; ever sence 'bout a month after her boy got killed. S'pose he felt kinder sorry fer her at first, an' then, after a time, he began teh git mushy over it. I wish teh goodness he'd either marry her or leave her alone! What with his galivantin' all over the country with her every week or ten days, an' not gittin' his hoss in th' stable till nigh onto daylight, there's no dependin' on him teh meet th' trains or do anything else, fur that matter! Here he is now, abed an' asleep, an' ef it hadn't ben fur you gets a-drivin' up teh th' deopo', we wouldn't ha' got no mail till nigh, in all probability."

With this remark he fished out two mail bags which the station master must have tossed into the back of the wagon as we were driving away.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

IN DEATH'S SHADOW

LIFE OF RAILROADER SAVED BY A MIRACLE.

Caught on Bridge, He Jumped to What Seemed Certain Destruction, but "His Time Had Not Come."

Perhaps no large body of men in any industry are exposed to so many dangers as are railroad men. Thousands of these faithful and heroic workers are killed every year, and other thousands are saved from death only by the narrowest margin. Some of these railroad escapes seem almost miraculous, and seeing them many railroad men comfort themselves with a fatalism.

"We cannot die until our time comes," they say, "and so it's no use to worry."

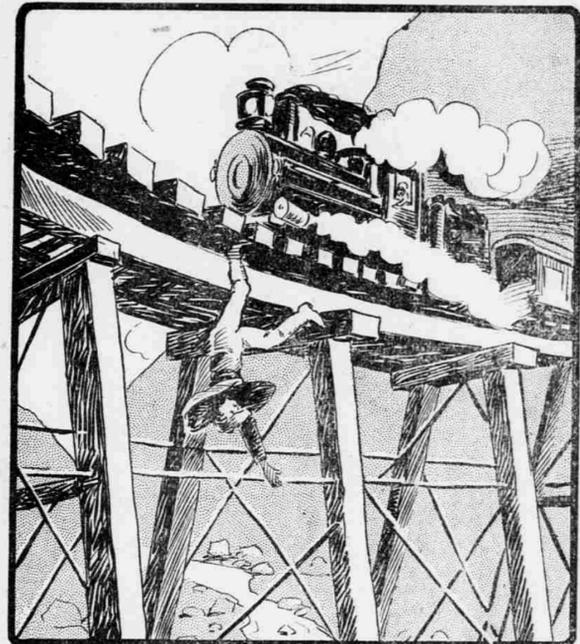
This is the philosophy of most men who follow dangerous occupations. It is a false philosophy, if the men who compile the chances of life for the insurance companies have their sta-

a point near the center of the bridge when the sharp warning signal of a whistle was heard. Shepard looked up and saw the express coming around a curve, not more than a hundred paces away.

"I was paralyzed by fear," he says. "I could not move forward or backward. Indeed, there was no use in moving, for the engine was bearing down upon me with frightful speed, trying to make up lost time. Below me, at least 75 feet from the track level, was the rock strewn bottom of the gorge. It meant death to jump. It was death to stand still."

Bruno, the dog, trembled and whined at his master's feet. He understood the danger, and when the locomotive was not more than 50 feet away the dog turned and jumped off the bridge. Mr. Shepard instinctively followed Bruno's example. There was little strength left in his knees, but he stumbled to the edge of the track and half fell outward and downward just as the heavy train went thundering by.

But some kindly fate was guarding Shepard that day. In the language of the railroad fatalist, "his time had not come." Instead of plunging down,



tistics right, but so long as it sustains and encourages the men who work constantly under the shadow of danger little can be said against it.

E. S. Shepard, of Deadwood, S. D., used to be a track walker on the Colorado Midland. On his division at that time the track inspectors had no velocipedes, and Mr. Shepard was compelled to "foot it" every day over ten miles of mountain track. His invaluable companion was a big St. Bernard dog named Bruno.

