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The short ghost story : a critical and historical survey

Cameron Dunlop Hall

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**THE SHORT GHOST STORY:
A CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY**

**A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Richmond**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts**

by

Cameron Dunlop Hall

August, 1959

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PREFACE

This thesis is an attempt to evaluate the work of the outstanding British and American ghost-story writers from the early 1800's to the present. No attempt has been made to make a precise historical survey of the development of the ghost story. This paper is limited to the short ghost story in fiction; all fairy-tales, folk-lore, supposedly authentic anecdotes, plays, novels, and poems of the supernatural are omitted. All pseudoscience stories, horror stories, and weird fantasy are also omitted.

In the introductory part of this paper an attempt has been made to ascertain some of the factors which determine success or failure in the short ghost story. Attention has also been paid here to the various types of ghost story; an outline and discussion of ghost stories according to type has been attempted. Finally, some of the earlier and lesser writers have been briefly considered here, as being too unimportant for individual mention in subsequent sections. The second part of the paper is concerned with the individual authors and their work. Emphasis has been placed on authors according to their achievement in the ghost story, not in other fields. The authors have been considered in alphabetical order, as their dates were not always available.

It is hoped that this paper will serve as a guide for those persons interested in learning who wrote ghost stories and what the stories were about. The author acknowledges and regrets many omissions, as some collections of ghost stories are long out of print and impossible to obtain.

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INTRODUCTION

SURVEY OF PRESENT SCHOLARSHIP

Very little has been written about the short ghost story in fiction. While much has been said about the Gothic novel, its origin, development, and influences, there is a need for a definitive work on the short ghost story. Such a work could be a more or less complete history of the short ghost story, tracing its development from the short Gothic romances found in early nineteenth-century chapbooks down to the present. Montague Summers, Eino Railo, Edith Birkhead, and many others have written authoritative works on the full-length Gothic novel, but no one has written an authoritative work on the Gothic short story.

In addition, a critical study of the development of the short ghost story might be made, with emphasis on the strange trend this type of fiction has taken in the last three or four decades. There is also an imperative need for a complete bibliography of the short ghost story. Two or three such bibliographies exist, but they are dated and painfully inadequate.

It would be manifestly impossible to attempt to consider in any discussion of the ghost story every ghost

story that has ever been written. However, there are many ghost story writers who are virtually unknown save to devotees of weird fiction, but who are justly famous within this appreciative circle. A discussion of these outstanding ghost-story writers and their work within the past hundred and fifty years is certainly needed. I have attempted this delightful task.

If the writer of ghost stories is well known in other fields, such as the novel, a discussion of his work may be obtainable, but often this will omit mention of his short ghost stories. Much has been written about Dickens and Kipling, for example, but little or no attention has been paid to their short ghost stories. There are many writers, however, whose work is almost totally unknown, in comparison, who have written excellent ghost stories. Outside of an occasional appearance in an anthology, they are unknown except to the ghost-story fan. No one reads the novels of Rhoda Broughton or Amelia B. Edwards today, but their ghost stories deserve to be remembered. Who has heard of M. R. James, a fairly recent writer, unless he happens to have read one of his ghost stories?

These, then, are the people with whom we are concerned here, authors of outstanding ghost stories regardless of what else they may have written. Some readers will doubtless take offense at the small amount of space devoted to such well-known figures as Henry James, Edgar Allan Poe,

and other notables, but here we are discussing achievement in terms of the ghost story, and there are many people who have written more and superior ghost stories than these. The short ghost story, as Peter Penzoldt shows in The Supernatural in Fiction, is a distinct genre and in a class by itself. Surely the masters of such a form of literature deserve a recognition long overdue.

Let us examine the resources available to the lover of the ghost story who wishes to know something about his favorite author's work. Or let us suppose that someone interested in compiling an anthology wishes to ascertain what ghost stories are available, who wrote them, and what they are about. There is not much from which to choose: Dorothy Scarborough's The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction, H. P. Lovecraft's Supernatural Horror in Literature, and Peter Penzoldt's The Supernatural in Fiction. Add to these incidental discussions on a few well-known writers in the field such as J. Sheridan Le Fanu or Henry James, and the introductions to some anthologies, and there you have it. Truly, not a very impressive array.

In almost all of these, emphasis is not placed strictly upon the short ghost story. Miss Scarborough introduces novels and the drama, as well as folk-tales, in her treatise, while H. P. Lovecraft goes into much more detail when discussing novels than with the short story. Peter Penzoldt emphasizes the short story, but also mentions an occasional full-length novel. In the introduction to Montague Summers'

anthologies much space is devoted to the drama and the novel as well as to the short story. In an attempt to discover some justification for the existence of this paper, I should like to consider briefly each of the contributions to the subject previously mentioned and their limitations.

Miss Scarborough's work, which appeared in 1917, contains ninety-two pages pertaining mainly to the short ghost story. These ninety-two pages are composed of two chapters, "Modern Ghosts" and "The Devil and His Allies." The other two-thirds of the book include discussions of the Gothic novel and later influences, supernatural life, supernatural science, and the supernatural in folk-tales. None of these concern us here.

The chapter on "Modern Ghosts" is concerned almost wholly with the versatility of contemporary (1917) spectres. Individual stories and authors are mentioned at random merely to serve as illustrations of the progress of modern ghosts. There is little continuity and no attempt at a systematic catalogue of the types of ghost story. Throughout all this, references are made to the drama and the novel as well as the short ghost story. "The Devil and His Allies" is an illuminating but completely unsystematic discussion of the devil in fiction and also of wizards and witches. None of these belong to the ghost story proper; more akin to the subject are vampires and werewolves.

Occasionally, mention is made of a story without citing the author, and again an author is said to have a certain

story, but the name of the story is omitted. It is obvious that Miss Scarborough is deeply read in her subject, but her discussion consists almost entirely of lists of examples of certain trends and types in the story of the supernatural. Many important ghost-story writers are never touched upon.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft's work is perhaps more an appreciation of his favorite authors and some of their work than an attempt at a detailed survey. Obviously the work of a scholar, Lovecraft devotes his first three chapters to the Gothic novel. Two more chapters are devoted to continental weird fiction and Poe respectively. The three final chapters concern American and English supernatural fiction and its contemporary masters. In these last chapters, however, equal emphasis is placed on the novel and the short story. Occasionally short stories are not discussed nor even mentioned individually. Naturally one does not expect details in such a short work, but the reader cannot but wish that Lovecraft had expanded and developed his work to twice its length, or even three times.

Lovecraft's taste, as his reader would doubtless expect, leads him to devote seven and a half pages to Arthur Machen, while E. F. Benson is discussed in a scant dozen lines. Sheridan Le Fanu, father of the modern ghost story, and if we omit M. R. James, its greatest master, is mentioned only once, in a list of authors who carried the romantic Gothic tradition on into the nineteenth century. There is no discussion whatever of his work, and none of his stories are

named. In discussing the work of Henry James, Lovecraft mentions only "The Turn of the Screw"; in discussing Mary Wilkins Freeman, only "The Shadows on the Wall"; and with Ralph Adams Cram, only "The Dead Valley." A page and a half is devoted to Robert W. Chambers' flamboyant extravagances, while such artists as Edith Wharton and Elia W. Peattie are completely ignored.

Supernatural Horror in Literature is an entertaining piece of writing and an erudite one, but it can hardly be called an impersonal survey. It certainly fails to cover the short ghost story, let alone the whole field of weird fiction.

Peter Penzoldt's The Supernatural in Fiction is by far the most scholarly work on the short ghost story yet to appear. He approaches his subject in a scientific and systematic manner, and the result is a valuable piece of scholarship.

Penzoldt has a very stimulating discussion of structure in the short ghost story; his treatment of opening and exposition will repay careful perusal. In addition to this Penzoldt has given us the clever theory of the "double climax." According to Penzoldt the exposition is merely the preparation for a climax, which is, of course, the appearance of the ghost. If the ghost appears more than once, the last appearance is usually the main climax of the story. Now there are two possibilities open to the author: he may offer no explanation for the ghost's

existence at the end of the story, this also constitutes a climax. Thus, according to Penzoldt, the first climax is reached with the (final) appearance of the ghost. The second climax comes with a full realization of what is behind the appearance of the ghost.

Penzoldt also offers an interesting discussion of some of the psychological factors which cause people to write ghost stories. He believes that certain authors, particularly those of the horror story, relieve their frustrations by expressing them symbolically in the form of fiction. The subject is not treated at any great length; it is perhaps more in the line of a psychoanalyst.

Moreover, Penzoldt has a fine chapter on the horror story, which he considers an entirely different genre from the ghost story and decidedly inferior to it. Emphasis is placed upon F. M. Crawford, H. P. Lovecraft, L. P. Hartley, and Arthur Machen. Finally, Penzoldt has an invaluable bibliography, one part of which lists collections of ghost stories and the other part works on the ghost story or on individual writers. However, many of the older writers are omitted.

Unfortunately, the problem of space enters the picture. Penzoldt discusses only the ghost story in Britain; the American ghost story writers are mentioned only incidentally except for Crawford and Lovecraft in the section on the horror story. However, in discussing the English ghost story Penzoldt has chosen only those authors who in his

opinion are outstanding representatives of different trends in the ghost story. Many first-rate ghost story writers are thus omitted. Much space is devoted to Kipling, Dickens, Stevenson, and Walter de la Mare, while other and more important ghost-story writers like E. F. Benson, H. R. Wakefield, A. M. Burrage, and Mrs. Alfred Baldwin are more or less neglected. In other words, emphasis is placed primarily upon the creation of certain types of supernatural stories rather than upon the field as a whole. Therefore, Penzoldt's work cannot be said to be a complete survey of the short ghost story, even in England.

It is always stimulating to read the opinions of others on a subject in which one is interested. Often the introduction to an anthology of ghost stories is not only entertaining to read but also valuable as criticism. Among various anthologies whose introductions are particularly noteworthy are those edited by Montague Summers, and usually those of Cynthia Asquith and August Derleth. One of Derleth's anthologies, Sleep No More, is especially valuable in that it gives a brief biographical sketch of each author included. The Fireside Book of Ghost Stories, edited by Edward Wagenknecht; The Other Worlds, edited by Phil Stong; and Great Tales of Terror and The Supernatural, edited by Herbert Wise and Phyllis Fraser all offer especially worthwhile introductions.

In the first third of this paper I have attempted to suggest some of the factors which determine success or

failure in the short ghost story. I have also attempted to draw up an outline of the different types of ghost story with a brief discussion of each type. Then I have made a list of ghost stories according to these types; this list does not include every ghost story ever written, but I hope that it does include the outstanding ones. Finally, I have tried to give the early history of the short ghost story very briefly, but there has been no attempt to trace its actual development. In this section I have included those early authors who wrote only one or two stories or whose work, for some other reason, was considered too unimportant to warrant a whole section later on.

I have devoted the last two-thirds of the paper to the outstanding ghost story writers in England and America during the last hundred and fifty years. Here I shall briefly consider the author and his work as whole before examining each story individually. Less space is allotted to inferior stories, and there are many regrettable omissions.

THE SUCCESSFUL GHOST STORY

I. The creation of fear

- A. A clearly shown supernatural element
- B. A believable supernatural element
 - 1. The use of restraint
 - 2. The matter of length

II. The narrative method

- A. The setting
- B. The opening and suspense
- C. The center of interest
- D. The explanation
- E. The style

III. Terror versus horror

THE SUCCESSFUL GHOST STORY

It is impossible to draw up a set of hard-and-fast standards for what constitutes a good ghost story, for the simple reason that there are first-rate stories which would prove exceptions to any standard proposed. Therefore, when we examine some of the factors which determine the difference between a fine tale and a failure, we must remember that the results at which we shall arrive will merely be some deductions, not definite conclusions.

For the sake of clarity I have attempted to draw up a set of standards intended as a critical guide; these are by no means intended to be definitive.

I. The creation of fear

The chief intent of the writer of ghost stories is (or should be) to frighten his reader--like Dickens' fat boy, he wants to make people's flesh creep. This seems to me to be the raison d'etre of the ghost story and, if it fails in this respect, then it is a failure as a ghost story.

A question often raised in a discussion of ghost stories is whether or not the ghost must be malignant. According to one of the greatest authorities on the supernatural, Montague Summers, "The ghost is malevolent and odious. In fiction a helpful apparition is a notable weakness, and the whole narrative becomes flabby to a degree."¹ Similarly, the most skillful ghost story writer of the twentieth century, Montague Rhodes James, believed that a ghost had to be malevolent in order for the story to be of the top rank.²

At the risk of flouting the opinions of these two experts in the field, I should like to suggest this clarification: In a first-rate ghost story the ghost must

¹ Montague Summers, The Vampire, His Kith and Kin, p. 273.

² H. P. Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror in Literature, p. 101.

frighten, but he need not necessarily be evil in order to frighten. In other words, many stories which are real spine-tinglers have ghosts that are not of ill intent. In these the ghost may often be explained as a sort of psychic residue, or an impression on the atmosphere from the past. Naturally these hauntings are not motivated by any malice toward the present, but they manage to throw a genuine chill into us all the same. Examples of this are E. F. Benson's "Expiation" and Oliver Onions' "The Cigarette Case."

A. A clearly shown supernatural element

In order for the ghost to frighten the reader, it must first be made absolutely clear that it is a ghost. I do not refer here to those riddle stories in which the exact nature of the spectre is never made clear. Nothing could be more frustrating than the inconclusive story in which it is left to the reader to decide whether or not "it" is a ghost. The reader feels decidedly let down, even cheated, when it is never made clear whether the story deals with some supernatural agency or whether the supernatural element may be explained by natural causes. A really superior ghost story should not leave the faintest doubt that it actually deals with the supernatural. Suggestion is all very well, but the ghost stories which suffer from understatement outnumber the overstated stories almost two to one.

B. A believable supernatural element

Dashiell Hammett claims that the reader of ghost stories does not believe in ghosts; therefore the writer must make him believe for the moment that such a thing is possible. "If the reader does not feel that these things have happened, or does not care whether they have happened, then the author has been, in the first case unconvincing, and in the second, uninteresting."³

1. The use of restraint

One of the most important factors in creating the "willing suspension of disbelief" is to use the supernatural with restraint. It is very easy to have too much of a thing, and the ghost must be used sparingly if it is to be used effectively. The overtalkative ghost often spoils a good story. A ghost who can carry on a long, sustained conversation with a living person is not only not frightening, but also not very convincing. A good example of this overuse of the supernatural is Kipling's "The Phantom Rickshaw." If Mrs. Keith-Wessington were not such a persistent apparition, she might be a more convincing one; as it is, a greater strain is put on the reader's credulity every time she opens her mouth.

2. The matter of length

If the ghost is to be made the center of interest and remain believable at the same time, then it is necessary

³ Dashiell Hammett, Creeps by Night, Introduction, p. 2.

for the story to be short. It is well-nigh impossible for a ghost to be the focal point of a story and also credible for any sustained length of time. According to Montague Summers, "No ghost story should be of any length. The horror and the awe evaporate with prolixity."⁴

Of course, the ghost can be made of secondary importance in a novel, but the result would not be strictly a ghost story. The novel based entirely upon the supernatural will of necessity let the reader's interest down before the end is reached. An excellent example of this is Bram Stoker's Dracula, in which the author was unable to sustain through the later chapters the effect he made in the first half of the book.

There are some very fine novels of the supernatural, to be sure: Dorothy Macardle's The Uninvited, Maggie Owen-Waderton's Sarah Mandrake, Hamlin Garland's The Tyranny of the Dark, Mary L. Pendered's The Uncanny House, and Margaret Cunliffe-Owen's Emerald and Ermine, to name only a few. But in all of these, if the supernatural element is not of secondary interest, a sort of subplot, then the reader's interest and also his credulity begins to lag before reaching the end. In other words, the short story is the only perfect vehicle for the supernatural because of its length.

⁴ Summers, The Vampire, p. 273.

II. The narrative method

In the creation of a really superior ghost story, much depends on the manner in which the story is told: its setting, the central motif, the suspense involved, and the explanation offered. Another important consideration is the author's tone of narration, whether that of seriousness, humor, or even of unbelief. As Peter Penzoldt says, "If the structure of the story is such that the suspense is kept up until the end, the exposition makes all the difference between a good and a bad story."⁵

A. The setting

H. R. James' theory is that for best effects the ghost story should be set in the present or near-present.⁶ The story is of much more enduring interest if it is recent enough for the reader to associate it with himself. This is hardly possible when the story is set before 1800, and the story seems to become less convincing the further it is set in the past. Marjorie Bowen has an otherwise excellent ghost story, "The Housekeeper," that is marred by its early eighteenth century setting, and this same fault also detracts from Margaret Irwin's "Monsieur Seeks a Wife." In other words, when there is no valid reason for placing the story in the remote past, the practice should be avoided. The reason for

⁵ Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 25.

⁶ Lovecraft, p. 101.

the haunting may be set in the past very properly, but the haunting itself should take place in the present.

With regard to locale, the modern ghost has freed itself from conventions with frequently excellent results. The ghost story no longer takes place exclusively in castles or old English manor houses; now small apartments, modest cottages, and luxurious modern villas come in for their share of spooks. There is no suggestion of antiquity about Elizabeth Bowen's "The Demon Lover," Sabine Baring-Gould's "Pomps and Vanities," Hugh Walpole's "The Tarn," and Ambrose Bierce's "An Arrest," all excellent ghost stories.

B. The opening and suspense

Some outstanding writers in the field (notably M. R. James) favor an opening that is free from suggestion, while others prefer to suggest the supernatural at the very start of the story. It is generally agreed, however, that there should be some hint, if not several, of the supernatural before it ever clearly appears in the story. In other words, a gradual crescendo should be managed, which will eventually reach some sort of climax (the appearance, or final appearance, of the ghost). From this will evolve in varying degrees suspense, which is almost de rigueur in the ghost story. As Montague Summers observes, "A good ghost story must be skillfully contrived, there must be suspense and apprehension."⁷

⁷ Montague Summers, Victorian Ghost Stories, Introduction, p. xliii.

C. The center of interest

A prime consideration is the main motif; in a successful ghost story the ghost must be the center of interest. There are three types of ghost stories often met with in which the ghost is of secondary importance, which are seldom, if ever, first-rate stories. These are the humorous ghost story, the moral ghost story, and the so-called psychological ghost story. All of these are discussed in the section on the various types of ghost story; so it will be sufficient to say here that in each of the three types the emphasis is usually put on some element other than the supernatural. When the interest is focused on the emotions of other characters, comic episodes, or moral lessons, the ghost is made to serve merely as a means to an end, and for the best effect this is disastrous.

D. The explanation

As for the explanation, pseudoscientific or otherwise, there is something to be said on both sides. Montague Summers considers the explanation unnecessary, "The authentic note of horror is struck in eerie suggestion which is of intent left ill-defined. Nothing could be more crude than an explanation and it is this banality that often ruins a story which otherwise might be of the very first order."⁸ One of the most superb ghost stories ever written, Bulwer-Lytton's "The Haunted and the Haunters," is usually reprinted

⁸ Summers, The Vampire, p. 273.

(and rightly so) without the lengthy explanation of several pages which the author originally affixed to it. This explanation adds nothing and detracts much, and is very tiresome reading.

On the other hand, the explanation often adds materially to the story, the reader not receiving the full impact of the haunting until after realizing the reasons for its existence. As Peter Penzoldt puts it, "details, which form a sort of explanation that makes the story plausible, and therefore all the more horrible, are an integral part of the climax."⁹ Among many excellent ghost stories that would suffer greatly if an explanation of the haunting were deleted are F. Marion Crawford's two masterpieces, "The Upper Berth," and "The Screaming Skull."

E. The style of narration

A factor which counts largely in the success of a ghost story is the manner in which it is told. To create the necessary atmosphere the ghost story must be told seriously; attempts at jocularity are almost always fatal. There is one really superb exception to this--E. F. Benson's "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery," a story of genuine terror which the humor at the opening only serves to heighten by contrast. A comic style of narration spoils two of M. P. Dare's stories, "The Haunted Drawers" and "The

⁹ Penzoldt, p. 18.

Haunted Helmet." Nothing could be any more trivial or superfluous than the supposedly farcical ghost stories in Told After Supper,¹⁰ by Jerome K. Jerome. Often the ghost stories of John K. Hays and occasionally those of Sabine Baring-Gould suffer from the same fault. True, there is an occasional touch of sly humor in some of M. R. James' stories, but unless handled by a master, comic narration can spoil a ghost story perhaps more quickly than anything else.

III. Terror versus horror

There is a final distinction that must be made between a fine ghost story and a mediocre one: the difference between terror and horror. Peter Penzoldt says, "The pure tale of horror can never reach a high literary standard, because it uses the most primitive devices to create terror, and often merely disgusts where it should frighten."¹¹

Generally speaking, only a master can create real terror, for terror has in it more than a little of awe. Lesser writers, unable to achieve true terror, content themselves with creating horror instead, by the most revolting and loathsome descriptions. Thus M. R. James usually gives us fine stories inspiring genuine terror, while Arthur Machen or H. P. Lovecraft often succeed only in arousing horror and sometimes nausea.

¹⁰ Jerome K. Jerome, Told After Supper.

¹¹ Penzoldt, p. 93.

Montague Summers sums it up very neatly: "If there is a note of spiritual horror, whether it be vampire horror or Satanism, the story is raised to another plane far higher than the rather nauseous experiments of lunatic surgeons, half-human plants, monstrous insects and the like."¹² And again, "Above all, mere crude physical horrors . . . such as I would incidentally remark only too often mar the modern supernatural story . . . are strictly to be avoided. A nauseous physical sensationalism will disgust and sicken the reader. Spiritual terror is on a far higher, on a far more awful, plane."¹³

¹² Montague Summers, Supernatural Omnibus, Introduction, p. 30.

¹³ Summers, Victorian Ghost Stories, Introduction, p. xliii.

THE TYPES OF GHOST STORY

In a discussion of the ghost stories of the last hundred and fifty years some attention must be paid to different types. Therefore, a catalogue of these various types of ghost story is called for, with a short discussion of each type. Any attempt at classification of this sort is of necessity somewhat arbitrary, for as we shall see, the ghost story permits of almost unlimited variety.

For the sake of convenience I have drawn up an outline, which to the best of my knowledge has never been attempted before. This outline is intended to be neither rigid nor conclusive; there are stories that will fit into several of the categories at once and others that will not fit perfectly into any.