One day Shepard was inspecting the track as usual when he came to trestle No. 4, a long structure across a gorge. He paused at the end of the trestle and looked at his watch. He had been told at the last station that the Midland express was an hour late and this would give him plenty of time to cross the gorge on the single track.

Man and dog started across without thought of danger. They had reached

to be mangled on the stones at the bottom of the gorge, he was surprised to find himself hanging head downward over the edge of the trestle.

His left foot had caught in some way between two ties just outside of the rail. The framework of the bridge shook under the impact of the heavy train, and every instant he expected to be shaken loose. In the terror of the moment he became unconscious and did not know what happened until he awoke and found himself being taken out of the train at the next station.

The engineer had seen him, of course, and had applied the brakes. When the train came to a standstill the crew and some of the passengers ran back and found Shepard still hanging, his left foot firmly wedged between the timbers. His only physical injury was a badly wrenched ankle, but the nervous breakdown unfitted him for duty for a long time.

TO A RAILROAD TRAIN IN THE MOUNTAINS.

The wooded hills stand silently. Awe hushed, and clad in sweet repose; No bird is stirring; noiselessly The woodbine clammers with the rose. Sweet silence sleeping hill and vale In sorcerer's spell of quietude. Is broken by the echoing fall Of iron voice in summons rude.

And thundering through the just domain Of Nature's proud magnificence, Behold man's sordid greed of gain— His ripe, colossal impudence. —L. S. Waterhouse.

CAP SAVED CHILD'S LIFE.

Waving Red Tam-o'-Shanter, Mother Stopped Approaching Train.

While five men struggled mightily to extricate a girl from the New Haven railroad track at Stamford, Conn., the other day, her mother's pluck and quick wit saved her from being cut to pieces by a train. It was the child's red Tam-o'-Shanter waved as a danger signal that halted the train within a few feet of her. Nearly half an hour more passed before she was released. While Amy, the five-year-old daughter of H. J. Lamborn, was hurrying from a neighbor's home to her own her foot was caught firmly between the planking of the crossing and a rail. Her cries brought her mother, who tugged at the little one's foot, only to hurt her ankle until she screamed with pain. Mrs. Lamborn's cries brought three section laborers quickly to the scene. A train was due soon and the men thought it would be easy to release small Miss Amy, long before that. But they had no implements but shovels, and every stroke at the plank that held her gave Amy intense suffering. Not until they heard the whistle of the approaching engine did they realize her danger. Then it was that the mother plucking Amy's red Tam-o'-Shanter from her head ran down the tracks and succeeded in stopping the train.

ENGINEER HAD QUICK WIT.

An Expedient by Which a Serious Accident was Avoided.

On a single-line section of a Scotch railway the quick-wittedness and pluck of a driver prevented a frightful catastrophe, says Chambers' Journal. A goods train was put into a siding to allow an express passenger train to overtake it. The operations were carried out in a great hurry to avoid the passenger train being delayed, and the "line clear" signal was given before the whole of the train was in the siding. When the express was approaching it was discovered that the goods train was longer than the siding could accommodate, so that the engine occupied the main line to the extent of several feet. It was too late to stop the approaching express, and a disaster seemed imminent, when a plan of action occurred to the active brain of the driver of the goods train, which he immediately put into operation by opening his regulator and putting the power of the engine against his train. This action caused the spring-buffers to compress, so that the train occupied several yards less space. It was now a fight between the power of the engine and the pent-up force of the 100 buffer-springs. If once the engine wheels commenced to slip, the springs would probably gain the mastery and force the engine on to the main line in the face of the oncoming express. The driver gallantly stuck to his post, manipulating his engine until the increasing roar caused by the approaching train told him the express was close upon him; then, leaving the regulator and the sand valves wide open, he leaped from his engine. Fortunately his action was successful. A few inches only intervened between the two trains, but the express swept by in safety.

Steel Used by Railroads.