THE TYPES OF GHOST STORY

- I. The riddle ghost story
 - A. The inconclusive story
 - B. "What was it?"
 - C. Strange disappearances
 1. Persons
 2. Places

- II. The moral ghost story
 - A. The avenging ghost
 - B. The punished ghost

- III. The humorous ghost story

- IV. The psychological ghost story
 - A. Dreams
 - B. Emotional illness or insanity
 - C. Guilty conscience or persecution complex
 - D. Possession

- V. The ghost story as serial time
 - A. From out of the past
 - B. Into the future

- VI. The problem ghost story

- VII. The orthodox ghost story
 - A. The types of supernatural entities
 1. The werewolf
 2. The vampire
 3. The elemental
 4. The banshee
 5. The poltergeist

- A. The types of supernatural entities (Continued)
 - 6. The familiar
 - 7. Assorted demons and fiends
 - 8. Remnants from ancient religions
 - 9. Forces from other worlds
 - 10. Ghosts
 - a. Animal ghosts
 - b. Invisible ghosts
 - c. Animated corpses, skeletons, or parts thereof
 - d. Ghosts of the living
 - e. The ghost as narrator
 - f. Orthodox spectres
- B. Reasons for the ghost's existence
 - 1. To seek revenge
 - 2. To correct a wrong
 - 3. To help the living
 - 4. To seek proper burial
 - 5. To guard something
 - 6. To fulfill a threat or promise
 - 7. When its grave is disturbed
 - 8. As the result of a curse
 - 9. Strong hold on a place or on life itself
 - 10. Called forth at a seance
 - 11. For other purposes

I. The riddle ghost story

In this type of story the author offers no explanation of the supernatural events, or perhaps implies explanations other than the supernatural. Hence the riddle ghost story is either a success or a failure; there is no middle ground. Here, understatement is the secret of success, and to say enough without saying too much is a test of the writer's ability.

A. The inconclusive story

In the inconclusive story the author never makes it clear whether or not it is a ghost story. This is perhaps the most frustrating of all ghost stories because the author is deliberately vague. Frequently in this type of story a loophole is left for a rational explanation, causing one to feel he has not been reading a ghost story at all. Many of the so-called ghost stories of Walter de la Mare are of this type; a good example is "A Recluse."

B. "What was it?"

In this type the ghost is either mentioned, but never appears directly in the story, or appears, but is never described. Thus in both instances the precise nature of the apparition is never made clear, but is left up to the reader's imagination. This type of story can be exceedingly gruesome because of this very indefinite quality which permits of infinite variety. What did the narrator see in H. R. Wakefield's "Look Up There!" That was so horrible

that it drove him insane? What was the flopping noise the woman in W. F. Harvey's "The Clock" heard in the shut-up house she had just thoroughly gone through? "What was it?" itself is the name of a famous riddle story by Fitz-James O'Brien in which the spectral element is left undefined.

C. Strange disappearances

One of the most successful types of riddle story is that of the mysterious disappearance, which may be that of a person or place. In the latter a man leaves his room and can never find it again or perhaps not even the street where he lived; this type is illustrated by H. P. Lovecraft's "The Music of Erich Zann." In the former type people vanish into thin air before several witnesses and for no apparent cause. Where did they go? Ambrose Bierce was fond of this type of story, and his "An Unfinished Race" is a good example.

II. The ghost story with a moral

The moral ghost story can also belong to almost any of the other types: a riddle tale, a humorous one, or just an orthodox ghost story. Here the tale illustrates a moral. Many fine stories have obvious morals to them, but when the ghost is made to serve merely as a means to an end, the work will be a failure.

A. The avenging ghost

Here the ghost may wreak vengeance on its murderer, or it may be returning from the grave to fulfill a threat. It may be wronged as a spirit and act accordingly, or it

may be an unspecified fiend who punishes curiosity or presumption on the part of mortals. Almost all revenge ghost stories would come in this category; a good example is Henry James' "Sir Edmund Orme."

B. The punished ghost

Here we have a haunting which is the result of wrongdoing in life; the ghost is forced to atone for his mortal sins. The haunting may be for a specified period or until a certain thing occurs, or it may last for all eternity. Fine examples of this type of story are M. R. James' "A Neighbor's Landmark," and E. F. Benson's "Expiation."

III. The humorous ghost story

The humorous ghost story is of fairly early origin. It appears in the work of Washington Irving and also in Barham's Ingoldsby Legends.

I consider the humorous ghost story an interesting development of the real ghost story but a kind of illegitimate one. These stories do not frighten and are not intended to; therefore they must be considered as humorous stories rather than as ghost stories, the supernatural element being secondary to the humor. In other words, while it is impossible for a humorous ghost story to be a first-rate ghost story, it is quite possible for it to be a first-rate humorous story. Some of these are very clever: John K. Bangs' "The Water Ghost of Harrowby Hall," for example, and of course

Oscar Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost," which is even more poignant (should it be called sentimental?) than humorous.

IV. The psychological ghost story

In this outline the term "psychological ghost story" will be applied to the story in which the ghost might be explained as a dream, a neurosis or insanity, a guilt complex, or as possession. The term is also loosely applied to the story which uses the supernatural as a device to stimulate the other characters and is mainly concerned with their reactions and emotions.

A. Dreams

Stories in which the ghost may be explained as a dream are less popular today than they were before the turn of the century. Now the dream is used to give a reason for a haunting or to explain what took place in the past. Perhaps the most famous of all dream ghost stories is Wilkie Collins' "The Dream Woman."

B. Emotional illness or insanity

This theme has found increasing favor with modern authors and was given impetus by Henry James and Oliver Onions. There is an opportunity afforded for the display of much talent in writing a story in which the person who sees a ghost is considered insane by others. A riddle story may evolve; did he see a ghost or was he actually insane? A truly arresting story on this theme is "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

C. Guilty conscience or persecution complex

Stories in which the ghost appears to his murderer often carry the suggestion of a persecution complex. The persecution is explained as a guilty conscience in the story, but the reader knows that the guilty one is actually haunted. Again this type often falls into the riddle category. A famous example of this type is J. S. Le Fanu's "The Familiar."

D. Possession

Some of the best ghost stories ever written are on the theme of possession, in which a person loses his personality in order to become the abode of another stronger one. People may be possessed by ordinary ghosts, various demonic spirits, or even by vampires. In Cynthia Asquith's "God Grante That She Lye Stille" a girl of rather colorless personality is besieged by the earthbound spirit of an evil ancestress, and in Mary Wilkins Freeman's "The Southwest Chamber" a woman finds herself possessed by her dead aunt's hatred toward herself.

V. The ghost story as serial time

In the last few decades we have had many stories which have been influenced by Dunne's theory of serial time. Dunne and his followers hold that time is an illusion and that past, present, and future all exist simultaneously. Thus certain people are able to have glimpses of the past or the future by a sort of "fold-in-time." This fold-in-time is the only explanation possible in many fine ghost stories.

A. From out of the past

Many ghost stories describe the impressions of a person who feels he is intruding in the past. In this instance some drama that took place years ago takes possession of the present, and the living witness is an interloper. A really excellent example is A. M. Burrage's "The Green Scarf." Also included here are all stories of ghostly cars, trains, and planes which, since they were never alive, must be explained as a psychic impression or residue.

B. Into the future

The fold-in-time not only permits flashbacks of what took place years ago, but also allows some people to have glimpses into the future. A person with this gift is said to be possessed of second sight. Many earlier writers of the ghost story used this theme, among them James Hogg and Mrs. Alfred Baldwin, but it is seldom met with today. Elizabeth Daly has an interesting story on the fold-in-time theme, "The Ghosts." A woman sees the ghost of an ancestress in an old house, but it is suggested that on another time plane the ancestress is seeing a "ghost" from the future.

VI. The problem ghost story

Somewhat similar to the moral ghost story is the problem ghost story; in each type the ghost serves only as a means to an end. In this instance the ghost is made the instrument for solving some sort of problem, usually the location of a hidden treasure or a lost will.

When the solution of the problem takes precedence over the supernatural element (and it usually does) the story loses much of its effect as a ghost story. It might even be said to belong to detective fiction rather than to the ghost story. Of course the whole plot revolves around the ghost whose intervention alone can provide a solution to the problem, but here emphasis is placed on solving the problem rather than on creating fear. Consequently, first-rate ghost stories of this type are met with very rarely, for as stated previously the supernatural must be the central motif for the best results. Almost all of Mrs. J. H. Riddell's stories belong in this category, and Mrs. M. R. S. Andrews' "Through The Ivory Gate" is another example, in which the ghost returns merely to reveal a buried treasure. Much better is J. Sheridan Le Fanu's "Madame Crawl's Ghost," in which the ghost returns to reveal the corpse of the child whom she had murdered years before, thereby solving its disappearance.

VII. The orthodox ghost story

In this paper emphasis is placed upon the orthodox ghost story which is merely a ghost story as such, a tale of terror intended to frighten the reader and devoid of deeper meanings. This type of story is perhaps the most old-fashioned of any discussed, since it follows a pattern used by earlier writers that is still popular today. Montague Summers speaks of these stories, "the old-fashioned Christmas kind, often traditional in their setting, deliberate

in movement, conventional in detail. Yet how amazingly effective they contrive to be!"¹

The orthodox ghost story may be divided into types from two standpoints of classification: The type of supernatural creature the story contains and the reason for this creature's existence.

A. The types of supernatural entity

The types of supernatural entity which appear in the orthodox ghost story are numerous. They include the werewolf, the vampire, nature spirits such as the elemental and possibly the poltergeist, and assorted unspecified fiends. Among the various types of supernatural being met with most frequently are the following:

1. The werewolf

This creature occurs infrequently in the earlier English ghost story; one of the earliest werewolf tales is the one told as an interpolated story in Marryat's The Phantom Ship in 1839. Like the vampire stories, stories of werewolves are all rather much alike; read one and you have read them all. It takes a writer of real genius to give us such a masterpiece as Hugh Walpole's "Tarnhelm." Peter Fleming's "The Kill" is also an excellent werewolf story.

¹ Montague Summers, The Grimoire and Other Supernatural Stories, London, Introduction, p. xxxiii.

Also in this category are stories in which people are able to change into animals other than wolves, such as cats, bulls, or hares.

2. The vampire

The vampire seems to have made its first appearance in the English short story with Polidori's "The Vampyre" in 1819. Like that of the werewolf, this theme seems somehow foreign to our literature, and it is only recently in the search for new effects that it has been used to any great extent. Perhaps the best-known English vampire story is "Carmilla," by J. S. Le Fanu; and "Mrs. Amworth," by E. F. Benson, is also a first-rate tale. Modern writers prefer subtler variations on the theme, such as "psychic" vampires who drain people of their vitality rather than their life's blood. An interesting story of this type is "Miss Avenal," by W. F. Harvey.

3. The elemental

An elemental is hard to define; it is most often a sort of nature spirit, usually malevolent and also possessed of great power. There are disease elementals, fire elementals, and elementals from outer space, and many more. Their favorite abodes are certain pools, forests, or even specific trees. The acknowledged master of the elemental ghost story is Algernon Blackwood, and his "The Willows" and "A Nemesis of Fire" are both masterpieces of their kind. E. F. Benson has a strikingly original story of disease elementals in "Caterpillars."

4. The banshee

Only seldom met with in fiction is the banshee, a spectre who foretells death or bad luck to certain families. This being is generally believed to have originated in Ireland. Mrs. Alfred Baldwin is the author of one of the outstanding banshee stories, "Sire Nigel Otterburne's Case," and Brander Matthews has a comic banshee story in "The Rival Ghosts."

5. The poltergeist

The poltergeist is the rarest of all types of supernatural beings in fiction. Perhaps this is because the subject affords so little scope for variety in development. Two examples of this noisy, mischievous spook are found in W. F. Harvey's "Miss Cornelius" and M. P. Dare's "The Beam"; neither story, unfortunately, has much to recommend it.

6. The familiar

Another figure frequently found in the ghost story is the familiar, who comes in assorted guises at the summons of some sorcerer to prey on his enemies. Again, the familiar is sent by his master to guard something, a treasure or often a tomb. M. R. James has an excellent story of a familiar in "Casting The Runes."

7. Assorted demons and fiends

There are many stories possessing real distinction which deal with various fiends, devils, and demons, often unspecified. When the reader is left in the dark as to the

exact nature of the haunter, a riddle story may ensue. These undefined fiends figure largely in the work of M. R. James; a notable example is "The Diary of Mr. Poynter."

8. Remnants from ancient religions

When modern man tampers with articles used by ancient priests or trespasses where their temples stood, he is likely to invite some undesirable company. Many ghost story writers are fond of basing stories on remnants of Druid worship or on ancient Egyptian cults which have persisted down to the present. H. R. Wakefield's "The Seventeenth Hole at Duncaister" is an instance of the former type, while F. B. Long has a good example of the latter in "A Visitor from Egypt."

9. Forces from other worlds

There have been many stories written on the assumption that our world is touched or surrounded by strange forces, possibly from other astral planes. There are certain places where the veil that separates the two wears thin, and when human beings penetrate into one of these "breaks" they often find themselves in strange company or even in a strange place. These forces may be malevolent, as in R. A. Cram's "The Dead Valley," or like something from fairyland as in Algernon Blackwood's "The Trod." This type of ghost story requires more careful treatment than perhaps any other, for it is easy for it to become science fiction, an entirely different genre from the ghost story, and hence excluded from this discussion.

10. Ghosts

The ghost is naturally encountered more often than any other form of supernatural being in the ghost story, but even in genuine ghosts there is still room for much variety. The ghost may be that of an adult or child, of a living person, or even of an animal. The ghost may be invisible, or he may make his presence known in any number of ways, many of them very disagreeable.

a. The animal ghost

As a rule the animal ghost is not found in the earlier ghost story. When the ghost is that of a beloved pet, the story may easily degenerate into sentimentality. There is an occasional tale of real terror, however, like Edith Wharton's "Kerfol," in which a chateau is haunted by five spectral pet dogs.

b. Invisible ghosts

When the ghost is invisible, he must reveal his presence either by sound or by touch. A visible horror is bad enough, but to face a supernatural entity that cannot be seen is decidedly worse. Perhaps the classic example of the invisible haunter appears in "What Was it?"; by Fitz-James O'Brien.

c. Animated corpses, skeletons, or parts thereof

Occasionally the ghost will take possession of a skeleton, corpse, or mummy, or even just a part of one of these, such as a hand. An animated hand forms the basis for a number of fine ghost stories, including W. F. Harvey's

famous "The Beat With Five Fingers" In F. Marion Crawford's "The Screaming Skull" the skull not only shrieks but also rolls about of its own volition and bites people's throats.

d. Ghosts of the living

The ghost is sometimes that of a person still living or of one just at the point of death, and is then properly called a wraith. If a person once took part in some violent action, years later when that action is spectrally re-enacted he might see a phantasm of himself as he was then, as in Mrs. Gaskell's "The Old Nurse's Story." James Hogg also has some stories of wraiths, and the wraith might also be explained as a sort of astral thought-projection as in Marjorie Bowen's "The Avenging of Ann Leete."

e. The ghost as narrator

When a writer attempts to present the thoughts and impressions of the ghost itself, the story is most likely to become a failure because it is unconvincing. I know of very few stories of this type that are at all successful, among them Jack Snow's "Faulty Vision" and Vincent O'Sullivan's "When I Was Dead." The latter seems to be the first instance of this type of story, as far as I can determine.

f. Orthodox spectres

The standard ghost of the older stories was a transparent figure robed in white, which moaned, wrung its hands, and clanked chains. The modern ghost is much more versatile in addition to being more solid, can converse intelligently, and can bite, maul, or strangle its victim.

The ghost of today is not limited as to locality but can inhabit modern cottages and apartments as well as crumbling castles. Furthermore, the modern ghost makes use of modern conveniences and uses the telephone and electric light to great advantage. Surely ghosts have come a long way! Perhaps the most famous of all orthodox ghost stories is Edward Bulwer-Lytton's "The Haunted and The Haunters," certainly one of the most terrifying stories ever written.

B. Reasons for the ghost's existence

There are a number of time-honored reasons for the existence of ghosts. Some ghosts have a mission to accomplish while others must return as punishment or as the result of a curse. Other ghosts return from sheer love of life or attachment to a certain place, while still others watch over something such as a buried treasure or often a tomb. In the last few decades the ghost is occasionally introduced into a story by means of a seance.

1. To seek revenge

This is probably the most popular theme found in the ghost story. One reason why the revenge ghost is so terrifying is that he is not hampered by material considerations; guns and locks mean nothing to him. The haunting may take the form of persecution, which is prolonged until the victim is driven to confession of guilt or even to suicide. Sometimes the ghost does its own punishing, which is frequently fatal as in Henry James' "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes."

2. To correct a wrong

Ghosts have been known to return from the grave in order to set things right. If a promise to a dying person is broken, the consequences can be highly unpleasant. August Derleth specializes in the broken-vow story; a good example is "Muggridge's Aunt." A. M. Burrage has a ghost return to prove he is innocent of a murder in "Browdean Farm," a real spine-tingler.

3. To help the living

M. R. James and Montague Summers both consider the helpful ghost a failure, but there are a great many stories dealing with this type of spectre. Among these E. W. Peattie's "On the Northern Ice" ranks very high, and could also be classed as a tale of a ghostly guardian. The more helpful the author makes his ghost, the less frightful it will become, thereby defeating his purpose.

4. To seek proper burial

This is one of the oldest themes found in the ghost story and is still used to advantage. The spirit is no longer troubled and ceases to walk when its mortal remains are laid to rest in consecrated ground. In "Sister Maddelina" R. A. Cram has the story of a nun's ghost unable to rest because she was walled up alive. In "Father Bianchi's Tale" R. H. Benson tells of a spirit who roams until the proper masses are said for his soul.

5. To guard something

The ghostly guardian is often met with in the ghost story. He may be some sort of demon or familiar sent by a sorcerer to guard his tomb, as in A. N. L. Munby's "The Inscription," or he can guard almost anything from books to collections of china. There are also stories of people watched over by ghosts, and many stories have been written of treasure watched over by a spirit. We see an example of this type in "The Red Camp," by A. C. Benson.

6. To fulfill a threat or promise

Ghosts who return to fulfill a threat are usually malevolent and may often be classified as revenge ghosts. In Elizabeth Bowen's "Hand In Glove" the mistreated aunt warns her niece she will be punished and returns from the grave to strangle her. Ghosts who return to keep a promise are not always so harsh; in "Keeping His Promise" Algernon Blackwood uses the theme of two friends who agree that the first one to die will appear after death to the other.

7. When its grave is disturbed

A spirit is very prone to resent interference with its resting place, and the consequences are often quite painful, especially if the spirit had the foresight to set a guardian over its tomb. M. R. James specializes in the story of a disturbed grave, and his "Count Magnus" is a notable example.

8. As the result of a curse

A ghost may be the result of a curse in two different ways; A sorcerer may curse an enemy and send a spirit to punish him, or the spirit may simply be earthbound because he was cursed. An example of the former type is A. M. Burrage's "Footprints," and the latter type is admirably illustrated by J. S. Le Fanu's "Wicked Captain Walshawe, of Wauling." There are also some fine ghost stories which revolve around a cursed item of some sort, which may be an article of furniture or some piece of wearing apparel. This cursed item often involves its owner or wearer in dire misfortune, or even death. August Derleth's "The Satin Mask" is a really fine example.

9. Strong hold on a place or on life itself

Surprisingly enough, these motives for haunting are found very seldom in the ghost story, although they seem to offer splendid possibilities. R. H. Benson has an excellent story of a man who clings to life after death in "Father Macclesfield's Tale," and Mrs. Molesworth in "Lady Farquhar's Old Lady" has a ghost who just can't bear to leave the house she loved.

10. Called forth at a seance

The spirit summoned at a seance is of fairly recent origin; I can find no instance of the seance motif in the short ghost story before the work of E. F. Benson. Benson, however, is very fond of this device and uses it frequently

and to great advantage in "The Gardener." Joseph Shearing also bases an excellent story on a seance in "They Found My Grave."

11. For other purposes

The reasons for which ghosts may return other than those discussed under separate headings are infinite . . . they may return for almost anything. To mention but a few, there are ghosts who return to accompany the soul of a loved one to its new home, and others who return to steal one's soul. Others return to find if they were loved in life, and still others who return to sit for a portrait or photograph. There is at least one ghost who comes back to prevent a picture being taken of her corpse.

LITERARY BACKGROUND

Modern English and American ghost stories have a common ancestor in the Gothic novel, of which the supernatural was a standard feature. Genuine ghosts appear in Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto in 1764, in Clara Reeve's The Old English Baron in 1777, and in M. G. Lewis' The Monk in 1796. Mrs. Ann Ward Radcliffe explains her ghosts away, but all her novels are steeped in weird atmosphere, especially her masterpiece, Mysteries of Udolpho (1794). The Irishman Charles Robert Maturin has several Gothic novels with genuine ghosts, of which the most famous is Melmoth The Wanderer (1820).

These Gothic novels were so popular that less skillful writers resorted to the lurid and fantastic often to the point of the ridiculous in order to gain attention. Indeed several satires on the extravagance of the Gothic novel are known, and at least one is excellent, Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey.

At almost the same time that these full-length novels of ruinous castles, torture, dark-browed Byronic villains, saintly heroines, and a bewildering array of assorted ghosts were so popular, there arose a shorter form of the Gothic romance which forms the link between the Gothic novel and

our short ghost story of today. According to Edith Birkhead there were chapbooks containing several short Gothic romances as early as 1806.¹ Miss Birkhead mentions an example of these early collections of ghostly-gothic tales called Wild Roses.² This deceptively titled book contained such hair-raising stories as "The Tomb of Aurora, or the Mysterious Summons," "Twelve O'Clock, or the Three Robbers," "Barbastal, or the Magician of the Forest of the Bloody Ash," and several others equally blood-curdling.

Another collection dating from 1823 is mentioned by Montague Summers, and has as its title Ghost Stories, Collected with a Particular View to Counteract the Vulgar Belief in Ghosts and Apparitions, and to Promote a Rational Estimate of the Nature of Phenomena Commonly Considered as Supernatural.³ This contained such stories as "The Ghost of Larnelville," "The Haunted Inn," and "The Village Apparition," but the ghosts are all explained as impostures or sleep-walkers.

These tales are the direct ancestors of our modern ghost story. Unfortunately, very few of them remain to us today. They were printed in cheap paper-backed editions intended for use in the circulating libraries of the day and were literally read to pieces. From what I can ascertain,

¹ Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror, p. 186.

² Birkhead, p. 186.

³ Montague Summers, The Supernatural Omnibus, Introduction, p. 24.

the few existing examples of these stories do not show any great literary merit; their worth lies rather in the fact that they are the first step toward the contemporary short ghost story.