Railways use up over 2,000,000 tons of steel a year, almost half the world's product.

Help the Horse. No article is more useful about the stable than Mica Axle Grease. Put a little on the spindles before you "hook up"—it will help the horse, and bring the load home quicker. MICA AXLE GREASE. Swaps well—better than any other grease. Coats the axle with a hard, smooth surface of powdered mica which reduces friction. Ask the dealer for Mica Axle Grease. STANDARD OIL COMPANY, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio.

PUT RELIGIOUS DUTY SECOND. Stern Laws of Business Come First, Says Austrian Court.

An interesting case at law, which centered on the observance of an old Jewish custom, was decided in Vienna recently. A merchant, says the American Israelite, discharged a clerk on account of neglect of duty. Among the charges against him was that he came to the store late in the morning because he attended service at the synagogue in order to say Kaddish—the prayer for the dead—for his father. The clerk argued that it was his privilege and his duty to say the prayer for his departed father, while the merchant, who was also a religious man, maintained that "if Moses had known that a man had to pay 8,000 gulden a year rent he would have made different laws." The judge would not allow such an argument, but decided in favor of the merchant, "because the daily attendance at the synagogue could not be considered the right of the clerk without the consent of the employer."

Importance of Sleep.

We should get up well every morning. If we do not, we are certain gradually to run behind in our physical bank account. This proves that sleeping is quite as important as eating. The luxury of sound sleep is one of the greatest means given to a man or beast for restoring and invigorating the whole system. No one should allow business or anything else to curtail this luxury, and parents should promote it in children, instead of drumming them out of bed early.—Homeopathic Envoy.

Immense African Dry-Dock.

At Port Florence, on the shore of the great lake Victoria, which is the chief source of the Nile, there is a dry-dock cut out of solid rock by natives who had never before done much serious work. The dock is 250 feet long, 48 feet wide and 14 feet deep. It is 3,700 feet above the level of the sea, or nearly three times the altitude of Lake Chautauqua.

MORE BOXES OF GOLD And Many Greenbacks.

325 boxes of Gold and Greenbacks will be sent to persons who write the most interesting and truthful letters of experience on the following topics:

- 1. How have you been affected by coffee drinking and by changing from coffee to Postum?
2. Give name and account of one or more coffee drinkers who have been hurt by it and have been induced to quit and use Postum.
3. Do you know any one who has been driven away from Postum because it came to the table weak and characterless at the first trial?
4. Did you set such a person right regarding the easy way to make it clear, black, and with a snappy, rich taste?
5. Have you ever found a better way to make it than to use four heaping teaspoonfuls to the pint of water, let stand on stove until real boiling begins, and beginning at that time when actual boiling starts, boil full 15 minutes more to extract the flavor and food value. (A piece of butter the size of a pea will prevent boiling over.) This contest is confined to those who have used Postum prior to the date of this advertisement.

Be honest and truthful, don't write poetry or fanciful letters, just plain, truthful statements.

Contest will close June 1st, 1907, and no letters received after that date will be admitted. Examinations of letters will be made by three judges, not members of the Postum Cereal Co., Ltd. Their decisions will be fair and final, and a neat little box containing a \$10 gold piece sent to each of the five writers of the most interesting letters, a box containing a \$5 gold piece to each of the 20 next best, a \$2 greenback to each of the 100 next best, and a \$1 greenback to each of the 200 next best, making cash prizes distributed to 325 persons.

Every friend of Postum is urged to write and each letter will be held in high esteem by the company, as an evidence of such friendship, while the little boxes of gold and envelopes of money will reach many modest writers whose plain and sensible letters contain the facts desired, although the sender may have but small faith in winning at the time of writing.

Talk this subject over with your friends and see how many among you can win prizes. It is a good, honest competition and in the best kind of a cause, and costs the competitors absolutely nothing.

Address your letter to the Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich., writing your own name and address clearly.