In examining several of these early anthologies we shall find very few stories that show promise of better things to come. The stories are for the most part crude, flat, and uninspired. Unfortunately, because many of these chapbooks have no date, it is impossible to discuss the stories in chronological order.

Gothic Stories⁴ contains six stories, one of which is called "Ethelbert, or The Phantom of the Castle, A Tale of Horror." Ethelbert explores his ancestral castle for the first time and sees a portrait which bleeds copiously. He then learns that his intended bride is his sister. Refusing to claim his newly found estate, he goes into a monastery where he finds his father's murderer and learns that his bride-to-be is not his sister after all. Much is explained unsatisfactorily, or else not explained at all.

Entertaining Gothic Stories⁵ contains five stories of which one, "Henry, or The Portrait of Mary," is explained as a dream. Only slightly better is "Vildac, or The Horrid Discovery." A wedding guest at an old castle discovers his host's father who has been imprisoned in a turret for

⁴ Gothic Stories. London: S. Bailey.

⁵ Entertaining Gothic Stories. London: W. Mason.

years. When he entreats the old man to reveal himself the captive explains that his punishment is fitting, for he in turn had killed his father. He then proceeds to point out his victim's ghost to the astonished guest.

Another collection is called Tales of Terror! or, More Ghosts, Forming a Complete Phantasmagoria,⁶ which contains "terrors one, two, and three." "Terror one" is the story of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, who takes refuge in a supposedly haunted ruined castle during a storm. There a phantom which turns out to be a Divine Spirit reveals the future to him. The Tale is mechanically told and falls completely flat.

A later, larger, and much superior anthology appeared in 1826 and was entitled Legends of Terror, and Tales of the Wonderful and The Weird.⁷ It would be well worth while for some publisher to bring out a modern reprint of this book, for I believe it is the most comprehensive collection up to its time, containing many poems of the supernatural as well as numerous stories. The modern reader would probably be surprised to find included among these Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle." Others include "The Wizard's Revenge," "The Bottle Imp," "The Dance of the Dead," "A Night in the Grave, or the Devil's Receipt," and "The Spectre Horsemen of

⁶ Tales of Terror! or, More Ghosts, Forming A Complete Phantasmagoria. London: Ann Lemoine.

⁷ Legends of Terror, and Tales of the Wonderful and the Wild. London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826.

Soutra-Fell, or The Fall of The House of Selby," in addition to many others.

An interesting example of the early moral ghost story is "The Castle-Goblin." A pair of lovers are about to commit sin in the castle ruins when they are confronted with a ghost with a spectral babe in her arms. The phantom informs the abashed couple that by preventing their fall she has expiated hers and is now free.

"The Water Spectre, or The Weird Sisters" is a Scottish tale on the theme of the missing rightful heir. Muchardus murders his friend and forges a will so he will inherit his estate, having already paid a servant to kill the friend's son. But the servant keeps the child and also a miniature it wore of its father. The murderer pays a visit to the weird sisters to learn his fate, and is told that he will perish when his victim's ghost appears to him for the third time. It has already done so once, and appears again as he leaves the sisters' cave. Meanwhile, the true heir has grown up and fallen in love with the ward of his father's murderer. The lovers are detected and captured; they escape and are captured again. The weird sisters give the youth a flag to wave in time of peril; he waves it now and his father's ghost appears, sinks Muchardus' boat, and the murderer is drowned.

Here we have ample material for a full-length Gothic novel, but it is compressed into a few pages. Naturally there is no room for development of detail or drawing of

character. J. Sheridan Le Fanu was one of the first writers of note to recognize the fact that a short ghost story revolving around one episode was to be preferred to such a conglomeration as the story previously discussed. This is one reason why Le Fanu may be considered as the father of the modern short ghost story.

These shorter Gothic stories were not only collected in anthologies but were also printed in the magazines. By the time Victoria ascended the throne the short ghost story was a standard feature of the periodicals. This practice was to reach its peak in the next two or three decades and continue until the turn of the century; some of the finest ghost stories are by contributors to fin-de-siecle magazines. Perhaps this is why Victoria's reign (1837-1903) is often called the heyday of the ghost story. Montague Summers has made an invaluable contribution to weird literature by tracking down some of these early ghost stories which originally appeared in various magazines and then reprinting them in modern anthologies. As he puts it, "There are no richer repositories of ghost stories than extinct magazines."⁸ For the reader with much time and still more patience such Victorian magazines as All The Year Round, Harper's, Peterson's, Blackwood's, and the Pall Mall Magazine are all rich in forgotten ghost stories. One may recover a lost Le Fanu or

⁸ Montague Summers, The Grimoire and Other Supernatural Stories, Introduction, p. xxxiii.

some such treasure.

One of the most famous of all ghost stories is Daniel Defoe's "True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal," which appeared in 1706. Most contemporary critics consider this a piece of actual journalistic reporting rather than fiction, so it is omitted from this discussion.

Many of the early nineteenth-century ghost stories were anonymous. One of the earliest writers of short ghost stories that we know by name is Sir Walter Scott, who has two tales of the supernatural. "The Tapestried Chamber, or, The Lady in the Sacque" (1828) is the conventional story of a guest in an old mansion who wakes to find bending over him an evil-looking old woman who shortly vanishes. In the morning his host offers a vague explanation by way of apology and is insulted when the guest insists on leaving. Much of the long introductory part seems tedious if not clumsy to the modern reader, but we must remember that tastes have changed, and what appears crude to us was what the Regency and early Victorian reader expected. Scott has a slighter story, "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror," which deals with second-sight. An episode from Redgauntlet, "Wandering Willie's Tale," is often found in the anthologies as a good example of the early ghost story.

Another episode from a novel often reprinted as a short ghost story is the werewolf narrative from Captain Frederick Marryat's The Phantom Ship (1839). This is an excellent story and has been variously printed as "The

Werewolf," "The White Wolf," and "The White Wolf of the Hartz Mountains."

C. R. Maturin, author of the celebrated Melmoth The Wanderer, has at least one short ghost story, "Leixlip Castle." This old-fashioned tale purports to be a family legend of the fates of the three daughters of an Irish baronet. The youngest vanishes supernaturally, and her spirit is thereafter seen to hover over fireplaces in the castle. The eldest is killed by a maniac on her wedding night. The middle daughter observes certain rites on Hallowe'en to discover her future husband, but a fiend appears instead and gives her a dagger. After she has been happily married for several years, her husband chances to see the dagger and recognizes it as one he used to murder his brother. Furious, he accuses her of witchcraft, and forces an instant separation.

An important "first" is Dr. John W. Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819), often mistakenly attributed to Byron. According to Montague Summers this is the first prose treatment of the vampire motif in English literature; immensely popular, it inspired several different and highly successful plays.⁹

Lord Ruthven, a vampire, becomes the friend of a young Englishman, Aubrey. They travel to Greece, where the vampire kills a young peasant girl and is later apparently killed

⁹ Montague Summers, The Vampire, His Kith and Kin, p. 230.

himself. On his deathbed he makes Aubrey swear not to reveal his death for one year. On Aubrey's return to England the shock of seeing Ruthven a social lion unhinges his reason. It is further unhinged when he discovers his sister is Ruthven's intended bride. No one listens to the madman until it is too late, and the unfortunate girl is discovered another victim of Ruthven's unholy lust.

A follower of Scott in the field of the ghost story was James Hogg, "The Ettrick Shepherd." Unlike those of his master and countryman, the stories of Hogg are somewhat crude and certainly naive. His Winter Evening Tales¹⁰ has a section of "Country Dreams and Apparitions," which contains several examples of the early ghost story. In "Tibby Johnson's Wraith" a woman at the point of death appears to a neighbor and walks along the road in front of her, vanishes, then reappears further down the road. The neighbor dies from shock and no explanation is offered for the two appearances. In "The Wife of Lochmaben" a woman who was deeply religious returns, not to punish her murderer, but to prevent her friend from believing that she had committed suicide and thereby losing her faith. I have been unable to locate Hogg's best known story of the supernatural, "The Wool-Gatherer."

Richard Harris Barham's Ingoldsby Legends (1840 and 1847) contains several short ghost stories; but what is more

¹⁰ James Hogg, Winter Evening Tales. New York: Leavitt and Allen Bros., 1871.

rare, it also contains many ghost stories in verse. These latter cannot be included in this discussion, which is limited to prose fiction.

Barham's ghost stories are usually somewhat marred by the air of levity with which they are told. In one story, "The Spectre of Tappington," the ghost turns out to be a sleepwalker and the story degenerates into farce. Much the same is true of "Jerry Jarvis' Wig," in which a man who has made a pact with the devil gets out of it by giving an accursed wig to his servant. The wig causes the servant to steal and take to drink, and gets him into much mischief.

More serious in tone is "The Leech of Folkestone," less a ghost story than an account of frustrated attempts at witchcraft. "Singular Passage in the Life of the Late Henry Harris, Doctor in Divinity" is also free of jocularities. This is a very originally conceived, if rather tediously told, story of sorcery, in which a student in Holland is able to summon the astral self of his sweetheart in England to him by means of the black arts.

Charles Ollier was a literary contemporary of Ainsworth and Bulwer-Lytton, and according to Montague Summers wrote several short ghost stories. "The Haunted House of Paddington," which appeared in the 1840's, is almost smothered by a stiff, rhetorical style of narration. The plot itself is not original: A very worldly man is accosted by a phantom in the midst of merry-making and warned that some one will come for him ere long. He then goes into a decline and on

the night of his death impatient footsteps are heard in the next room, but no one can be seen there. The story has little to recommend it.

If we omit the work of Sheridan Le Fanu, which will be discussed subsequently, one of the first really outstanding ghost stories in English literature is Edward Bulwer-Lytton's "The Haunted and The Haunters or, The House and the Brain." This appeared in 1857 and will remain the classic example of the standard orthodox ghost story.

The story briefly is as follows: A skeptic prepares to pass a night in a reputedly haunted house with his servant (who flees) and his dog (who is strangled). The first phenomenon they witness is a print in the yard made by no visible foot. Inside they follow a vague light upstairs where it condenses into a small ball of fire, and they also see chairs moved by misty blue forms, hear knocks, and feel slaps. All this sets the stage for a terrible black shadow and swirling lights which appear at intervals, between the acts, so to speak, of a spectral drama acted out by the phantoms of former occupants of the house. One room strikes the man as especially sinister; when this is razed, a smaller room is found beneath it. This secret room contains some sort of magical apparatus to ensure the working of a curse on the house and to keep it haunted. When the apparatus is removed, the house is troubled no more. A short but boring explanatory section attempts to offer a scientific explanation, but the story is usually reprinted without it.

Bulwer-Lytton also has two novels in the Gothic tradition, Zanoni and A Strange Story.

George MacDonald is the author of a short story of the supernatural, "The Portent," which I have been unable to find. His David Elginbrod is a fine novel of the occult.

Charles Dickens wrote several short stories of the supernatural, and there is a need for a definitive edition of his ghost stories. Of course, his most famous ghost story is "A Christmas Carol," but this can hardly be said to be a satisfactory ghost story. As Peter Penzoldt observes, most of Dickens' ghost stories are a sort of fairy tale, in which the ghost is used to illustrate a moral.¹² This fairytale quality is present not only in "A Christmas Carol" but also in "The Chimes," "The Cricket on the Hearth," and "The Haunted Man and The Ghost's Bargain." The same holds true for two more stories in this vein, "The Bagman's Story" and "The Goblins Who Stole a Sexton." These stories are not bona fide ghost stories and are hence omitted from this discussion.

Dickens, however, has at least two ghost stories free from moral elements and fantasy, and these manage to convey a genuine chill. "To Be Taken With a Grain of Salt" has also been reprinted as "A Trial for Murder." In it a murdered man's ghost appears to the foreman of a jury in an effort to convince him the supposed murderer is actually

¹² Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 101.

guilty. Even better is "The Signal Man," a story of second sight. A signal man on a railroad has twice seen a phantasmal figure near a certain light and each time a terrible accident ensued. The third time he sees the figure it is a warning of his own approaching death.

Both Wilkie Collins and his brother Charles made use of the supernatural in their writing. Wilkie Collins has a full-length novel of the supernatural, The Haunted Hotel, but he is better known for one very famous short ghost story, "The Dream Woman." In this story a young man dreams repeatedly that a certain woman is about to stab him. As he grows older he meets this woman, falls in love with her, and marries her in spite of his mother's protests. One night he awakens to find his wife about to stab him, just as in his dream. He prevents her, but she escapes, and now he lives in constant fear that she will return and try again.

Charles Collins, son-in-law of Charles Dickens, wrote at least one better-than-average ghost story, "The Compensation House." A man is responsible for another man's death and thereafter, whenever he looks in a mirror, he sees not his own face but that of his victim. Consequently no mirrors are allowed in the house, and the persecution does not cease until the man is on his deathbed.

Robert Louis Stevenson is the author of one masterpiece of macabre literature, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, with which, unfortunately, none of his shorter pieces can compare. As Peter Penzoldt says, "none of Stevenson's

five or six weird tales is a typical short story of the supernatural. One can call most of them fairy tales or parables. They are supernatural in their general atmosphere rather than in their plot."¹³ This is correct; while all four stories hereafter mentioned have supernatural elements, none is strictly a ghost story.

"The Body-Snatcher" is a story of the supernatural only because the author was unable to conceive of another solution. The reader is unprepared and consequently feels cheated in addition to being unconvinced. "Markheim" is one of those indefinite stories in which the supernatural element could be a ghost, a vision, insanity, or conscience. It is unsatisfactory from several counts. "The Bottle Imp" is a variation on the Faust pact theme. The bottle must be sold at a lower figure each time, and the owner, "left holding the bag" is doomed to perdition. Most successful of all is "Thrawn Janet," in which Stevenson shows his gift for telling a story and nothing more. This is an account of the retribution which overtakes a woman who has dealings with the devil, a first-rate story unimpaired by sermonizing.

Of course the Victorian ghost story was not limited exclusively to men. Female novelists such as Miss M. E. Braddon, Amelia B. Edwards, Rhoda Broughton, and Mrs. Gaskell all wrote ghost stories at the middle of the century. Later there were Mrs. J. H. Riddell, Mrs. H. D. Everett, Mrs. Hartley,

¹³ Penzoldt, p. 113.

Mrs. Oliphant, Mrs. Molesworth, Violet Paget, Edith Nesbit, Mrs. Alfred Baldwin, and Frances Hodgson Burnett, to name only a few. Some of these will be discussed separately in a later section. I have been able to find only one ghost story apiece by Mrs. Hartley and Mrs. Gaskell, and I have been unable to find any stories by Mrs. Everett, whose collection is called The Death Mask.¹⁴

Amelia B. Edwards is the author of several ghost stories; four that I shall consider here are found in Montague Summers' Supernatural Omnibus. They were originally printed in All The Year Round and date from the 1860's.

"The Engineer" is the story of two friends inseparable from boyhood. They become engineers and go to Italy, where they fall in love with the same girl. One stabs the other in a jealous rage and instantly repents, but it is too late. Some years later the survivor has a chance to revenge his friend and himself on the heartless girl, for she is on the train which he is driving. He is just at the point of driving the train off a bridge when his friend's spirit appears and seizes the controls, thereby saving his soul. In "How The Third Floor Knew The Potteries" a waif is befriended by the foreman of the potteries. When the foreman's sweetheart is stolen by an unscrupulous rival, the foreman disappears. The boy he befriended sees the foreman's spirit twice, each time in front of a certain kiln. When the ashes are sifted, remains of a human being are found, but the rival escapes.

¹⁴ H. P. Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror in Literature, p.82.

"My Brother's Ghost Story" takes place in Switzerland. An Englishman on vacation becomes friendly with two Italian peddlers and a Swiss music-box salesman. The young Swiss is about to be married and takes the short route over a glacier to his home. That night the Englishman and one of the Italians hear a music-box playing at twenty minutes to twelve and find their watches stopped at that time. Their friend's body is later found lodged in a crevasse of the glacier.

Best of the four is "The Phantom Coach," a rather old-fashioned tale but none the worse for it. A man becomes lost on the moors during a snowstorm while hunting and chances upon an old manor. When the owner finds the man is anxious to return to his wife, he sends a servant to show him the track to the highway. Here the man is supposed to take a coach to the village where he and his wife are staying. The coach appears before he can reach the highway, however, and he is horrified at finding it occupied by three corpses. Just at the moment of discovery the coach goes over into a ravine. After some weeks of careful nursing the man learns that years ago a coach went into the ravine at that spot and all in it were killed. This is an exceptionally well-developed story and deserves to be better known.

Miss M. E. Braddon has at least two ghost stories to her credit, neither of which is particularly distinguished. They both originally appeared in Ralph the Bailiff in 1862 and are reprinted by Montague Summers in his Supernatural

Omnibus. In "Eveline's Visitant" a man kills his cousin in a duel and the cousin vows revenge as he dies. When the victor marries, the cousin's ghost begins to appear, not to his slayer but to the bride, and eventually harrasses her to death. "The Cold Embrace" is the story of a young man who forgets his sweetheart while traveling and finds upon his return that she had committed suicide. Thereafter, when alone, he feels an invisible someone steal up behind him and clasp icy arms around his neck. As was the case with Eveline, the phantom's continued visits eventually undermine his health completely.

Mrs. Elizabeth C. Gaskell, better known for Cranford, is the author of two ghost stories, one of which, "Clopton House," I was unable to find. "The Old Nurse's Story" is often reprinted in anthologies in spite of being clumsily developed and too melodramatic.

A young child and her nurse are sent to the old family home to stay with an elderly great-aunt. The house is haunted by an organ that plays by itself and by a little girl who cries and raps on the windows. It seems that years ago the great-aunt's sister was secretly married and had a child, and the jealous great-aunt denounced her sister to their father. Enraged, he turned them out into the snow where the child perished, and it is her ghost who tries to get in or to entice others outside to share her fate. The climax is reached with a spectral re-enactment of the denouncement and subsequent casting-out which takes place

in the great hall and includes a phantom of the living great-aunt as she was at the time of the tragedy. Mrs. Gaskell is not without power in her creation of a dramatic situation, but the story is hardly clear.

According to Montague Summers, Mrs. Hartley wrote several ghost stories; but he reprints only one in the Supernatural Omnibus.¹⁵ "Chantrey Manor House" is not a particularly hair-raising tale, rather old-fashioned and somewhat cumber-somely developed. An Englishman returns from India and rents an old house but finds it is supposed to be haunted. Eventually, various mild phenomena are experienced by both family and servants, and because of the effect on his wife's health the man is forced to leave. This story is undistinguished.

Mrs. Margaret Oliphant Wilson Oliphant is the author of a novel of the supernatural, A Beleaguered City, and also a collection of shorter pieces called Stories of the Seen and the Unseen.¹⁶ Unfortunately, only one story from this fits into our discussion, "The Open Door." Had Mrs. Oliphant written other stories along similar lines she would rank as a master of the ghost story, for "The Open Door" has become a classic.

¹⁵ Summers, The Grimoire, Introduction, p. xxxiv.

¹⁶ Oliphant, Mrs. M. O. W., Stories of the Seen and the Unseen. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1889.

An Indian officer lately returned to Scotland rents an old estate and moves there with his family. His son, a delicate child, begins to hear voices and begs the father to help the person who cries so. The father and doctor believe the child has brain fever until they themselves hear the voice crying "Mother, let me in!" Much investigation ensues, but no human agency can be discovered. When the local minister accompanies the next trip of investigation, he recognizes the voice. He prays for the spirit to seek its mother in Heaven rather than where she lived in life, and the haunting ceases.

Edith Nesbit (Bland) is the author of several novels and children's books, many of which are highly flavored with fantasy. I have been unsuccessful in tracing her collection of ghost stories, Grim Tales (1893), but Montague Summers reprints two stories from it in his Supernatural Omnibus.

One of these, "Man-Size in Marble," is a superb story of really excellent atmosphere. A couple rent a small cottage which incorporates the ruins of an old manor house, and near by is an ancient chapel containing tombs with marble effigies on them. According to local legend, these marble images get up one night each year and return to their old home. The man disregards warnings and leaves his young wife alone on this night; on returning he finds her a corpse. Tightly clasped in her hand is a stone finger.

"John Charrington's Wedding" is a somewhat slighter story; a very determined man is about to marry the village belle but is called away by illness shortly before the wedding. He returns just in time, and acts so strangely that some of the guests believe him intoxicated. When the carriage containing the bridal pair arrives at the reception, the groom is missing and the bride is a maniac. A telegram arrives from the place he visited saying that he was killed in an accident on his way to the station.

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett is remembered by lovers of weird literature for two long short stories of the supernatural which have been printed separately as novelettes. Neither "The White People" nor "In The Closed Room" is an ordinary ghost story; they are not intended to frighten and are almost poetic in tone. They possess a sad and serene beauty all their own, and the only other ghost story which approaches them at all in this respect is Marjorie Bowen's "Miss Lucy's Two Visitors."

"In the Closed Room" (1904) is the story of a little girl who hates the drab ugliness of a hot, noisy New York apartment. Her parents are good people but do not understand their somewhat ethereal child. However, when the father gets a job as caretaker in a shut-up mansion, the child is happy because she now has a playmate. Another child awaits her in the closed room, the lock of which opens only to her touch. She describes the playmate to her mother, but the parents think it is imagination. It is only after

their daughter's death that they learn the playmate was the former daughter of the house, and it was because of her death that the house was closed.

The heroine of "The White People" (1917) was born just after the death of her father and just before the death of her mother. It is suggested that this accounts for her uncanny "gift." At any rate, she possesses the faculty for seeing dead people, especially those who return to be near loved ones, and she distinguishes them from the living because of their strange whiteness. As a child she had for a playmate "Wee Brown Elspeth" who was murdered hundreds of years before. Now that she is grown, the man she loves dies before their marriage, but she is content with his astral self, one of the "white people." These stories are longer than the average ghost story but would lose much of their effect if they were shortened.

The short English ghost story has had its American counterpart almost from the very beginning. The history of the short ghost story in America might be said to parallel that of its English progenitor, although on a slightly smaller scale. There have even been Gothic novels written in America; Charles Brockden Brown's Wieland and Julian Hawthorne's Archibald Malmaison, to name only two.

Collections of shorter Gothic stories had their appeal here just as they did abroad; anthologies of short ghost stories appeared in America by 1835 and probably earlier. Tales of Terror, or the Mysteries of Magic was "a selection

of wonderful and supernatural stories translated from the Chinese, Turkish, and German," compiled by Henry St. Clair, and printed in Boston in 1835.¹⁷ Several of the eighteen stories in the volume treat of Faust pacts between human beings and fiends, while at least five are in the most direct Gothic tradition, crude and stilted. There is a werewolf story, "The Gored Huntsman," in which a lovely woman has the power to turn herself into a stag. Perhaps most readable of all is "Peter Rugg, The Missing Man," which according to a modern anthology is by William Austin.¹⁸ Rugg, a man of violent temper, vows to reach home before a storm breaks or never to reach it. He never does reach home, and his carriage is afterward seen through several New England states, always just before a storm, and the driver often stops to inquire the correct route to Boston. The story is imaginatively told, but probably owes something to the legend of the Flying Dutchman. It is interesting to remark that the editor of this anthology says in his preface (speaking of the short story of the supernatural), "There are no tales which excite such intense interest, or will bear frequent perusal so well." And this almost a hundred and twenty-five years ago!

In tracing the development of the short American ghost story the first author of any consequence that we encounter

¹⁷ St. Clair, Henry, Tales of Terror, or the Mysteries of Magic. Boston: Charles Gaylord, 1835.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Hough Seehrist, Thirteen Ghostly Yarns, p.1.

is Washington Irving. His Tales of a Traveller (1824) contains four ghost stories, one of which possesses real merit. Irving was fond of the humorous ghost story, and most of his ghost stories contain a comic touch or two, even if it is only in the character of the narrator. "The Bold Dragoon" is an excellent example; the whole story is a mixture of farrago and farce. The dancing furniture, which may be explained as the result of too much liquor, is delightful, but the tale can hardly be classified as a good ghost story. Similarly, "The Devil and Tom Walker" is told with tongue in cheek and would scarcely frighten a child, although it is certainly a well-written and original treatment of the Faust theme.

"The Adventure of my Uncle" is more serious in tone, but somewhat unsatisfactory because of lack of explanation. A visitor to an old chateau wakens to see a female figure, robed in white, which shortly vanishes. He identifies the ghost from a portrait next day, but his host refuses to relate her history. The similarity between this story and Scott's "The Tapestried Chamber," which is far superior to it, is obvious.

Of decided excellence is "The Adventure of the German Student or, The Lady with the Velvet Collar." During the Revolution a poor student in Paris finds a girl huddled at night on the steps of the guillotine. He takes her to his room, falls in love with her, pledges eternal faithfulness, and they spend a night of rapture. When he returns next

day from his studies, he finds the lady a corpse. A policeman identifies her as having been guillotined the day before, and when he unclasps the buckle on the band about her throat, her head rolls on the floor. . .The student dies in a madhouse. The story is a little gem of pure horror, without a single incongruous note.

Irving is also highly adept at rewriting old legends, as evidenced by his Tales from the Alhambra. Two of his best known stories fit in this category also, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," both too well known to need discussion here. Not so well known are "The Storm Ship" and "Hell-Gate," both concerned with spectral pirates in New York harbor and on the Hudson River. Like the "headless horseman," the ghost in "The Spectre Bridegroom" is an imposture and not a genuine revenant.

Almost every anthology of the supernatural of any length will include a story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, but I cannot find any bona fide ghost in his work. Like Mrs. Radcliffe, Hawthorne steeped his tales in a ghostly atmosphere without introducing any genuine apparitions. He chose rather to suggest than to take the step of using an authentic spectre; we can admire his prudence if not his judgment. We cannot but feel, however, that had he written a true ghost story he would have managed somehow to explain the ghost away, for he was not free from the early lure of pseudoscience fiction as we see from "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment."

The two stories of Hawthorne's which most closely approach genuine ghost stories are "The Gray Champion" and "The White Old Maid." In the former story a personified spirit of colonial freedom comes to the colonists in their time of need, predicts the downfall of a tyrannical governor, and disappears. "The White Old Maid" is an ultra-romantic tale in which it is suggested that a woman long dead returns from the grave to keep an appointment at a certain time.

This is Hawthorne's chief fault. Had he made his ghosts unmistakable as such rather than leaving the question up to his reader he might hold a higher place than he does in weird literature.

We come now to the greatest master of the weird tale up to this time, Edgar Allan Poe, who was to influence American, English, and continental fiction for the next fifty years. While many of Poe's stories show an undoubted debt to the Gothic novel, yet, like Hawthorne, he failed to avail himself of their outstanding feature--the genuine ghost. One is amused in reading Poe to notice how he manages to avoid the actual ghost and yet write a story of the supernatural! H. P. Lovecraft devotes a whole chapter to Poe and praises him highly: "Whatever his limitations Poe did that which no one else ever did or could have done; and to him we owe the modern horror story in its final and perfected state."¹⁹

Horror story, yes, but ghost story, no. Poe's influence on the genuine ghost story seems to have been almost negligible,

¹⁹ Lovecraft, p. 52.

excepting on Lovecraft himself, whose work includes few true ghost stories. We see again the contemporary predilection for pseudo-science in Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," a rather lurid account of a corpse not allowed to die because of a hypnotic trance. Fortunately, this bogus scientific knowledge fails to mar his four best stories of the supernatural.

"The Oval Portrait" is a sort of vampire story, in which a painting gradually saps the life of its subject, a lovely young girl, until upon its completion she falls dead. This seems to be a possible source for Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray. Poe also has an interesting story of possession in "Ligeia," which possesses real power in spite of occasional crudities. The dead first wife comes back to "possess" the second one, eventually causing her successor to resemble her physically.

A much better story, perhaps Poe's best from the standpoint of eerie atmosphere, is "The Fall of the House of Usher." This masterpiece of macabre fiction has no single genuine ghost although several are suggested. Poe's supreme achievement in this field, however, is "The Masque of the Red Death," surely one of the most strikingly original stories of terror and suspense ever written. The gruesome description of the seventh chamber and the thrill of horror we experience when we realize the uninvited guest is the Red Death, or death itself, if you prefer, is scarcely to be matched elsewhere and is in a class by itself.

Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe were all to contribute to the work of Fitz-James O'Brien and Ambrose Bierce, who will be discussed in a later section. These two men, the fathers of the American ghost story, were to pave the way for a great flowering of the ghost story with such masters as Henry James, Ralph Adams Cram, F. Marion Crawford and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman.

There has grown up in the last two or three decades a strange school of weird fiction in which the writers specialize in a particular combination of ghost story, phantasy, science fiction, and sadism, copied partly from Poe and partly from the work of one another. When a writer cannot stand on his own feet but must use the inventions and terminology of others, his work can only be said to be decadent.

THE GHOST STORY
IN BRITAIN

CYNTHIA ASQUITH

Even had Lady Cynthia Asquith written no ghost stories of her own, devotees of the macabre would still be indebted to her as the collector-editor of her series of Ghost Books, and several other anthologies. However, Lady Asquith has several stories of her own, at least two of which possess decided merit; they are collected in the volume called This Mortal Coil. Two of the stories in this collection are not ghost stories, and a third story, "The Nurse Never told," based on Dunne's Theory of serial time, must be classed as a failure. Of the remaining six stories, two are of possession, two are of ghosts with a mission, one is of dire ghostly revenge, and the last one is an excellent riddle story.

There is nothing to alarm in "The White Moth," a poignant story of a girl whose parents refuse to let her write poetry, and she dies with a great yearning unsatisfied. Years later another girl, the complete opposite of everything poetical, finds herself compelled to set pen to paper when staying in a certain room, and the result is exquisite poetry. Of course the room is that in which the real poet died years before. The only fault of this story is possibly that the setting is over-elaborately laid.

Miss Asquith's other story of possession, "God Grante That She Lye Stille," is more grim. A lovely young girl who has no real character of her own feels she is gradually being ousted by a stronger personality, that of a very evil ancestress. Aided by her lover, a young doctor, she manages to repulse the would-be invader, but the strain is too much for her health. An interesting story of a spirit with a mission is "The First Night," in which the author of a play returns from the grave to play the lead as it should be played when the star is indisposed. This is better than the average ghost story of "The show must go on."

A stark story of revenge is told in "The Playfellow," in which a man lets his little niece perish in a fire in order to inherit the ancestral home owned by his elder brother. Retribution comes when a fire breaks out once more; seeking to save his own daughter, the man climbs a ladder to reach her at the window. His "daughter" turns out to be his long-dead niece who laughs at him while his own daughter is burned to death in another wing.

"The Corner Shop" is one of the very few successful ghost stories in which the ghost does not frighten, although there is an eerie twist at the end. An antique dealer made his fortune by buying three things, of whose true value their owners were ignorant. Late in life his conscience pricks him and he tries to atone by arranging it so that articles of great value are picked up for a trifle, thus

giving the buyer a chance to be honest in his place. This happens twice, but he dies before it can be accomplished the third time. It is accomplished the third time when a young man discovers that an odd little frog is a valuable piece of jade and tries to return it. He is surprised to learn that the old man who sold it to him has been dead for some time.

An excellent riddle story, one of sheer horror, is told by an ill woman in "The Follower." She explains to the doctor (whose face is averted) that she has been haunted for years by a horribly repulsive man who has made her life miserable. The doctor, in a very solicitous voice, inquires if the man's face were like his, and reveals it-- attracted by a piercing scream, attendants rush in and find the dead woman alone in the room.

MRS. ALFRED BALDWIN

One of the outstanding writers of ghost stories in fin-de-siecle England was Mrs. Alfred Baldwin, whose collection is called The Shadow on the Blind, and Other Ghost Stories. Although the stories are rather old-fashioned in the telling, at least two are superb, and the author is highly adept at the story with an innocent opening that culminates in disaster.

"The Uncanny Bairn" is an interesting story of second-sight, in which a delicate child foresees several deaths, including his father's, but the faculty leaves him as he

gets older. "The Weird of The Walfords" is an interesting story of a man haunted by an heirloom bed. He destroyed the bed because there had been so many deaths on it, but portions of the carving are used to make a cradle and when his infant is placed in it, it dies.

"Many Waters Cannot Quench Love" is a slighter story, in which a weak plot spoils a fine eerie setting. On the same night that a young man drowns in a flood, his sweetheart drowns off the coast of Africa, and her spirit appears to a stranger in the home she hated to leave. Another slender story is "How He Left the Hotel," in which the elevator boy tells how he took down an old gentleman who had been very ill and watched him go out the front door, only to learn a few minutes later that the man had just died in his bed.

"Sir Nigel Otterburne's Case" is a very clever banshee story in which a family death is always heralded by the phantoms of all deceased relatives. In this instance the dying man's daughter sees among this host of spirits that of her brother in India, of whose death she was unaware, and the shock drives her mad. Less outstanding, and perhaps a trifle lengthy is "My Next-Door Neighbor," set in a charity hospital. The narrator sees the man in the bed next to him visited shortly before death by his deceased sweetheart.

The most old-fashioned story in the collection is "The Empty Picture Frame," but it is still a very readable

story for all that. A woman is visited by a distant cousin, and tries to show the visitor a striking resemblance between herself (the visitor) and a family portrait, only to find an empty frame with the portrait vanished. When the guest leaves, the portrait is found to be back in place. The crowning blow is a letter from the cousin saying she had been on the continent and had just received the letter of invitation.

"The Shadow on the Blind" is the standard story of a family that buy and restore an old mansion reputed to be haunted. At a fancy-dress ball the new owner hears groans from the room overhead, and his daughter sees an evil-looking man with a sword in the hall. Outside, her husband sees on a blind the shadows of two men in a struggle. The family discovers that the house was the scene of a violent quarrel in which a young man killed his father with a sword thrust. Needless to say, they leave the house immediately.

"The Real and The Counterfeit" is Mrs. Baldwin's masterpiece, and one of the best ghost stories I have ever read. A young man is visited by a couple of school friends for a holiday. They learn that his home is haunted by the ghost of a monk, the house having been built on the ruins of a Cistercian monastery, and that the ghost has not been seen for forty years. On hearing his host is disappointed never to have seen the phantom monk, one of the guests decides to play a joke on him. He procures a robe and

on the next moonlight night he leaves his room to pace the haunted hall. He sees his reflection in a mirror, but it approaches as he stands still, and when his host and the other friend arrive, they find two monks. One of them glides into the wall, and the other is the corpse of their foolhardy friend.

SABINE BARING-GOULD

Sabine Baring-Gould's A Book of Ghosts possesses variety if not vitality. The ghosts vary from humorous to deadly, from a French waiter to a Neanderthal man, but most of the stories must be ranked as failures. In the first place they are too full of ruminating conversation which adds nothing and detracts much. Second, the reader gets the impression that the author is writing with tongue in cheek and doesn't believe in what he is writing about. This is fatal for a good ghost story. In other words, there are too many stories in the vein of Jerome K. Jerome and John K. Bangs; out of twenty-one stories only about a dozen merit discussion, and that only briefly.

In "Jean Bouchon" a deceased waiter of that name continues to serve and to take tips. He serves only new customers, and when his coffin is opened in later years, it is found to be full of change received as tips. No better is "Colonel Halifax's Ghost Story," in which some bones are kept by a collector under the mistaken impression that they are very old. Their former owner was a murdered

poacher who now haunts the wing in which they are stored.

A revenge ghost appears in "Mustapha." An Englishman causes an Egyptian to break a sacred vow, thereby unintentionally forcing him to cut his throat. In return the Egyptian's ghost comes back to cut the Englishman's throat. "Little Joe Gander" is the most sentimental story in the book; the mother of a feeble-minded child returns from the grave to prevent his sadistic father from beating him. Baring-Gould has one humorous ghost story that is very clever. In "McAlister" the ghost of a soldier appears to a man and asks him to tell a descendant that the wrong upper half of a body is buried in his place. The descendant is Scottish and is too stingy to remedy the situation.

None of the following stories are at all outstanding; they are not even second-rate. "On The Leads" tells of a house haunted by the owner's insane great-grand-aunt who returns from the grave to dance on the roof on windy November nights. "White Flag" is a story of the Boer War and of an Englishman killed by trickery on the part of a Boer family. His mother learns of this and curses them, and they die one by one. She later repents.

In "Aunt Joanna," best of the four, a couple steal the possessions of an old recluse just deceased. They wake in the night to find her closely examining her possessions after which she departs with them. They are later found placed neatly on her grave. "The Leaden Ring" is the story of a heartless girl who jilts several suitors, one of

whom shoots himself. The girl then hears a spectral pistol fired at her ear at the most inopportune times, and finally finds on her hand a leaden ring made from her scorned lover's fatal bullet.

"The Bold Venture" is a very original story but a somewhat complicated one. An old woman hates her daughter-in-law, and both are jealous over the former's grandson (the latter's stepson). The grandmother makes the child a toy boat, but his stepmother eclipses it by a bought one. The disappointed grandmother takes to her bed and soon dies. One morning soon after the stepmother's boat is found shattered, apparently by the one made by the grandmother, and from then on the stepmother sickens and eventually dies.

The best story in the collection is "Pomps and Vanities," a most unusual tale of possession. Twin orphaned sisters are raised by aunts, but one aunt is very puritanical and the niece she raised dies feeling she has never really known life. Her sister, raised by a worldly aunt, is quite accustomed to moving in society. After her sister's death the worldly twin is surprised to find that she cannot remember attending various functions, although she is told that she was seen there. Her sister's ghost finally appears to her and confesses that she "possessed" her to taste the longed-for but never experienced joys of life.

ARTHUR C. BENSON

The ghost stories of Arthur C. Benson fall below those of his brothers in quality; they are collected in the volume

called The Hill of Trouble. These stories suffer from several faults, among which are a too deliberate vagueness, characteristic of the period, and a strong religious flavor. Their chief detractor, however, is that they are all set in the remote past, so remote that it lends that stories an air of medieval legend. All four ghost stories in the collection (eight others are not ghost stories) would be greatly improved if they were transferred to a more nearly contemporary setting.

"The Hill of Trouble" tells of a deeply religious student on vacation. He is warned away from an ancient mound because of evil forces there. He goes there and meets an old Druid priest (or his ghost) who shows him in a crystal his eventual death. On returning to college he is unable to work, so returns to the hill for more information. When the Druid touches him, he finds release in death. In "The Gray Cat" one form taken by a malevolent elemental which haunts an isolated mountain tarn is a gray cat. A young boy goes there in spite of warnings and innocently invites undesirable company. The evil forces almost succeed in claiming a victim until the local priest exorcises them not only from the child but from the tarn.

"The Red Camp" was a Roman outpost. Now a young man has fallen heir to the impoverished estate on which it is located and hunts for the legendary treasure buried there. When he finds it, he is haunted by the ghost of the Roman soldier who guarded it in life. When, at the advice of the

king, he uses the money to build a church, the spirit is satisfied and troubles him no more. Benson also has an interesting story of forces from other worlds in "The Closed Window." The window is in a room in a tower used by an old man for evil arts. Now two of his descendants live in the house, and one of these unbolts the window and vanishes. The other follows and finds the window opens into a strange land where he finds his cousin in a swoon. They manage to escape and board the window up again, but the cousin never recovers from the effects of what he saw.

E. P. BENSON

Edward Frederick Benson is second only to M. R. James in the twentieth century ghost story. His stories show an amazing range and versatility, and there are very few types of ghost story at which he has not tried his hand. While certain of his stories possess a degree of similarity, such tales as "Caterpillars," "The Room In The Tower," "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery," "The Gardener," "Expiation," and "The Face" earn him a secure place among the greatest masters in the field.

Benson's first collection was called The Room in the Tower, and Other Stories. The title story is extremely fine and Edward Wagenknecht declares that "it is one of the few stories in the book that actually makes my own blood run cold."¹

¹ Edward Wagenknecht, The Fireside Book of Ghost Stories, p. 17.

A man dreams repeatedly that he visits a certain house and is given the tower room, which he greatly fears. Some years later he visits some friends who have rented a house for the summer, and recognizes the house of his dream. In his bedroom (the room in the tower) is a portrait of an evil-looking old woman which, when removed, leaves blood on the hands of those who handled it. That night he wakes to find the subject of the portrait bending over him, but he manages to escape from the room. When the coffin of the woman in the portrait is dug up, it is found to be full of blood.

"The Dust-Cloud" was one of the first stories about a ghost car. After a man ran over a child and then crashed into his gatepost, people see the child's ghost beside the road and hear an invisible crash. In the incident described in the story, a car follows a cloud of dust like that made by another car, but the cloud ends abruptly at the closed gates. In "Gavon's Eve," a rather original story, a young man gets the local "witch" to raise the spirit of his drowned sweetheart which drowns him in turn, while the witch is struck by lightning.

"The Confession of Charles Linkworth" deals with a convicted murderer who refuses to confess his crime. After he is executed he calls the prison doctor on the phone and asks him to get the prison pastor to the phone to give him absolution. "At Abdul Ali's Grave" is not on the high level of the previous stories; it is a tale of Egyptian sorcery

in which a corpse is made to tell where treasure is hidden.

Benson uses the werewolf motif to excellent advantage in "The Cat" and "The Shootings of Achnaleish." The former is the story of an artist whose sweetheart threw him over for a richer man, and then commissions him to paint her portrait. He cannot paint her eyes to suit himself until he gets the desired effect by painting the eyes of a cat. When he later destroys the portrait, he is destroyed in turn by the were-cat. Much better is "The Shootings of Achnaleish," a most original story. The inhabitants of a Scottish village possess the faculty for changing themselves into black hares. A member of a party of visiting huntsmen shoots one of these hares, and his guide's mother dies. The hunters are forced to flee.

"The Bus-Conductor" is an indifferent story of second sight in which a man is enabled to avoid a terrible accident. One of Benson's most often reprinted stories is "The Man Who Went Too Far." A man begins to commune with nature, and finally reverts to the point where he can hear Pan. He goes still further, and of course when he succeeds in seeing Pan the result is death. It is very well done, but falls short of Benson's best stories.

Neither "The Other Bed" nor "Outside The Door" possesses any real distinction. The former story deals with a suicide in a hotel room. The ghost of a man who cut his throat appears on the bed in a pool of blood. The latter story is one of an old tragedy which is spectrally re-enacted. Years

ago a girl was brutally murdered, and now her ghost is heard (but never seen) running from her murderers along a hall.

"Caterpillars" is perhaps Benson's most original story, one of striking and horrible malevolence. An Italian villa is discovered to be haunted by disease elementals. Two men, members of a house party, find a new species of caterpillar in the garden and one names it "Cancer Inglesis" after himself and because it has crab-like pincers. It crawls toward him and he steps on it, and that night the other man sees his friend's bed covered with spectral caterpillars. Needless to say, the man dies shortly from cancer.

In "The House with the Brick-Kiln" we have a superb ghost story along more traditional lines. An old house is rented by two men for the fishing season, but they are troubled by noises, lights, and finally by an evil-looking man who peers in the windows. They finally discover that he is the ghost of an artist who formerly occupied the house, and who murdered his wife by roasting her in the adjacent brick-kiln. The story has a gripping atmosphere of real menace.

"How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery" is one of the finest ghost stories ever written, and what is still more rare, it is one of the very few instances where humor does not spoil the gruesome effect of the story. The ghosts of two children, murdered by their uncle for their property, bring swift and terrible death to all who see them. One

courageous girl realizes that this is because all who saw the innocent little ghosts hated and feared them, and she removes the evil by offering them the love and pity they have lacked for two hundred years. It sounds sentimental, but it is most convincingly done. Had Benson written only this, he would still rank as one of the great modern masters of the ghost story.

Benson's second collection, Visible and Invisible, falls short of his other two, and contains only two really successful stories. Among his finer efforts is "Negotium Perambulens," a story of an elemental with an atmosphere of true terror. This "spirit" visits only people who, by leading wicked lives, desecrates the nature of their home, a house built from the ruins of a church. The remains of a painting from the church show a hideous monster, something like a gigantic slug, which is represented as sent by God to punish sinners. Two deaths are believed locally to have been caused by this monster, and its third visit is witnessed and told by the narrator of the tale.

Two less successful stories are "At The Farmhouse" and "In The Tube." The former is a psychological study of a man whose life has been ruined by a drunken wife. He finally gets up nerve enough to strangle her, and then sets fire to the house. A last-minute check shows her body is not where he left it, and as he rushes out, horror-stricken, her corpse bars the exit and causes him to perish miserably in the fire he set himself. "In The Tube" is told by a

man of great psychic sensitivity. He sees a slight acquaintance throw himself under a train, only to meet him alive later at a party. He later finds the man does commit suicide in the manner in which he "saw" him do so.

Benson is fond of using the seance as a vehicle for his ghosts and employs this method in several stories. "Machaon" is the poorest of these; it naively suggests that the spirit of Machaon (Asclepias) comes thousands of miles and years from ancient Greece to modern England to warn a man at a seance that his old servant should be treated for cancer with X-rays! This remarkable spectre speaks English as well as his native tongue. "Inscrutable Decrees" is not much better; the ghost is of secondary importance. A ghost comes to a seance to warn a man that his intended bride is a sadist and watched her (the ghost) drown without trying to save her. The story is mainly concerned with other evidences of cruelty; the ghost is merely the last straw.

"The Gardener" introduces a ouija board and a more gruesome ghost than usual. A young couple rent a house and have a friend visit them, but every time they pass the deserted gardener's cottage they notice a man lurking there. This figure begins to appear at the main house, and knocks and footsteps are also heard. They learn from a visitor that years ago the gardener killed his wife in a fit of jealous rage and then cut his throat. The ouija board reveals that the person "speaking" is coming to find his

wife. The final scene in which the gardner manifests himself in the parlor, bloody gash and all, is wonderfully done.

There is also a very slight piece, "Mr. Tilly's Seance," in which we learn how that gentleman feels when he is run over, and how he attends a seance in spirit which he had planned on attending in person. Another story possessing little merit is "Roderick's Story." A man who is expected momentarily to die goes to stay in the room occupied by the woman he loved. The story ends with her spirit coming for him at the time of his death, but the supernatural element is strictly secondary.

"Mrs. Amworth" is less original than "The Room In The Tower," but is nevertheless an excellent vampire story. The setting, a small cluster of old brick houses in an English village, is one of the best in eerie fiction, and could be used as a "classic example." Mrs. Amworth is descended from a family of known vampires, and when she returns to her family home the village is at once plagued by a strange sickness, of which the chief symptom seems to be anemia. This malady does not cease when Mrs. Amworth is struck by a car, nor does it until a driven stake sends her to rest.

The stories in Benson's third collection, Spook Stories, are more consistently perfect than in the first two. There is only one really inferior story in the twelve--"Spinach," an absurd jumble of fraudulent mediums, seances, and an absent-minded ghost.

There are three more stories which are not exactly poor, but which are not Benson at his best. In "Reconciliation" a house is haunted by the ghost of the man who lost it by gambling. The haunting ceases when one of his descendants marries a descendant of the man who won it from him. "The Corner House" is the story of a woman who hates her husband (because he lost his money) until her mind is unhinged. When she murders him in a fit of rage, after making his life miserable for years, his ghost returns to take a terrible revenge. "Corstophine" is a story of second sight, in which a man has a premonition of an approaching train wreck. He takes another train and thereby saves his life.

"Bagnell Terrace" is on the often used theme of an ordinary English house used for the worship of ancient Egyptian gods. When new tenants move in, they experience unpleasant psychic residues left in the house. This story is better than the average one of this type. In "A Tale of an Empty House" a horrid murder which occurred years ago is re-enacted before two vacationers who seek refuge in a deserted house during a storm.

"Home, Sweet Home" is a very clever story of a revenge ghost in which an elderly woman is murdered by a servant. Her phantom returns to play her favorite tune on the piano until the murderer is unable to stand it any longer and commits suicide. Benson has an interesting story of an elemental in "And No Bird Sings." A certain tract of woodland is shunned by birds, beasts, and human beings. Newcomers

to the neighborhood seek to discover a reason for this and for the awful smell of decay in the place. They find the wood is haunted by a malevolent slug-like thing which preys on all living creatures, and finally succeeds in ridding the wood of its presence.

"The Temple" concerns two friends who rent a quaint cottage, but find it is shunned by local people. They discover the house was built in the center of a Druid circle and that the altar stone forms part of their kitchen floor. Tragedy is narrowly averted when one of the men almost falls a victim to forces from the past which seek to sacrifice him on their ancient altar. In "Naboth's Vineyard" a retired lawyer forces a man to leave a charming house so that he can buy it, and the ousted man dies of a heart attack. The new owner doesn't enjoy his new home long, for the previous owner returns from the grave to dispute possession and ultimately to kill the usurper.

Benson is the author of a superb riddle story, "The Face." A woman is haunted by a nightmare in which a man's face appears; she finally identifies it at a portrait gallery as a man who lived two hundred years ago. On the verge of a nervous breakdown, she goes to a seaside village to rest and finds the man's grave at an abandoned church on a cliff overlooking the sea. Frantic, she wires her husband to come for her, but another "man" comes-- They trace her footprints to the old church which is found buried under a landslide into the sea.

In "Expiation" Benson has achieved a masterpiece. The atmosphere of impending disaster and the well-sustained suspense place this story in the first rank. When two friends rent a country house, tension mounts as the telephone rings unaccountably and ladders and nooses appear and disappear in the garden. A horrible climax is reached when one of the friends is left alone at night and forced to watch a gruesome suicide spectrally re-enacted in the garden. The use of flashes of lightning and the alternate periods of darkness is a most effective touch.

ROBERT HUGH BENSON

The Reverend Robert Hugh Benson staunchly upholds the literary tradition of his family with a very well written book of ghost stories aptly titled A Mirror of Shalott. The frame for these stories is that of a group of priests and a visitor (Benson) who agree to relate their experiences in the uncanny. Several of the priests bring friends who have tales they think would be enjoyed, and the stories are very successful as a whole. However, they are very strongly permeated with Catholicism and are occasionally marred by explanations of various rituals; one story, "Mr. Bosanquet's Tale," is less a ghost story than a theological discussion.

In "Monsignor Maxwell's Tale" a staunch Catholic is appalled to learn his brother is about to leave the church, and he offers himself in his place. The offer is accepted, for he goes into a trance, and upon awakening is a different

man, with no faith whatever. He shortly dies of brain congestion. "Father Meuron's Tale" is a startling story of exorcism: two priests on a tropical island are called to rid a native woman of an evil spirit. The spirit is invisible and cannot be seen to leave the woman, but some meat placed on a near-by table suddenly corrupts into worms before their eyes.

Less coherent is "Father Brent's Tale," in which a small boy is psychic. He claims to see three ships (invisible to others) sail up the inlet beside the house. The part that cannot be explained is that something caused a large wave to form just then--what was it? Also rather clumsily handled is "The Father Rector's Tale." A man leads an evil and depraved life, but retains his faith. He makes a great effort and his evil self leaves him, but his life had been wicked for so long that little else is left. He ages fifty years within one year and dies soon after.

"Father Girdlestone's Tale" is the least satisfactory in the book on several counts. It is much too long, the evil spirit is never made sufficiently clear for plausibility, and too much time is devoted to the reasons for certain Catholic rituals. The plot itself is quite thin, some evil force tries to drive the narrator away from a small mining town but is overcome. Far superior, and one of the best in the collection is "Father Bianchi's Tale." The priest says some masses to satisfy an old peasant woman who claims

that she repeatedly sees a man's phantom standing in the church. As the priest finishes the masses, he inadvertently looks toward the spot where the woman said she saw the apparition, and there it is.

"Father Jenk's Tale" has an air of the miraculous about it. A family move into an old house built on the ruins of a priory. Because of an ancient curse all the sons of families living in the house sicken and die, and now the present owner's son falls ill. When the priest prays to the patron saint of the old priory, the boy recovers. A more terrifying story of a diabolic spirit is "Father Martin's Tale," in which a priest is summoned to give the sacraments to a dying woman. Before he can leave, her brother comes telling him she has recovered and there is no need to come. The priest goes anyway, and is just in time; of course the woman's brother had never left the house. This story has a gripping atmosphere of real menace.

The outstanding story in the book, and certainly the most original, is "Father Macolesfield's Tale." A dying man has a tenacious hold on life and fights death up to the very last. The priest sees his spirit attempt to return from the grave three times along the path on which his coffin was carried from the house, and each attempt is weaker than the one before. He first tries to return in his own likeness, but stumbles and falls; and when the priest reaches the spot, there is no one there. The second attempt is made in the form of a hare, which disappears when shot and

causes great terror among the dogs. The last attempt takes the form of a column of spiraling leaves, like a little whirlwind, certainly a novel form of haunting!

Less distinguished are "Father Stein's Tale," in which the narrator was reformed by a dream, and "Mr. Percival's Tale," in which a visitor to a coal mine sees the ghosts of four miners killed there twenty years ago. A sort of psychic residue is experienced in "My Own Tale." No one is able to remain very long in an old chateau because of the intense feeling of loneliness that lingers there.

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD

The work of Algernon Blackwood is more uneven in quality than perhaps that of any other writer of ghost stories since the turn of the century. He has some dozen stories that are absolutely first-rate and many more that one can only rank as failures, but this is to be expected when one's output is so voluminous. Like Walter de la Mare, Blackwood is occasionally guilty of being too deliberately vague and dreamy. This mysticism is all very well in its place, but it can spoil a good ghost story very quickly. Often one receives the impression of artificiality. Occasionally some of these stories have an almost fairy-tale quality about them, but they are seldom altogether successful. However, "May-Day Eve" and "The Trod" are minor masterpieces of their kind. Blackwood's greatest fault is that when he once gets a good thing, he works it to death. There is so much similarity between so many of his stories that the

reader cannot hope to distinguish one from another after reading them. It is hard to evaluate his work as a whole because of this very fault, for so many of the stories seem flat and uninspired. But Blackwood's mastery of the elemental ghost story and an occasional masterpiece like "The Listener" earn him a place only slightly below that of M. R. James and E. F. Benson.

Blackwood's most consistently successful book is John Silence, in which five tales are linked in the person of Dr. Silence, a gifted clairvoyant who devotes his life to helping people in psychic distress. Had all Blackwood's work been on the high level of these five "cases," he would without doubt be the greatest figure in modern supernatural fiction.

In the first case, "A Psychological Invasion," a humorist can no longer write anything but obscene blasphemies after moving into a certain house. Dr. Silence spends a night there and dissipates the evil in the house. It was given its impetus by an infamous woman whose house had stood on that site a century before; the evil had accumulated in intensity down through the years. Especially interesting are the effects of the phenomena on the two pets the doctor brings to the house with him, a cat and a dog.

The second case, "Ancient Sorceries," is often found in the anthologies. A man stays some time in a French village and is irresistibly drawn into the subtle atmosphere of the place. The villagers are reincarnations and

descendants of a cult of witches that flourished there centuries before; they possess the questionable gift of changing themselves into cats. The man falls in love with a lovely young witch-girl and is almost led to destruction by her.

"The Nemesis of Fire" is an interesting story of a fire elemental and very original. An English household is disturbed when the collector-owner procures an Egyptian mummy who had had a supernatural guardian set over his tomb. The guardian causes the house to become unbearably hot, starts hidden fires, and makes smoke hover over the grounds. The infallible Dr. Silence soon sets things straight.

The doctor is called on desperately in "Secret Worship," a terrifying case of Satanism. A former pupil of a private German school returns to visit there thirty years later and is made welcome by the teachers, some of whom he seems to recognize. A horrid mistake is gradually revealed, for they think he has come to join them in devil-worship, and Dr. Silence arrives on the scene just in time. When the man comes to, he is lying in the ruins of the school which was burned years before by villagers because of the awful practices of the inmates.

"The Camp of the Dog" is a werewolf story and the only poor one in the book. A man on a camping trip loves a girl in the party but is avoided by her. He unconsciously projects his frustrated desire into the form of a wolf which prowls about her tent at night. When the girl returns his love, his astral self no longer prowls.

Three of the ten stories in The Empty House are not ghost stories, and of the remaining seven only one is really superior. This is "Keeping His Promise," in which two friends made a pact years before that the first to die would appear to the other. One visits the other, but his rasping breathing is still audible after he apparently left. Only then does the other friend remember their pact. None of the other stories are really poor, but they are not Blackwood at his best. Perhaps least successful is "A Haunted Island," in which a camper with second sight "sees" himself scalped by Indians.

A more orthodox but not outstanding ghost story is "The Empty House," which falls far below the level of "The Listener." Two people in search of thrills investigate a haunted house and witness the re-enactment of an old murder. Their curiosity is not only satisfied but quenched. A pair of amateur investigators also figure in "With Intent to Steal," a less satisfactory story. Many people have committed suicide in an old barn, and now one of the two investigators finds himself possessed by an overwhelming desire to hang himself. His friend saves him just in time.

Blackwood is fond of setting his stories in obscure rooming-houses, unfamiliar to those who experience the haunting. "A Case of Eavesdropping" results in a man's hearing a murder committed in the room next to his. Upon investigation he finds the room is empty and has been so for years. In "Smith: An Episode in a Lodging-House,"

Smith is possessed of so much vitality that he is completely irresistible to the vampirish familiar of the sorcerer in the room beneath him. A more spiritual story is "The Wood of the Dead." A saintly old man claimed that he saw visions of the dead in a certain wood. After his death his own spirit appears whenever there is a death in the village.

Pan's Garden, another collection, contains many stories based on some aspect of nature, most of which fall rather flat. A sea elemental lures a man to a watery grave in "The Sea Fit," while a snow elemental attempts the death of another in "The Glamour of the Snow," both rather indifferent stories although possessed of a certain originality.

A still poorer tale is "The Attic," in which the spirit of a child just dead comes to release an unhappy spirit that had haunted the attic for years. Not quite so maudlin is "The Destruction of Smith," a story of second sight. Smith sees the thing he loves most, the town he founded, destroyed by fire--it kills him. A guardian spirit appears in "Special Delivery." A man is compelled to follow a beckoning figure out of his Alpine hotel, and the hotel is shortly buried by an avalanche.

The best story in the book and one of Blackwood's most original tales is called "The Transfer." It concerns two psychic "vampires," one of whom is a man who draws the vigor of mind and vitality from all he comes in contact with; the other is a barren piece of earth where nothing will grow.

After the man falls on this starved piece of ground, he no longer possesses his stolen vigor, and the once-barren ground riots into luxurious growth.

Day and Night Stories contains several tales of the supernatural, but none of them represent Blackwood's best work. In "The Tryst" a man returns from making his fortune to claim a sweetheart who has waited for years. She meets him at the gate and tells him she can't be his now, but that she will be soon. He later learns that she was killed when the house burned down several weeks before. An atmosphere permeated by evil occurs in "The Occupant of the Room," a favorite with anthologists. A man takes a hotel room whose last occupant mysteriously vanished, and finds he is possessed by a strong urge to commit suicide. Of course the former occupant is finally found in the locked closet where she had hung herself.

"The Other Wing" is a trite story of a small boy who dares venture into a closed wing to return a favorite cane to his dead grandfather. No one believes him, but the cane cannot be found. Years later the grandfather's ghost repays the favor by rousing him in time to save the house from being burned. "The Tradition" is a mediocre banshee story in which residents of a certain street hear hoofbeats and see a large white horse go by whenever a death is about to take place. In "Transition" Blackwood uses the over-worked plot of the man who is killed (by a car) and not realizing it, goes on home where he cannot understand why his wife and children

pay no attention to him.

Three of Blackwood's finest stories appear in The Listener, the title story of which is the best ghost story he ever wrote. This is a horribly sinister tale of a man who lodges in an eerie old house and gradually senses he is being watched and spied upon. He begins to dream of a horrid being who haunts his sleep and then, almost imperceptibly at first, begins to haunt his waking hours also. He is terrified to find after almost unbearable suspense that the house was occupied for years by a leper who finally took his own life.

Also well worthy of inclusion in the anthologies and often reprinted in them is "The Willows," perhaps Blackwood's best known elemental story. Two young men boating on the Danube in flood time stop for the night on some sand islands thickly overgrown with willows. They soon feel that they are trespassing in a forbidden region and that the forces hostile to them are centered in the willows. This is a finely managed tale of mounting suspense. Another story of the unleashed forces behind nature waiting to be set free by careless mortals is "May Day Eve," in which a man loses his way in the hills and falls in with some very strange company. These beings that lurk in wait for a break in the veil are admirably suggested, with just enough said and the right amount left unsaid.

"The Dance of Death" is a variation on the theme of "Transition," but much better. A man seeks all evening to

dance with an elusive girl, but it is only after a fatal heart attack that he succeeds. "The Woman's Ghost Story" is unbelievable and must therefore rank as a failure. A woman investigator in a haunted house is asked by the ghost not to be afraid of him, but to love him. When she does, he is no longer earthbound.

A modern collection that reprints several of the stories already discussed is called Tales of the Uncanny and Supernatural. It includes a rather lurid story of voodoo revenge, "The Doll," and two stories in which people are projected into other astral planes, "Entrance and Exit" and "The Pike-staff Case." Neither has much to recommend it. "The Man Who Was Milligan" is an unsuccessful riddle story in which a man is gradually obsessed by a Chinese print. He finally sees the boatman in the print coming for him; and the next thing he knows, he is in China.

A werewolf story leaving much to be desired is "Running Wolf," in which a young Indian slays a wolf (his tribe's totem) and is changed into a wolf as punishment. "The Terror of the Twins" is an unpleasant little story of an evil half-mad man who resents the fact that his wife bore twins. After death his hatred is still strong enough for him to return on their twenty-first birthday and cause the younger twin to lose his mind and vitality which is then transferred to his elder brother.

Blackwood has two rather pedestrian ghost stories called "The Deferred Appointment" and "The Decoy." In the

former a man promises to have his picture taken but dies before doing so. A local photographer is then visited by a man who sits for a picture and then vanishes. Naturally, when the picture is developed, no one is there. "The Decoy" suggests Edith Wharton's "Afterwards." A man, his wife, and her lover spend the night in a haunted house without knowing what form the ghost will take. It takes the form of the betrayed husband long enough to decoy the lovers away so that he can hang himself.

"The Empty Sleeve" is an interesting story of thought projection in which a musician craves an antique violin in the collection of a connoisseur. The collector wakes to see some sort of beast prowling about his cases and strikes off one of its legs before it escapes. The next time he sees the musician, that gentleman has lost one of his arms. A somewhat slighter piece is "Accessory Before the Fact," a story of second sight. A man on a walking tour "sees" himself murdered and robbed, but feels somehow out of place. He recognizes the murderers at an inn, and later reads that a traveller was found robbed and slain just where he had had his "vision."

"The Trod" represents Blackwood at his best. This is a story of those mysterious regions, not quite Fairyland, overhanging our world, in which Blackwood excels. In a remote section of the country there is an ancient track called the "trod," on which it is considered unsafe to walk because people have been known to vanish on it. A visitor to an

estate overlapping part of the trod saves his host's niece from joining those who walk the trod, among whom is her mother who disappeared years ago and who calls her.

Peter Penzoldt has dedicated his treatise to Blackwood, calling him "The greatest of all" and taking umbrage at H. P. Lovecraft's more objective observations: "Mr. Blackwood's lesser work is marred by several defects, such as ethical didacticism, occasional insipid whimsicality, the flatness of benignant supernaturalism, and a too free use of the trade jargon of modern occultism."² I am quite ready to admit Blackwood's greatness, but I can also see the justification for each of Lovecraft's charges. At any rate, "The Listener" and "The Willows" remain among the best dozen or so ghost stories in the language.

ELIZABETH BOWEN

Elizabeth Bowen has to her credit at least six short ghost stories, but only two of these have any great distinction. "The Cheery Soul" and "Green Holly" must be classed as failures because of vagueness and understatement. However, "The Demon Lover" is one of the best riddle ghost stories in the language.

Of the four ghost stories included in Ivy Gripped The Steps, the best by far is "The Demon Lover," in which Miss Bowen creates a fine atmosphere of horror and suspense.

² Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 234.

A woman visits her London home alone and finds a letter from an old lover killed in World War I, saying that according to their bargain this is the day. A flashback hints at the nature of this promise, to which she was untrue and married another. Her terror is increased by the fact that she is unable to remember exactly what the promise entailed. The dead lover does come for her in one of the most terrifying climaxes in weird fiction. Much less successful is "Green Holly," which tells of some workers stationed in a country house. One of them, a bachelor, begins to see the ghost of a lovely woman. We are then told that the ghost sees in him a long-dead lover, killed on her account. Unfortunately, the ghost's emotions fail to be convincing.

Very little better is "The Cheery Soul," in which the supernatural element is so vaguely suggested as to fail to scare the reader. A man visits some new acquaintances but finds them away. He finds notes and other evidences of a departing cook, only to learn that his friends were spies and had fled, and that there had not been a cook in the house since one drowned herself the previous year. "Pink May" could be explained as a guilty conscience on the part of the narrator, but it is a better story than the preceding two. Shortly after moving into a new home a woman begins to be unfaithful to her husband. Every time she dresses for a date with her lover she feels an intense atmosphere of disapproval. Also, little things go wrong such as

rumpling of flowers on the hat she planned to wear. The story is well told, although no reason for this phenomenon is ever offered--one feels a little cheated.

The other two stories appear in Cynthia Asquith's second and third Ghost Books respectively. In "The Claimant" a man and wife buy a lovely old house which is sold to settle an estate. They have lived there long enough to love the place when they get a letter from a man who claims the place was left to him and he is coming to claim it. He is killed in a plane crash en route, but this doesn't stop him. His ghost succeeds in getting rid of the couple by scaring the wife and killing the husband.

Miss Bowen's best-contrived story, "Hand in Glove," lacks the appalling terror of "The Demon Lover." Two impoverished girls in frantic search of husbands mistreat an invalid aunt and steal her clothes to remodel for themselves. Finally a marriage hinges on getting into the last trunk, to which the aunt has the key. By neglect at the right moment she is gotten rid of, permanently. Her niece takes the key and races up to the attic to raid the trunk, but the aunt is there ahead of her--they are buried in the same grave.

MARJORIE BOWEN

Mrs. Gabrielle Margaret Vere Campbell Long, writing under the pen-names of Joseph Shearing and Marjorie Bowen, has given us several fine ghost stories and at least one that is well-nigh perfect. I have not succeeded in tracing

her collection, The Last Bouquet, Some Twilight Tales, and the following stories, with the exception of "They Found My Grave," are found in Grace Latouche and The Warringtons and The Bishop of Hell. Edward Wagenknecht calls Miss Bowen "one of the most amazingly prolific and delightful storytellers in English literary history."³ However, Peter Penzoldt includes the "disgusting stories in The Bishop of Hell" (with the one exception of "The Crown Derby Plate") in "The worst type of horror tale: that containing descriptions of sadism."⁴

"Keeksies" is a horrid little story of a drunken man who intrudes on his rival's wake and, after throwing his body into a clump of keeksies (hemlocks), dresses himself in the shroud to play a joke on the mourners. Since his place has been usurped, the corpse goes to take his usurper's place as husband of the woman they both loved. Miss Bowen also has a none-too-successful humorous ghost story called "Raw Material," in which a miserly old aunt is murdered by her niece and nephew for her money. Holding no grudge, she frequently appears to them and tells them what a fool she was not to enjoy it.

In "The Avenging of Ann Leete" we have an elaborately constructed story narrated by a man who has second sight. His sweetheart was loved by another man who, frustrated, murders her. The narrator sees his beloved several times

³ Wagenknecht, p. 264.

⁴ Penzoldt, p. 179.

after her death and thus discovers her body. Even more poignant in tone is "Miss Lucy's Two Visitors," an almost poetic account of a girl's first love. Lucy is slowly recovering from a serious illness; so she stays at home while the others go for a picnic. It is love at first sight when the handsome nephew of a neighbor calls, but this happiness is short-lived when she sees a second visitor on the drive. The maid finds no one at the door and upon returning to her mistress finds that the second visitor was Death.

Miss Bowen's masterpiece is "The Crown Derby Plate." A woman bought a set of china with one plate missing at the sale of a connoisseur's estate and years later, while visiting in the vicinity, she decides to visit the owner of the house and see if the plate has ever turned up. The owner is very eccentric, has a fine collection of china, and gives her the lost plate. As she begins to notice an unpleasant smell, she takes her leave. At a cottage near by she stops for directions and learns that the house is unoccupied because the old collector came back from the grave to claim his treasured china and drove the new owner away.

Under the name of Joseph Shearing, Mrs. Long has written the finest story of a seance that I have ever read, "They Found My Grave." A woman at a seance becomes fascinated by the voice of a bragging Frenchman. He boasts that he has a marvelous tomb covered with wreaths left by pilgrims.

This is enlarged upon until she investigates and finds his tomb is small and completely unkept. When she returns to the next seance, she is greeted with fawning praise by the voice, which furiously warns her she is doing a foolish thing as she starts to expose him. She afterwards feels a momentary pang of regret that she has deprived the spirit of what was perhaps his only pleasure. She is so engrossed that when the voice suddenly screams in her ear as she descends the steps she trips, falls, and breaks her neck.

Several of the stories in The Bishop of Hell have been discussed under Grace Latouche and The Warringtons, but there remain five others that come within the scope of this paper. Two of these are of second sight, and neither is entirely successful. In "The Fair Hair of Ambrosine" that lady is murdered. Her lover dreams he will be killed in the same house by her same murderer, and it all eventually comes true. The narrator of "Ann Mellor's Lover" is clairvoyant and relives an old tragedy. Ann Mellor is abducted by her lover and says so; when she realizes it means the gallows for him, she tries to retract, but it is too late.

The ghost is a secondary element in the title story, in which a man's viciousness earns him the title of the "Bishop of Hell" (he is an ordained clergyman). When he is finally killed in a duel, he returns from his "bishopric" to prove the existence of that place to a friend. The emotion aroused here is horror rather than terror. "Florence Flannery" is an unbelievable tale of a woman who is supposed

to have lived for over three hundred years. During this time she is pursued by a cast-off lover's phantom in the form of a fish, which finally kills her.

A much better story is "The Housekeeper," which is the outstanding tale in the book. A man murders his wife (an immaculate housekeeper) so that he can remarry for money. The first wife returns in the spirit to kill him with kindness, making him so comfortable and keeping the house so clean that it eventually drives him to confess his crime. The story might be improved were it set in the present rather than in the early eighteenth century.

RHODA BROUGHTON

The voluminous writings of Rhoda Broughton include a book of ghost stories, Twilight Stories, first published in 1879. This is to be expected because Miss Broughton was a niece of one of the great masters of the ghost story, Sheridan Le Fanu. Her collection is only ninety pages long and contains five tales, one of which is not a ghost story.

Two of the stories concern dreams of impending death which come true. In "Poor Pretty Bobby" a girl dreams that her sailor-lover comes to her one night, but she later finds that he was drowned at almost the exact time he appeared to her. Much better is "Behold It Was A Dream," in which a lady visiting friends in Ireland dreams that they are murdered by a robber. She warns them, but they refuse to listen, even after she recognizes the murderer of the dream

as one of their servants. Unnerved, she is forced to return home, and there in a newspaper she reads of the brutal murder she had foreseen.

"The Man With The Nose" is a riddle story: a man's wife is afraid of a sinister man who follows them. He scoffs at his wife's fears and leaves her for a short time, only to find on his return that she left in the company of the strange man and is never seen again.

The most superior story in the collection has the rather ponderous title of "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth." This is also a riddle story, but the inexplicable is handled with such restraint that the denouement comes as a great shock. The story is told in the form of a correspondence between a woman at the seashore and a friend who is renting a supposedly haunted house in London. The lady in the town is disturbed when a maid sees "it" and goes into violent insanity without being able to relate her experience. The lady is still somewhat skeptical; but when a close friend offers to investigate, she tries in vain to dissuade him. We are never told what he sees, either, but only how it affected him. The result is fatal, and the lady is forced to give up her charming home.

JOHN BUCHAN

John Buchan has three stories of the supernatural in his The Runagates Club, and one of these is very poor, one fair, and one is excellent. The poor one is "The Green

Wildebeest," a story of African witch doctors and their curses. The plot had little to recommend it to start with, but repetition has worn it so thin it palls, "Skule Skerry" is a better story slightly similar in tone to R. A. Cram's "The Dead Valley." A man visits a small uninhabited island off the Hebrides. He is warned that it is uncanny but finds for himself that he is in a place where the veil wears thin.

Best of the three stories and almost worthy of M. R. James is "The Wind in the Portico." A man finds relics of Roman worship on his estate and becomes interested in them. He finally recreates a temple to house his altar and other finds, only to discover the god has actually taken possession. An attempt to remove him brings down fearful vengeance. This is a very well-written and exceedingly effective story.

A. M. BURRAGE

One of the more outstanding modern English ghost story writers is Alfred M. Burrage, whose collected tales are published in Some Ghost Stories. This collection includes three really first-rate stories, and there is not a single actually poor story in the lot.

Two of the stories revolve around a gypsy curse. "Footprints" is the story of a gypsy girl whose baby dies from want because her husband was disinherited. She sends the baby's spirit to its unrelenting grandfather; and we

are not told what takes place at the interview, but the old man is found dead. The other story, "Furze Hollow," is concerned with a whole band of gypsy ghosts; the gypsies were executed because it was believed that they burned a local manor. A hundred years later, in accord with their dying curse, they return and the manor is burned once more.

A third story dealing with a curse is "Between The Minute and The Hour," which is strikingly original. A man who refuses food to some beggars is told by one of them that his time is between the minute and the hour (just before midnight). At that time he is impelled to go outside. He finds he is now in prehistoric times and sees dinosaurs. The second night the scene has changed and he falls in love with a coy belle of the Regency. The third night he finds himself chased by wolves, which can run faster than he can. A more orthodox ghost story is "The Room Over The Kitchen," in which a man is warned not to take a certain room in an inn. He later finds that the man who warned him died from fright in that room years before as the result of a practical joke.

In "Wrastler's End" according to local legend an athlete was crippled while wrestling, and the victor then proceeded to steal his betrothed. The cripple warns him he will never marry her, and then commits suicide. A witness later reports seeing the hated rival grapple with the crippled man's ghost, which throws him over a cliff. Burrage also has an interesting riddle story, "The Wrong

Station." A man has a heart attack on the train and while unconscious his astral self gets off at a strange place, is met by a strange woman who tells him to have patience and finally puts him back on the train. He cannot decide whether the experience was from a previous existence or a preview of one to come.

A slighter story is "The Summer House," in which a neglected child feels a loving presence in an abandoned summer house. He learns when grown that it was the favorite retreat of a young girl who met a tragic death. "The Yellow Curtains" is a complicated and rather unconvincing story of a man who visits two childhood friends in their dream house. He does not know that the "husband" was killed before the wedding could take place, and that at the time of his visit the "wife" was in a coma miles away. In "Nobody's House" the caretaker tells a visitor how the previous owner was jailed for shooting a friend, but his mind went blank and he couldn't remember what happened. The visitor is the former owner, come to see if the place will refresh his memory. It is fully restored by the murdered man's ghost (whom he killed) and who now takes his revenge.

A ghost with a purpose haunts "Browdean Farm," and his purpose is to prove himself innocent of a murder for which he was executed. This he accomplishes when the new tenants see the ghost of his supposed victim hang herself. This story is vividly and imaginatively told and is very

successful. Another original, if slightly thinner, story is called "The Gambler's Room." Two friends, one a model of virtue, sleep in a haunted room, and in the night one wakes to see his virtuous friend playing cards with three evil-looking phantoms. The next morning the novice gamester said he slept all night, but from that time on he is a confirmed gambler and loses everything he can get his hands on.

The two outstanding stories in the book are entirely different from each other, and both are very original. "Playmates" is the moving story of a little girl brought up in a lonely house by elderly people. Her guardian eventually discovers she is visited by the ghosts of several little girls who died when an epidemic swept what was then a boarding-school, and sends her off to school where she can find live playmates. This story and the next one are written with a very admirable restraint.

The haunting is actively malevolent in "The Green Scarf," Burrage's masterpiece and one of the best ghost stories I have ever read. A betrayal and subsequent tragedy occurred in an old house during the Protectorate when a green scarf was waved as a signal to attack. When this scarf is found and waved again in jest, it unleashes forces that have lain dormant for centuries (an excellent device). That night the house is besieged again, but by phantom soldiers, and the results would have been surely fatal had not the two occupants managed to reach the consecrated chapel under the roof.

JOHN COLLIER

John Collier is the author of many very clever stories somewhat in the tradition of Saki. However, a clever story and a good ghost story are seldom one and the same. There is also an occasional similarity to the work of H. G. Wells. This cleverness results in at least three stories, none of which are really good stories of the supernatural; all are found in the collection Presenting Moonshine. "Rope Enough" is based on the Indian rope trick; those who manage to reach the top of the rope find themselves in a beautiful land of pleasures. "Bottle Party" is a novel variation on the theme of the imp in the bottle. "Old Acquaintance" tells how a Frenchman thinks he sees his just deceased wife on a spree with a rival, but when he returns home her corpse is gone.

A much better and certainly more original story is called "Bird of Prey." Some newlyweds have an old parrot which lays an egg after being attacked on the porch one night. The parrot hatched from the egg is coal black and very unprepossessing. The bird repeats a fictitious conversation to the jealous husband, causing him to believe his wife is unfaithful; so he shoots himself. The diabolic parrot then seizes the dying man's soul and makes off with it.

Collier's best known story of the supernatural is "Thus I Refute Beelzy," which has an excellent surprise ending. A child invents an imaginary playmate and persists in believing in him in spite of his father's threats. One day the father is goaded too far and sends the boy to his

room to await a whipping, but the boy says his playmate will protect him. The mother hears a frightful scream and when she reaches the scene, all that's left of her husband is one foot. . . .

These same stories, with the exception of "Bottle Party," may also be found in The Touch of Nutmeg.

A. E. COPPARD

Fearful Pleasures, by A. E. Coppard, does not contain a single ghost story that is really outstanding. Coppard admits deriving many of his inspirations from folk-tales, and his stories often have an aura of Fairyland accordingly. The reader also often receives the impression that the author sat down to write a story with no definite plan in mind and just wrote whatever occurred to him as he went along. Neither of Coppard's best known stories, "Adam and Eve and Pinch Me" and "Clorinda Walks In Heaven," fall within the scope of this paper.

"Old Martin" is based on the superstition that the last person to be buried has to wait on all the others in the graveyard until the next interment. An old man's beloved niece dies^{and} he is driven frantic at the thought of her serving three old drunkards who died lately, until the death of the vicar restores his peace of mind. "The Kisstruck Bogie" is a ridiculous farce. The reader is asked to believe that a ghost is forced to leave off haunting because he had an affair with a lady ghost and has to marry her.

"Gone Away" is a riddle story and much better. A man and wife are travelling through France with a friend when they stop in a small town to buy a newspaper, first the friend disappears and then the wife. When the man goes to the police, the car disappears and he is so incoherent they believe him insane. When the doctor comes to examine him, he finds the man has disappeared. "Ahoy, Sailor Boy" is an unusual story in which a sailor thinks a girl is trying to pick him up. It turns out the girl is a ghost and vanishes.

Coppard's best ghost story is "Polly Morgan." An old lady believes she is visited every night by the spirit of a lover, and her niece tries to cure the "delusion" by nailing the old lady's window shut. Now that the ghost can't enter, the old lady pines away and dies. When the niece's sweetheart is killed, she spends her time in waiting for a visit from his spirit, hoping she will be as lucky as her aunt.

M. P. DARE

One of the most successful collections of ghost stories in recent years is by Marcus Paul Dare, and it is aptly called Unholy Relics. In the introduction Dare says that all thirteen stories are fiction, but based on anecdotes that have come within his ken as an antiquary. Although two or three of the stories are perhaps a trifle thin, they are all well-written, and at least two are spine-tinglers.

Moreover, Dare has successfully used the device of tying the stories together in the form of the experiences of two bachelor antiquaries.

The title story takes place in the crypt of the Cathedral of Toulouse, where the narrator, an Englishman, has gone for purposes of research. While accidentally locked in the crypt he attempts to steal the bones of an English saint with the idea of restoring them to Britain. He is foiled in the attempt by other inhabitants of the crypt who make things exciting for him. As he crawls out the next morning, he notices a legend over the door: "Vigilant are they who guard the place." A much slighter piece is "The Haunted Drawers," which is somewhat marred by an overly jocular style of narration. In it a spirit is earthbound because of some letters hidden in an old desk which reveal that he deserted the woman he had ruined.

"The Haunted Helmet" is another tale which might be improved were it not for the levity with which it is related. When the antiquaries buy a suit of armor, they are disturbed to see the helmet detach itself and float about the room. They later learn that it was removed from a tomb to complete the set. The most elaborately laid story in the collection, and also the longest, is "The Demoniac Goat." In this adventure the two antiquaries visit a retired clergyman to view his discoveries and barely prevent him from sacrificing their valets. They are somewhat surprised to learn their genial host is not only a Satanist but has been dead for

over a year. As for his pet goat, the reader is left to draw his own conclusion.

The most appalling apparition in the collection is that found in "A Nun's Tragedy." By chance the two antiquaries visit the abbey ruins on the anniversary of the day that an unfortunate nun was walled up alive. Her phantom is as convincingly described as any ghost in fiction, and this is perhaps the best story in the book. Dare has an unusual variation of the automatic-writing theme in "A Forgotten Italian," in which a woman is prompted not to write but to paint. Her work includes a painting by an obsolete Italian, and also one in the style of (and signed by) Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

"Fatal Oak" seems to have been suggested by M. R. James' "The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral"; both revolve around articles made from a piece of wood that has been cursed. In this instance a man permits his unfaithful wife to sit in a chair made from cursed gallows-wood, which kills her. He falls into his own pit, however, when he picks up a tobacco jar made from the same wood. Dare does a variation on this theme in "Borgia Pomade." An Italian jar with a curse on it comes to light in an English country house and is claimed by the lady of the house for her beauty cream. The beauty cream eats the flesh from her bones, but happily, when the jar is destroyed, she recovers.

The two antiquaries visit a small private chapel in "An Abbot's Magic," and while there they see the phantom

of a former priest. It seems that he practiced the black arts and is condemned to haunt as a result. Another slight story is "The Beam," which concerns a poltergeist. It is suggested that the poltergeist is the spirit of a suicide who hanged himself from a beam in the ceiling. When this beam is removed, the haunting ceases. "The Officer's Coat" is more convincing; an old coat is found in a forgotten trunk and given to a collector of antique clothes. That night the collector is visited by the ghost of the former owner of the coat who identifies himself. Some months later the collector is able to identify an old miniature as being a likeness of his midnight visitor.

"The Nymph Still Lives" is not exactly a ghost story: The narrator visits a spring dedicated by the Romans to a local goddess. While there he dreams she visits him, dances for him, and crowns him with a wreath of flowers, and when he wakes the wreath is still there. "Bring Out Your Dead" is the most original of all and concerns a visitor of the two antiquaries. This man visits a church to examine early English skulls and steals one. It turns out that the skull belonged to a victim of the plague who evidently resents being disturbed, for the poor mistaken thief comes down with the most virulent form of the plague and dies from it. His death is accompanied by repeated cries of "Bring out your dead" from the skull and complete with a chalked cross on his door!

WALTER DE LA MARE

Walter de la Mare's stories often appear in anthologies of the supernatural, but he is much more adept at creating an atmosphere of wonder than of fear. His stories possessing hints of Fairyland are among the best he has written; they are unique. But De la Mare's love of fantasy, his love of the indefinite, and his love of digressions all combine to spoil his ghost stories. In fact, it is a matter of some dispute whether they are ghost stories, since they are all of the inconclusive type. De la Mare's apparitions are always so vaguely suggested that the reader cannot pin down any one item as proof of a ghost. His ghost stories have never been collected; consequently they are scattered throughout several books of short stories and various anthologies. He also has a novel of the supernatural, The Return.

"A Recluse" is one of de la Mare's better known stories. A man's car breaks down and he is forced to seek refuge with an eccentric recluse. The recluse steals the man's car keys so he is forced to stay, but no reason for this is offered. The man flees, however, when he sees his host in bed but hears his voice somewhere else.

"All Hallows" has a sombre, brooding atmosphere, but the closest the author comes to ghosts is some unexplained noises. It is suggested that the forces of evil are repairing a lonely old church; again there is no explanation and there are also many digressions. "Strangers and Pilgrims" also

takes place in and around a dusky country church. A stranger is shown an interesting collection of old epitaphs, but mysteriously vanishes. The spirit that beckons to the lonely child in "Miss Jemima" has more of the fairy about it than the ghost, but it is certainly an evil fairy all the same.

All things considered, "The Riddle" is De la Mare's best story of the supernatural; one reason for this is its lack of digressions. Several children visit their aged grandmother in a fascinatingly eerie old house. They can play anywhere except near a certain antique chest. Each in turn disregards this and goes to the forbidden chest, and each in turn vanishes, until there are none. . .

L. P. HARTLEY

Leslie Poles Hartley has been highly praised by Peter Penzoldt,⁵ but Hartley ranks far higher as a horror story writer than as a ghost story writer. His collection, The Travelling Grave and Other Stories, contains five ghost stories and seven horror stories. The title story is a horror tale of striking originality, but it is not a ghost story. Vague suggestions of the supernatural appear in "The Thought," "Night Fears," and "A Change of Ownership," none of which is a true ghost story. None of the five ghost stories in the collection is actually mediocre, but there

⁵ Ibid., pp. 174-177.

is not a single one which is really first-rate.

Perhaps Hartley's best known story is "A Visitor From Down Under," in which it is suggested that a new arrival at a London hotel killed another man in Australia. The gradual revelation that the dead man has come to London to seek revenge is very skillfully contrived, and Hartley is adept at creating suspense. "Podolo" is more successful as a horror story than as a ghost story; it is also a riddle tale. A girl kills a cat (too wild to tame) to keep it from starving to death on a Venetian island. While her lover and the gondolier nap, she is attacked by something, we are never told what.

"Three, or Four, for Dinner" also has a Venetian setting: Two Englishmen expect to meet for dinner an Italian count (whom they have never seen). En route they discover a corpse floating in the canal and take it along. The count finally arrives, but the men are called back to their gondola where policemen identify the body as the count. When the men return to their table, their guest is gone.

"Feet Foremost" is a very clever story of possession, although the ghost is treated a bit too casually for best effects. The ghost which haunts an old house is hampered by the fact that it must be helped over the threshold in order to enter. Once it enters, however, it causes the person who aided it to fall ill and speedily die, and then it leaves the house in its victim's body. Tragedy is averted in the story when a plane crashes in the yard and the pilot is

brought into the house. He dies and the ghost is forced to abandon its intended victim and leave in the pilot's body. In spite of being on the lengthy side, this story is one of Hartley's best.

"The Cotillion" is also among his more successful efforts. A selfish girl has thrown over a man deeply in love with her, and he has (unknown to her) committed suicide. She is at a masked ball when a strangely familiar partner reveals himself as the discarded lover. Alone in one of the smaller rooms, the man refuses to let her go until she has given him a favor; he gives her one first--a pistol with one bullet fired. She manages to escape before he can unmask, and when others rush to the room, it is empty.

W. P. HARVEY

William Fryer Harvey is one of the most versatile ghost story writers of our time. Many of his stories show striking originality, and he is the author of one of the best-known ghost stories ever written, "The Beast With Five Fingers." Many of the stories in his most recent collection, The Beast With Five Fingers, are not ghost stories, but there are several excellent ones included which are well worth our attention.

One of these, "Across The Moors," concerns a quiet, gentle ghost, in this case that of a preacher who was murdered and robbed. He appears to escort a lonely frightened woman to her destination. "Miss Avenal" is an interestingly

horrid little story of a sort of human vampire, an elderly lady who rejuvenates herself by draining her nurse of all her youthful vitality.

Seldom met with in fiction is the poltergeist, which appears in "Miss Cornelius." This lady seems to possess certain strange powers which are deliberately left obscure. They are strong enough, however, to drive the man who detects her tricks insane. Another but undistinguished story of psychic power is told in "Peter Levisham." A man feels an irresistible compulsion to sit in an empty office at a certain time. He is then able to explode a murderer's alibi; the murderer insisted he was in that office when the murder occurred.

Most clumsily told of all is "The Ankardyne Pew," which lacks coherence. A gambler tortured a gaming cock to death, and ever since his house has been haunted by cock-crows and other phenomena. "The Heart of the Fire" is not quite so awkward: A tradition exists in a family that as long as the fire on their hearth is kept burning it will keep away misfortune. A man of this family robs and murders a traveller and buries him under the hearthstone. Many years later, feeble and helpless, he watches the fire go out and is powerless to prevent it. As it expires, the man he murdered returns to take revenge.

Much better is "Sarah Bennet's Possession," in which her dead husband suffers for the way he treated her when alive. His only hope now is to make her see him so that he

can beg her forgiveness, but she has put him out of her mind so completely that he is never able to establish rapport. One of Harvey's best-known pieces is a riddle story, "August Heat." An artist conceives a picture of a condemned murderer in the dock, but later meets his subject in the flesh. The man has just finished a tombstone bearing the artist's name and the date of death is that same day. An equally good riddle story is "The Clock." A woman goes to a shut-up house to get a clock for a friend, and finds, after searching through the house, that it is still running. As she stands wondering who could have wound it, she hears an odd flopping noise drawing near. Unable to face whatever it is, she jumps from a window, and as she turns to look back at the house, the window has been closed.

Harvey's masterpiece is one of the most famous of all stories of the supernatural, "The Beast With Five Fingers." A man encourages his uncle to practice automatic writing while asleep, and the messages are all addressed to himself. After his uncle's death he receives his uncle's severed hand through the mail, and it proceeds to run merrily about the room and then hides. The story describes with mounting horror and suspense his frantic efforts to destroy the infernal thing, but it escapes from a locked safe and also from a fire into which it is thrown. In spite of every precaution it finally manages to get to him, and of course results in his death.

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

William Hope Hodgson is the author of several novels of the supernatural, and one notable collection of short ghost stories called Carnacki, The Ghost-Finder. Like Blackwood's John Silence, Carnacki is a man of great psychic power which he uses for good purposes, helping people who suffer from various forms of hauntings. Three of his "cases" are found to be due to human agency and are therefore not discussed here. Of the remaining six stories, two are exceptionally fine and deserve to be better known.

Perhaps the slightest of the six is "The Haunted Jarvee," in which a ship seems to act as a sort of magnet for strange psychic forces. Odd clouds and shadows follow the boat, and terrific storms appear and disappear without warning. Many men are lost, and the ship finally sinks in a storm that it apparently engendered itself. "The Hog" comes closest to science fiction and is marred by over-lengthy pseudoscientific explanations. A man has a horrid dream of falling into a vast pit of swine, dominated by one incredibly evil giant hog. When he goes to Carnacki for help, the shadowy pit starts to form in the floor of Carnacki's house, and it takes all his skill to save the man and himself.

"The Horse of The Invisible" is an interesting story revolving around a family tradition that if the eldest child is a girl, she will be haunted by an invisible horse during her courtship. In the past, several deaths have occurred as a result of this haunting, for which no explanation is

is ever offered. Carnacki finds that the "horse" endangering the girl is partly due to a jealous cousin. Part, however, is authentic, because the ghostly horse kills the cousin who dared impersonate it. Similarly, in "The Searcher of the End House" wet footprints and a horrid smell are found to be caused by human motivation. The house is actually haunted by a woman's ghost, seen by several people but never by Carnacki. Yet he sees the ghost of a small child running about which no one else sees.

A much better story is "The Gateway of the Monster," in which an old manor has a "gray room" haunted by a gigantic hand which has choked three people plus Carnacki's cat. Nightly raps are heard on the door of the room, and the bedclothes are always found thrown on the floor in the morning. Carnacki draws a magic circle in the room and spends the night in it. He traces the trouble to a hidden ring which was brought from the Crusades. This ring serves as a sort of entrance for malignant entities from other worlds.

One of the most original and certainly one of the most terrifying ghost stories ever written is "The Whistling Room." Carnacki is called to Ireland to investigate a castle with a haunted room from which issues a horrible whistling noise. The evil in the room is intensely malevolent, and decoys Carnacki into the room by imitating his host's voice calling for help. He barely escapes in time, and the only remedy seems to be to tear down the wing with the haunted room. In the process of demolition it is discovered that the

castle was the seat of an ancient Irish king who imprisoned an enemy in that room and then tore his tongue out before putting him to death. The man could still whistle and died doing so, and his hatred took the form of the evil whistling which had grown in intensity and power down through the centuries.

These short ghost stories are much more successful than Hodgson's novels of the supernatural, which suffer from being set too far in the past. Carnacki has recently been reprinted by Arkham House.

MARGARET IRWIN

Margaret Irwin has several rather interesting stories and a play collected under the interesting title of Madam Fears The Dark. This contains four ghost stories, of which two possess considerable merit if not real distinction.

"The Earlier Service" is an interesting story of reincarnation. Centuries ago a village church was the scene of devil worship and also human sacrifice. A victim of these Satanists is reincarnated in the minister's young daughter, who feels a horrible fear every time she enters the church. With each entry the ancient forces of evil seem to her to grow stronger, finally attaining enough power to materialize, and the girl almost falls victim a second time. An over-elaborate setting spoils "Monsieur Seeks A Wife," laid in early eighteenth-century France. A young gallant visits an old family friend to choose one of his daughters for a bride. He falls in love with the eldest, but discovers she is a

witch; in addition to other bad habits she often changes into a cat. Naturally the wedding is called off.

"The Book" is a very strikingly conceived story of a man who finds an ancient and evil book. In it are hints by which he can obtain wealth, but each time he follows them he is compelled to commit a crime which is also recorded in the book in advance. When the book records the murder of his daughter he rebels and throws it on the fire, only to be strangled by an invisible fiend.

Miss Irwin's masterpiece is "The Curate and The Rake," in which an overworked young minister gradually loses contact with the world. He becomes enamored of the heroine of a local tragedy which occurred two hundred years ago, and finally he begins to see her in the church. The phantom's gradual ensnarement of the man is suggested with consummate skill, and the climax comes when the lovers elope in a phantom coach. His body is later found beside the road.

MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES

The outstanding writer of ghost stories in the first three decades of this century is Montague Rhodes James, whose thirty stories are more consistently perfect than those of any other writer in this field, because he is a true artist in both style and originality. He possesses not only the capacity for inventing first-rate plots but also the technical skill needed to narrate them perfectly.

He has been highly praised by many modern critics. Peter Penzoldt says that he is successful because "he is the most orthodox ghost-story writer among his contemporaries. His stories are straightforward tales of terror and the supernatural, utterly devoid of any deeper meaning. They are what the orally-told ghost stories originally were: tales that are meant to frighten and nothing more."⁶ H. P. Lovecraft says James is "gifted with an almost diabolic power of calling horror by gentle steps from the midst of daily prosaic life."⁷ Other critics have an apt description of James' work: "A subtle reticence in Dr. James' choice of detail, enhanced by the academic preciseness of his style, evoke a distinctively delicate horror that is all his own. He loved to invent ghost stories in which a malicious evil, distilled in the middle ages and preserved through the centuries, is decanted with terrifying effect in our own times."⁸

Something of a moralist but never didactic, James was fond of showing that the powers of darkness often turn on those who summon them. He is also prone to show that things we know nothing about are best left alone. This is admirably illustrated in the title of one of his better tales, "A Warning To The Curious," which is one of several

⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

⁷ H. P. Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror in Literature, p. 134.

⁸ Herbert Wise and Phyllis Fraser, Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural, p. 516.

stories concerning ghostly guardians. In this story the guardian watches over a buried Saxon crown; and when a man who persists in searching for it (in spite of premonitions against doing so) finds the crown, he also finds that it brings him into some very undesirable company.

In another of James' best stories, "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas," some sort of supernatural creature is set to watch over a treasure concealed in the masonry of a well. A man finds a coded clue to the treasure in a stained-glass window. Solving it eventually locates the well and the right stone. However, when he reaches into the opening for what looks like a leather bag and the bag reaches back and wraps its arms around his neck, he abandons the project.

A ghostly guardian (possibly a familiar) is set to guard a tomb in both "Count Magnus" and "Mr. Humphreys and His Inheritance." In the latter a man falls heir to an old house, the garden of which contains an ancient maze. It is suggested that the ancestor who made the maze practiced the black arts and brought home more than just souvenirs from the grand tour. At any rate, the maze is troubled after dark until the ancestor's ashes are removed from a globe in the center of it. "Count Magnus," highly praised by H. P. Lovecraft, is a more terrifying story of a Swedish sorcerer who set some sort of fiend to guard his tomb. When an antiquary examines the mausoleum, the villagers warn him that he is inviting undesirable company, but he persists. He then notices that he is dogged by two figures who we are

given to understand are the wicked count and his familiar. Flight is futile. When the quarry is caught, what is left of him causes seven people to faint.

In "The Tractate Middoth," an exceptionally well-developed story, a ghost keeps guard over his will, which is hidden in a book. This will disinherits his nephew, who spends much time in looking for it and finally finds it. When he attempts to destroy it, a passer-by sees a black blob fall upon him from a tree. When the passer-by reaches him, it is too late. Similarly, ghostly vengeance falls on a thief in "The Uncommon Prayer-Books." These books are unique and are stolen from a private chapel by an unscrupulous book dealer who stores them in his safe. The next time he opens the safe, he finds that it contains more than the books.

There are four more stories dealing with meddling people who are warned to let certain things alone; but when they persist, they find they must suffer the consequences. With the exception of "The Rose Garden," these are very well handled, and show James as the master of the ghost story with a deceptively innocent beginning which ends in disaster.

"The Rose Garden" is the story of a lady who has a large post removed from her garden, although she has been warned against it. People in the neighborhood begin to have disagreeable dreams, and the climax is reached when unpleasant faces peer at the lady from the shrubbery. She takes

a vacation and the post is replaced. Infinitely superior is "Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad," which has been called one of the most original ghost stories ever written. A man vacationing at the seashore finds a curious ancient whistle. When he blows it, a sudden violent wind springs up and, moreover, the empty bed in his room is now occupied. The visitant makes a form for itself from the bed linen and almost succeeds in forcing the man to jump out of the window. When the whistle is thrown in the sea, the hotel returns to normal.

Another arresting tale is called "Rats," also concerning a man staying at an inn, formerly a sort of manor house. Upon opening the wrong door, he sees what he things is a scarecrow on a bed. When he goes back for another book, the "scarecrow" gets up and comes toward him. After he recovers from his swoon, the owner explains that when he first came to the house he was told that if he left the creature a room to itself, it would leave the rest of the house in peace. In this story and in the next there is not a single superfluous detail.

"Wailing Well," a vampire tale, is perhaps the most gruesome of James' stories. A meddlesome young scout is warned that a certain copse is "off-limits" on a camping trip. In spite of a local shepherd's warning that the copse is haunted, he sneaks off to explore it. Powerless to help, his companions watch him being stalked by the "population" of the copse from a hill, and the suspense is unbearable.

When his body is recovered, there is not a drop of blood left in it, and one more ghost now haunts Wailing Well.

In contrast with these we have four stories which, when compared with the others, can only be said to be undistinguished. These include "A School Story," in which the reader is to infer that a ghost returns to avenge his murder, after sending the man who killed him a note. The murderer is later found in a well clasped by a corpse. "The Story of a Disappearance and An Appearance" is the account of a man murdered by the owners of a Punch and Judy show; his ghost interrupts the next performance. This story is jumbled, confused, and never made sufficiently clear. "Two Doctors" also suffers from a lack of clarity: supposedly, one is jealous of the other and possesses enough magic power to cause his death by suffocation. Shortest of all is "There Was a Man Dwelt by a Churchyard," which is intended as a burlesque and therefore not to be considered as a real ghost story.

A better story, but rather clumsy and cumbersome in the telling is "Martin's Close." The trial of a man accused of murdering a simple-minded girl he had seduced is made the vehicle for the story, and in the proceedings we learn that she returned to haunt her former lover. Likewise somewhat awkwardly told is "The Residence at Whitminster," in which a minister has two boys for wards, one of whom dabbles in black magic and uses the other as a victim. When the powers he evoked get out of control and turn on him, his

ghost is occasionally seen to this day.

Flies are used to advantage in "An Evening's Entertainment." An old lady explains to her grandchildren why they must not walk in a certain lane. Years before, two men had practiced devil worship there and had come to a bad end. Ever since, that vicinity has been haunted by swarms of large black flies, the bite of which causes serious illness.

"The Ash Tree" is an interesting story of a witch's curse, in which the witch seeks to revenge herself on the squire who condemns her. He is found in bed, a blackened, bloated corpse, and his room proves fatal to several others. Years later, when the ancient ash beneath its window burns, a large cavity is disclosed in which are found the witch's skeleton and several large spider-like things, evidently her familiars. "The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral" falls a little short of James' best stories; again the style of narration is somewhat cumbersome. We learn from the diary of a clergyman that he bribed a servant to loosen a stair-carpet so that the minister he succeeded tripped and broke his neck. The dead one seeks revenge in a very un-Christian like way by jumping out as his successor descends the same steps, of course eventually resulting in another fatal fall.

Two of James' best stories are "A View from a Hill" and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter," both very original. In the latter an antiquary buys an old diary which contains a scrap of material made from a man's hair. The dead one evidently

resents this gruesome object being copied for use as drapes because the house begins to be haunted by a loathsome creature covered with hair who crawls along the floor and chases the antiquary. When the new drapes are destroyed, it appears no more. "A View from a Hill" also concerns an antiquary; this one wishes to know what his area of interest looked like in Roman times. He finds this out by digging up bones from the ancient burial mounds and boiling them down into a liquid which he seals up into a sort of telescope. Thus when looking through this he looks through a dead man's eyes and can see what the country looked like centuries before. Again the dead resent this usage, and the unfortunate antiquary is made to suffer for his presumption.

"Can Alberic's Scrap-Book" and "Number 13" have both been reprinted in anthologies and are among James' most famous stories. The former tells of a visitor to a small French town who buys from the local sacristan an ancient volume of assorted missals and fragments of other early writing. One of the illustrations depicts a king sitting in judgment on a horrible hairy fiend. This demon seems to be earth bound by the drawing, for that night he visits the new owner in his hotel room, but is never seen again after the picture is destroyed. In "Number 13," a most original story, a tourist in Sweden cannot understand how his hotel room can have three windows by day and two at night. It is simply because at night a spectral number thirteen springs into being between twelve and fourteen, incorporating part

of each of them. Years before, it was the scene of sorcery and the practice of black magic.

Another well-handled story involving the practice of questionable arts is "Lost Hearts," a story praised by Montague Summers.⁹ A man has found a magic formula for prolonging life. It calls for the hearts of three human beings under the age of twelve. At the time of the story the man has already killed two children who will not be missed. He has devoured their hearts and proposes to make his young ward the third victim. He is prevented from doing so by the ghosts of his two former victims, who remove his own heart first.

In "An Episode of Cathedral History" an old church is being remodeled, and under the altar is discovered a curious old tomb. When the altar is removed, people in the neighborhood begin to have bad dreams and to hear strange cries at night. Many are visited by a strange sickness that often proves fatal. The mystery is cleared up when the tomb is opened. . . . it contained a very-much-alive satyr.

Another story possessed of spine-chilling qualities is "A Neighbor's Landmark," in which a woman's spirit is doomed to haunt a certain wood as punishment for her sins. Among other crimes, she had cheated two orphans out of this wood by moving their landmark. Now those who pass by the vicinity at night are accustomed to hear appalling shrieks

⁹ Montague Summers, The Supernatural Omnibus, Introduction, p. 33.

when the phantom makes its eternal rounds.

It is not too much to say of "The Mezzotint" that it is not only James' best-known story but one of the most famous of all ghost stories, and also one of the most original. A spectral tragedy is re-enacted in a mezzotint, lately acquired by a museum. The witnesses of the phenomena see the house in the picture approached by a skeletal figure draped in black who enters and later emerges carrying a child. The house depicted is later identified as the scene of a mysterious disappearance in the early 1800's. Although the mezzotint is closely watched, the drama is not enacted again. It is suggested that the figure was seeking revenge on the owner of the house (a judge or magistrate) who had ordered him executed. James has a variation on this, but far inferior to it, in "The Haunted Doll's House." The new owner of an antique doll's house is the unwilling spectator of a similar tragedy which is acted out in his new acquisition.

The story which vies most closely with "The Mezzotint" in originality is "Casting the Runes," in which an evil man of great power is able to loosen a demon familiar upon his enemies by giving them a slip of paper inscribed with runic symbols. One of his intended victims and the brother of a former victim get together and succeed in returning the cursed slip to its unsuspecting author, on whom the familiar now turns. This story is developed with much finesse; indeed from the technical standpoint it may be considered James' masterpiece. Furthermore, it is one of the few

ghost stories to have the dubious honor of having a motion picture based upon it, "Night of the Demon."

It is impossible in these necessarily brief synopses to do justice to James' skill. This scholarly literary artist has given us some dozen of the finest ghost stories ever written, which place their author indisputably in the very first rank. He certainly equals, if not surpasses, his greatest rival, J. Sheridan Le Fanu.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling is the author of several ghost stories and almost-ghost stories, none of which ever attain real excellence. One often suspects that anthologists choose Kipling's ghost stories more for the fame of their author than for their intrinsic worth. With regard to style, his stories are often marred by a journalistic jauntiness, which is fortunately absent from his best work. There is a pressing need for a collected edition of Kipling's ghost stories; as it is, they are scattered throughout some half-dozen volumes of short stories. Therefore, several are unavoidably omitted in the present discussion.

"The Phantom Rickshaw" has been reprinted so many times that it has become a classic; nevertheless it is not a particularly distinguished story. An Englishman has an affair with a married woman on a boat bound for India, but later leaves her. While he is on a short trip she dies, and on his return he is greeted by her phantom complete with 'rickshaw, coolies

and card-case. This persistent apparition follows him around, appearing at various inopportune times, and manages to break off a budding romance. The man's health finally gives way under the strain.

Kipling has a rather repulsive werewolf story set in India, "The Mark of the Beast." An Englishman insults an idol, and the native priest retaliates with sorcery. The man then gradually turns into a wolf; the first symptom is a craving for raw meat. The priest is forced to undo the spell when he is tortured by the man's friends. "Haunted Subalterns" is also set in India and is an indifferent story of a poltergeist. An officer is plagued by an invisible spirit which knocks and plays musical instruments. He changes quarters, but the spirit comes along too, and trickery is suspected but never proven.

"The Return of Imray" is a better story along more traditional lines. A man in India disappears and his house is eventually rented to someone else. The new tenant and his guests are haunted by impressions of someone near rather than by an actual apparition. Finally the body of the missing man is found hidden under the roof, and the haunting then ceases. Less successful is "At The End of The Passage," in which the ghost might be explained as insanity. An Englishman in India is driven to a nervous breakdown by loneliness and responsibility and begins to see the ghost of himself. Naturally this makes him worse than ever and finally kills him.

"They" is unlike any of the other stories: its tone is exquisite, almost poetic. Peter Penzoldt says: "Kipling's 'They' is not a typical ghost story, yet it is certainly the finest tale of the supernatural he has written. It is not a tale of terror, but one full of deep emotion."¹⁰ A man blunders into a blissfully serene estate owned by a blind woman. He hears and senses crowds of happy children, but never sees them. Only later does he realize that the children are not of this world.

J. SHERIDAN LE FANU

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, grand-nephew of Sheridan the dramatist, was certainly the greatest Victorian master of the ghost story, and one of the great masters of ~~the ghost story, and one of the great masters of all times.~~ Here we see for the first time a consistent break with the short Gothic romance with enough episodes for a full-length novel. For this reason Le Fanu may surely be considered the father of the modern ghost story. Like most Irishmen Le Fanu was a marvelous story teller with a seemingly inexhaustible repertory. Best of all, while there is a certain similarity of situation between several stories, his stories are not all of a piece. In spite of an occasionally cumbersome style, Le Fanu has created perhaps more outstanding settings for his stories than any other ghost-story writer, even M. R. James. Le Fanu is a master of invention.

¹⁰ Penzoldt, p. 141.

In "Carmilla" Le Fanu wrote what is perhaps the best vampire story of any length in English. When "Carmilla" is compared with Dracula, we see the reason for its success: Le Fanu knew when to stop. The reader is amply furnished with a complete and convincingly detailed account of the vampire's pursuit of its victim. A lonely girl and her father have as their enforced guest a young girl whose carriage was wrecked near their Styrian castle. The visitor, Carmilla, and Laura, her hostess, are soon close friends, but Laura's health begins to decline. The suspense is unbearable until an old friend of Laura's father visits the castle and recognizes Carmilla as the vampire who killed his niece.

Several of Le Fanu's stories revolve around what he calls the "inner vision." This is a sort of special faculty which enables certain people to see or experience phenomena invisible to others. In the frequently reprinted "Green Tea," Le Fanu's best known story, a man opens his "inner vision" by drinking large quantities of green tea. Thus he is enabled to see a fiend in the shape of a small black monkey which becomes his constant companion. This "familiar" is not seen by others and makes itself very disagreeable to its object of torment, cursing him, interrupting his prayers, and finally driving him to suicide.

Similarly, in "The Familiar" a man is haunted by a revenge ghost visible only to him. The ghost is of a man whose daughter was seduced by the man he haunts. The ghost stalks his victim's footsteps, fires ghostly shots at his

head, and makes life miserable for him in general. Naturally this culminates in a complete mental and physical breakdown and eventual death.

Two more stories dealing with strange visions are "Mr. Justice Harbottle" and "The Vision of Tom Chuff." The former is a sort of allegory in which a hypocritical old judge lets personal dislike influence his sentences. He is warned that if he condemns a certain enemy he will have to answer to a higher court, but persists and is then shown a vision of his own execution. On the appointed day his body is found hanging from his stair rail. In "The Vision of Tom Chuff" a drunkard is shown the error of his ways and given a preview of what is in store for him if he continues to drink and abuse his family. He behaves for a short while but soon returns to drink and all that was foretold comes true. Neither of these stories is Le Fanu at his best.

Le Fanu has a well-told story on the Faust theme, "Sir Dominick's Bargain." The plot is the familiar one of the man who sells his soul for worldly goods, but the setting is one of the author's best. Less successful and perhaps most clumsily told of all is "Ulltor de Lacy." This story of revenge tells how a man put to death by a de Lacy vows to return and extinguish his line. He succeeds in this by making the daughter of the last de Lacy fall in love with him, believing him a real man. They run away together and she is never seen again.

One of Le Fanu's most original stories is "Schalkin The Painter," but it somehow misses being a first-rate ghost story--there is perhaps too much of the fairy tale about it. A struggling young painter loves his master's daughter. The master, however, promises her to a mysterious old man because of his wealth. The bride and groom disappear without anyone getting a good look at him. Some years later the disappointed suitor sees the couple in the vaults of a cathedral, and the groom is an animated corpse.

"Squire Toby's Will" and "The House in Aungier Street" prove something of a disappointment; they are not poor stories but merely undistinguished. The former is the familiar story of the man who finds a will in his brother's favor and destroys it. In consequence he is haunted not only by his father's ghost but by his newly deceased brother as well.

"The House in Aungier Street" is haunted by the ghost of a man who committed suicide. He appears to two young students occupying the house and attempts to persuade them (or scare them) into following his example. This story possesses a very gripping atmosphere of real terror and suspense.

Le Fanu was also adept at writing the shorter ghost story, and "The Sexton's Adventure" is a minor masterpiece. The sexton unintentionally leads a friend to drink, ultimate ruin, and suicide. He is so shocked that he swears off drink, and tells his wife one night as he goes to dig a grave that the devil may take him if he touches a drop while he's gone. Homeward bound a mysterious stranger invites

him by gestures to take a drink. When he refuses, the stranger follows him home and in a horrifying climax reveals himself as the dead friend, sent from Hell to try to tempt the sexton to break his promise.

One of Le Fanu's most original stories is "Wicked Captain Walshawe, of Wauling." A nonbeliever interrupts his wife's funeral and snatches the Holy Candle from her hand. Her old nurse curses him, saying that his soul will remain in the candle until it is consumed. This is forgotten until after his death when the next-of-kin comes to stay to look for some papers. He unknowingly uses the cursed candle and is horrified to see the wicked captain emerge in miniature from the candlestick and then gradually assume normal size. From watching the phantom's actions the heir gets a clue to the hiding place of the lost papers.

The atmosphere in this story and also in "Dickon The Devil" is exceptionally well-drawn, and the latter is one of Le Fanu's best stories. An old man hates his next-of-kin, but dies before he can disinherit them. After his death they use the manor park for grazing cattle, and soon people begin to see (but only from a distance) the former owner's phantom walking among the cattle and any he touches are sure to die. The ghost is baffled for a while when two boys are sent to watch the cattle, for he avoids people. He eventually retaliates by stealing one of the boys from his bed, and when they find him, his mind is gone.

One of the most convincing and least romantic of Le Fanu's stories is called "Madame Crowl's Ghost." A young girl is sent for by her aunt to help watch a senile old woman who shortly dies. After her death the girl sees the phantasm of the old lady go to a secret door in the paneling of her room. Upon investigation it is found that the woman had shut her husband's son by a previous marriage in this room to die so that her own son would inherit the estate. This story might well serve as a sort of model for a good ghost story.

These stories are all found in Green Tea and Other Ghost Stories, an Arkham House book. The original edition of Green Tea contained only five stories. A very worth while undertaking, for which there is a definite need, would be a comprehensive collection of all of Le fanu's ghost stories.

I have found four more of them in various anthologies (see notes). "The Spectre Lovers"¹¹ is a good ghost story without being particularly outstanding. A young fellow coming home one night half drunk sees a phantom regiment. An officer asks the lad to follow him and leads him to a ruined house, now like new, where a woman's ghost is waiting. The youth suddenly grows frightened and prays, and finds himself lying amid the ruins of the house the next morning.

"A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family"¹² is a

¹¹ Wagenknecht, The Fireside Book of Ghost Stories.

¹² Montague Summers, Victorian Ghost Stories.

good story, but not a good ghost story for two reasons: it is too long and the supernatural element is only incidental. A young bride sees a black veil before the door as she enters her new home for the first time, and an old family servant declares that it is a family omen of impending misfortune. The story is mainly concerned with the gradual revelation that the husband's first wife was still alive when he married the second. "The Dream"¹³ is a moral ghost story in which a drunkard has a "vision" of falling through a certain staircase landing into Hell. He repents for a time but ultimately weakens, and that night he is found dead of a broken neck on the landing. The story is very similar to "The Vision of Tom Chuff."

"The Dead Sexton"¹⁴ is clumsily developed and exceedingly old-fashioned. The sexton is accidentally killed in the act of robbing the church. When his body is moved to the coach house of the inn, a mysterious stranger appears for whom the corpse seems to possess much fascination. The servants believe he is the devil, come to steal the sexton's body now that it is out of the church. The innkeeper watches and sees the stranger place the body on his horse, but when he fires at him the gun explodes in his hands and both stranger and corpse are never seen again.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

ARTHUR MACHEN

Arthur Machen is one of the great modern masters of the horror story, yet there is scarcely a single tale of his that can be called a ghost story. It is for this reason that his work, while well-known to the lover of weird fiction, will be discussed only briefly here. Machen's stories are usually longer than the average horror story because he sets such an elaborate stage. His stories often remind the reader of the novels of Wilkie Collins in that they are made up of the "testimonials" of several people. This does not always result in coherence and a clear narrative. In fact, Machen is too prone to take several innocent occurrences, such as a newspaper clipping and one or two more seemingly unrelated objects, and then weave a story around them. Coincidence is often overworked, and the reader finds his credulity severely tried. Machen's best work is found in Tales of Horror and The Supernatural.

In "The Novel of the Black Seal" a man deciphers the figures on a strangely carved black rock. They lead him to suspect that our world is inhabited by an old, malevolent race sometimes called "fairies" or "the little people." These creatures evidently resent his investigations, however, for when he persists in them he mysteriously disappears. "The Novel of the White Powder" is a horrible story of a man who has a prescription filled by a druggist. A mistake is made and by coincidence the man is given the identical formula used centuries ago by witches in celebrating the

Black Mass. A sort of fungus appears on the man's hand and then spreads, finally turning him into a seething pool of putrescence.

"The Great God Pan" and "The Inmost Light" are both science fiction. In the former a brain operation enables a woman to see Pan and have a child by him. The story is mostly concerned with veiled allusions to this daughter's debaucheries. The latter story also concerns an operation in which a woman's soul is removed and changed into a marvelous jewel. The author's involved style of narration here forces the reader to read the story several times to get the full effect.

In "The White People" a child is initiated into strange and forbidden rites by her nurse. As she grows older, she learns charms and words which enable her to see and visit strange places outside mortal ken. "The Shining Pyramid" is an indifferent story of two men who piece together from several coincidences the fact that the "little people" are about to hold a celebration. They succeed in witnessing this gala affair which consists in the roasting of a young girl who had been missing for weeks.

"The Bowmen" created a furore when it appeared and gave rise to the legend of "The Angel of Mons." Some English soldiers in World War I are in peril until suddenly St. George appears leading an army of phantom archers against the foe. "The Great Return" is in a similar vein: A patron saint returns to create visions in an old chapel

and to fishermen at sea, and to cure a dying girl. The author's attempts to retell Welsh legends and folklore are both boring and unconvincing.

More successful is a shorter piece, "The Happy Children." A visitor to an old Welsh town wonders why all but the children of the place are indoors on a certain night. He later learns from local legend that the children he saw were not alive. "Out of the Earth" is another extra-short story, this time of the "little people." These emerge from their customary underground abodes during the war to rejoice in the cruelty and stupidity of men.

In "Children of the Pool," a sort of allegory, a man is vacationing in Wales near a repulsive-looking pond which is shunned by natives. Some entity crawls from this pool at night to sit outside the man's window and remind him of the sins he committed in youth. It is suggested that the hidden evil in the man attracted the evil hidden in the pool.

"The Terror," the longest story in the book, revolves around phenomena engendered by war. Here animals all over the country go berserk and attack man; the reason given is that man has forfeited his claim to be ruler of the animal kingdom by causing so much bloodshed. The story can hardly be called a success.

R. H. MALDEN

Richard Henry Malden has been called an outstanding disciple of M. R. James, but his stories certainly suffer

by comparison with those of the latter. Malden's main fault is understatement; evidently afraid of stating too much, he has gone to the other extreme and stated too little. His ghosts are too vaguely suggested and the reader tires of "black shadows" and "strange bird-cries." Like Mrs. Radcliffe, Malden wants to have his cake and eat it too; he makes his ghosts so indefinite that they can all be explained away. Another fault in the overuse of the dream as a means of explaining the reason for the haunting or for showing what took place in the past. In five out of the nine stories in Nine Ghosts a dream is made one of the supernatural phenomena experienced.

In two of Malden's stories the supernatural element is so slight as to be almost negligible. "Stivinghoe Bank" is the site of a ruined chapel; years before, a priest had practiced black magic there. A modern visitor hears old legends, finds the tomb of the priest's monkey-familiar, and has bad dreams. The only other ghostly occurrences are shadows, unexplained laughs, and footprints, hardly enough to scare a child. These same faults are made manifest in "The Coxswain of the Lifeboat," in which an inquisitive person tries to make a ghost story around a tombstone because he feels "creepy" around it. The reason for the troubled spirit is not suggested in a dream here, but is acted out on the pages of the investigator's book (as on a stage) which is even less believable than a dream.

"The Thirteenth Tree" also has little to recommend it. Centuries ago a witch cursed the line of the judge who condemned her son, and the estate has never passed to a direct heir since. A guest sees the garden spectrally transformed into what it was like at the death of the judge's son, whom he sees drowned by an undefined black thing. Only slightly better is "The Blank Leaves," in which an amateur genealogist comes upon a curious cryptogram in an old parish register. When he makes a tracing, he loosens forces dormant for years and enables a spirit to recover its severed hand which was used to make "a hand of glory."

"The Priest's Brass" is an unconvincing story of a fifteenth-century priest-sorcerer, whose exact counterpart is the local sexton of today. Reincarnation is suggested but never made clear. At any rate the sexton is able to change himself into a bull and charges the visitor who has found all this out, but misses him and goes over a cliff. The bull is never found, but the sexton is discovered dead in bed. In "A Collector's Company" the collector is a country vicar who practices the black arts. A chance visitor sees the old vicar on the lawn, leading a wild dance in which the other participants are either skeletons or corpses (it is never made clear which). The collector comes to a bad end and is found at the church door with his clothes clawed to shreds.

Perhaps the most eerie atmosphere of any story in the collection is found in "The Dining-Room Fireplace." An

Irish country house is rented for a vacation, but the new tenants object to an evil portrait and inexplicable draughts in the dining-room. Finally two people see what they thought was a ruffled hearth rug fly up the chimney. Hidden behind the portrait are found the records of an eighteenth-century club, the members of which dabbled in witchcraft. The portrait is that of their president who mysteriously died in that room.

One of Malden's happier attempts is "The Sundial," in which the new owner of an old house removes an ancient post in the garden to put a sundial in its place. He immediately begins to be haunted by an evil-looking man who always vanishes at close range. It is discovered that formerly a crossroads met in the garden, and that the post was a stake driven through the corpse of a hanged criminal to lay his spirit.

By far the best story in the book is "Between Sunset and Moonrise." A country curate goes to the far end of his parish to visit an old woman who never goes to church. He receives the impression that she was expecting someone else and is struck by her nervousness during his visit. On the way home fog sets in, which separates long enough for him to see a towering, cloud-like creature, intensely diabolical, rush past him to the house he had recently left. Of course the old woman is found dead the next day. If Malden had attained the high level of this story in his other efforts, Nine Ghosts would be a much better thing than it is.

FLORENCE MARRYAT

Florence Marryat has a slender little volume of ghost stories called The Ghost of Charlotte Cray and Other Stories. One of the four tales it contains is not a ghost story. All are longer than average.

The title story is the poorest one. An old maid is led on by a man and she expects to marry him. When he marries another, she wants to tell his wife of his perfidy but dies before she can do so. After her death her ghost visits his home and office several times in vain but finally succeeds in materializing before the wife. The man, however, convinces his wife what she saw was a delusion.

Superior to this is "Little White Souls," which is set in India. The wife of a British officer believes her husband is unfaithful. Because of her child's health she accepts the loan of a Rajah's castle in the hills. Years before, an Englishwoman had been forced to enter the Rajah's harem, but she displeased him and was put to death along with her baby. Now her ghost comes to steal the soul of the foolish woman's newly born baby. Emphasis is put on the woman's stubborn jealousy rather than on the ghost.

Best of all is a typical old-fashioned ghost story called "The Invisible Tenants of Rushmere." A family rent a country house but hear it is haunted. The father ignores local warnings and also some vague noises, but when he hears a whole spectral tragedy re-enacted, he is forced to believe in ghosts. They later hear the story of the Place: A former

daughter of the house was unhappy and married foolishly to get away. When she returned seeking forgiveness, her father shot her and then hanged himself, and this is what subsequent tenants hear but cannot see.

G. F. MARSON

G. F. Marson has an almost unique little book called Ghosts, Ghouls, and Gallows, containing several ghost stories, three of which possess real excellence. The first half of the book is devoted to authentic experiences in the supernatural that have come within the author's ken. The second half of the book is an assortment of short stories, almost all of which deal with either crime and detection or the supernatural. Several of these stories are linked together in the experiences of a policeman in a small town, and almost all show some merit.

"The Face" is the story of a phantom monk who guards some antique golden vessels belonging to an old church. An attempted robbery is frustrated by this ghost who scares the burglar into fits. The story is excellent except for prolixity, and the same holds true for "Drowned Men Tell No Tales." In this instance a murder comes to light because of an eerie glow hovering over the hidden body.

"The Ice Beck" is an interesting story of a certain stretch of water haunted by an evil spirit which compels people to commit suicide. Several people have drowned themselves there in the past, and one more is just prevented

in time. The near-victim declared she was in fine spirits until reaching the water, when she was seized with deep depression and a strong urge to destroy herself. Much slighter is "Drop With The Left," a story of a cricket match. The star of the team is on a spot and does not know what to do until he hears his father shout "Drop with the left." This is strange for he had left his father home in bed. On returning home he learns his father is dead, but sat up just at the last moment and shouted, "Drop with/^{the}left."

Least successful of all is "Trumpeter, What Are You Calling Now?" A man befriends a troupe of scouts who camp on his place every year, and rouses them in the morning with his bugle. One year he fails to show up, but his bugle awakes several boys who slept in a barn during a storm. They learn that fumes would have killed them if they had stayed in the barn, and they also learn that their bugling friend had been dead several months. Another rather mediocre story is "Death of a Cleric," in which a ghost identifies his murderer by calling attention to his picture.

Marson has a most attractive extra-short ghost story "Ever Faithful," a minor masterpiece of striking originality. Centuries ago in the great plague the inhabitants of a village burned their homes to prevent infecting their "sister town" in the valley. Now during the war the town in the valley is about to be bombed when suddenly the lights of a town spring out up on the hill. The inhabitants of the valley find the next morning that the site of the ruined

town had been bombed and that once again it had saved their lives.

"The Victory Ball" concerns a group of selfish, worldly young people in postwar Britain. They are unable to find any place for a party but an abandoned camp; so they appropriate its chapel. That night the dancers are joined by shadowy forms, nurses and soldiers, and the belle of the ball is startled when she is claimed by one of the latter. He turns out to be her husband, whom she deceived and who was killed in action. She is killed in turn when the flimsy buildings catch on fire and her partner will not let her go.

Marson's best story, a very original one, has one of the most gruesome climaxes in all supernatural fiction. "The Haunted Bus" is the story of rival bus companies. The owner of one of these is mentally unbalanced and is killed by his own bus while trying to race his rivals. After his death persons who sit on top of the bus are likely to be joined by a wild-looking man who glares madly about him. This happens several times and the phantom also causes the driver to run over a child and finally to wreck the bus. All this is related by the local doctor to a visitor as they drive along the road where these events took place. The climax comes when the subject of their conversation reveals himself in the back seat of the car, and causes another accident.

RICHARD MIDDLETON

Richard Middleton's career, like that of Fitz-James O'Brien, was cut short by death before he could fulfill the promise of his youthful work. Middleton is the author of at least five stories of the supernatural, two being very famous--"The Ghost Ship" and "On The Brighton Road." They are all found in The Ghost Ship and Other Stories.

"The Ghost Ship" is one of the outstanding humorous ghost stories in the language. In a terrible windstorm a ghost ship manned by ghost pirates is blown inland and settles in a turnip patch. The crew causes chaos in the village by luring the respectable local ghosts into becoming drunkards; and when a local committee investigates, the captain serves them some rum that explains everything. Order is restored when the ghost ship returns to its natural habitat during a second storm, but the turnips in that field have tasted like rum ever since.

"On The Brighton Road" is a little masterpiece of stark tragedy. A tramp is joined by another, but the second one is scarcely more than a boy and ill besides. The sick one is put in a hospital in the next town under protest. The older tramp is amazed when his youthful companion joins him again on another road; he is more amazed when the younger man informs him that he died that morning.

Middleton's other ghost stories are much slighter.

"The Coffin Merchant" suggests W. F. Harvey's "August Heat."

A man receives a handbill from a mortician informing him that he will soon be in need of his services. He goes to see if the notice is a practical joke, but is told that it is not and that they are sent only to those who will soon need their services. He is so upset that he goes home and dies. "The Conjuror" concerns an unsuccessful magician who needs a job desperately. He is on trial for a job one night, but has made several blunders. His next trick is to make his wife disappear with the aid of mirrors. She does so without the mirrors, however, and so completely that she is never seen again. He gets the much-needed job.

"Shepherd's Boy" is a thinner story which lacks the impact of "On The Brighton Road." A stranger is asked by a shepherd if he saw a boy on the path. The stranger later learns in the local inn that the shepherd's son was killed and that the old man consequently lost his mind. He now asks all passers-by if they saw his son along the way-- some of them did.

MRS. M. S. MOLESWORTH

Mrs. Mary Stewart Molesworth, much better known for her many children's books, is the author of two books of ghost stories, both of which are disappointing. In the first, Four Ghost Stories, two out of the four are ghosts of the living, one is too long by half, and the fourth, "Lady Farquhar's Old Lady," somehow just misses being a first-rate story. It is the familiar tale of someone who loved her home so much she couldn't bear to leave it, even

after death. The old lady's ghost appears to a young girl three times and causes her to have a nervous breakdown. It is a well-developed story and the description of the ghost is very fine; it ought to be better than it is.

"Witnessed by Two" is the story of a man in India and his sweetheart in England. At a time of illness and great fatigue (semi-consciousness) his wraith or thought-projected image visits the lady in London and when it vanishes, she naturally believes he is dead. She later learns he is alive and that his recollection of the incident is like a dream. A somewhat similar story is "The Rippling Train," in which a man and woman love each other but never admit it. She marries someone else and he becomes an old bachelor. One night he sees her wraith in his study and later learns that she had just been severely burned, dying a few months later. Her wraith backed into the room and showed only a profile to hide the burned side of the face.

Last, longest (over a hundred pages) and poorest of the four is "Unexplained." The plot is too involved to give here, but no satisfactory solution is ever offered, and the reader feels that he is left holding the bag. Entirely too much time is devoted to laying the scene, which actually adds nothing to the story--it is an unsatisfactory tale from several counts.

Mrs. Holesworth's other collection is called Uncanny Tales, and only two out of the six stories it contains are of the supernatural; neither of these is outstanding. It is

distressing to read a story with unrealized possibilities, and such is the case with "The Shadow in the Moonlight," a potentially fine story which fails to make the grade. Again, it is too long for perfect success, and much detail could be omitted with profit. A family think they are living in a haunted house, but after three changes of residence they discover that their ghost (a particularly horrid one whose visits are admirably described) is attached not to the house but to some antique tapestries. When these are traced, a secret panel and some hidden jewelry are discovered.

The other story, "At The Dip of The Road," is much shorter. A girl returning to her cousin's home after dark from a visit in the neighborhood is terrified when the carriage is pursued by a man on foot who manages to keep up with the horses until a dip in the road is reached and he disappears. It is later learned that he had been a game-keeper on the estate years ago.

A. N. L. MUNBY

A. N. L. Munby is the author of some dozen ghost stories which are colled in the volume called The Alabaster Hand and Other Ghost Stories. At least two of these attain real distinction.

The title story concerns a relic which was hidden under the hand of a figure on a tomb. The pew beside the tomb was unoccupied for years; and when a newcomer sits there, the hand reaches out and grasps his coat. This incident eventually

leads to the discovery of the relic. A story which owes much to "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas" is "The Inscription," in which years ago an amateur sorcerer sets his familiar to guard his tomb. When a remote descendant attempts to move the tomb, he is killed by some sort of unspecified fiend, but the story falls far short of the one by James.

Another tale seems to have been suggested by "The Picture of Dorian Gray". In "The Topley Place Sale" a hard-headed heir insists on putting up for sale some heirlooms which were supposed to be kept in the family. Included were the pistols of a distant ancestor, and also a modern portrait of himself, which are all sent to the storeroom of the auction firm. When the night watchman there hears a shot, he finds a bullet gone from one of the guns and a hole in the heir's portrait. We later learn that the heir died at exactly that time, presumably from heart failure.

"The Negro's Head" is an old account of a Negro killed for sorcery by a superstitious man who is subsequently killed by the Negro's ghost. Another revenge story is "The Lectern," in which a stolen lectern brings ruin and violent death to the family of the man who stole it. With the exception of two witchcraft stories here omitted, the only other second-rate story in the book is "The Four-Poster." It is discovered that the bed-hangings were made from disinterred shrouds by a grave-robber, but not until after their former owner visits the occupant of the bed with very unpleasant consequences.

Munby has an interesting story in "The Devil's Autograph," a variation on the old Faust theme, but possessing enough freshness to prevent its being trite. In "The Treganet Book of Hours" the new owner of the book finds a modern illustration and tries to trace the old one. He finds the missing picture was drawn from life, the result of a family curse. It seems a man wanted his neighbor's farm and burned his house over his head. The dying man told him he would never rest with his ancestors, and when he dies a charred figure interrupts the funeral by stealing the corpse. The man's lame son was unable to run so had to watch, and he later drew what he had seen.

Another fine story is titled "An Encounter In The Mist" and might well be called "The Well-Meaning but Mistaken Ghost." A man lost in the mist is given directions by a kindly old man but finds that if he had followed them, he would have fallen to his death. Local legend later reveals that a benign hermit lived there years previously, and often directed lost people to safety by what was then a safe trail. Since then part of the trail had fallen in a landslide and in seeking to help, the ghost had unwittingly sent several men to their death. Even better is "The White Sack," a really excellent story of an elemental. A man wanders for hours lost in the mist. When he finally finds his way out, he is alarmed to see a small cloud of the mist detach itself, follow him, and rapidly gain on him. The terror and mounting suspense are finely handled and it is by far the most original story in the book.

A more orthodox story and perhaps a more gruesome one is "The Tudor Chimney." An old mansion is haunted by a horrible apparition trailing burnt rags and an awful smell ever since a sealed chimney is opened. When Parish records are examined it is discovered that a former owner of the Hall was very unpopular. After he was suspected of killing a child the villagers stormed the Hall one night and he was never seen since. Naturally upon investigation his partially burned remains are found in the chimney where he evidently tried to hide, but once these are given Christian burial the house is troubled no more. It is a bit old-fashioned, perhaps, but none the less effective for being so.

AMYAS NORTHCOTE

The name of Amyas Northcote, like that of his literary contemporary A. M. Burrage, is a very important one in the twentieth century ghost story. While Burrage's stories are more consistently perfect than those of Northcote, the latter has several stories of decided excellence. Although Northcote adheres fairly closely to established patterns, he manages to infuse much variety into his work. His stories are collected in the volume In Ghostly Company.

Among these, "The Downs" is reminiscent of Blackwood's "May-Day Eve." A traveler lost at night on the downs finds himself in some very strange company. He later learns of an old local superstition that on one night in every year all those who met a violent death on the downs return to

the scene. Also similar to another Blackwood story, "A Deferred Appointment," is "The Young Lady in Black," which is the better story of the two. An artist is commissioned by a young woman to do her likeness, but she can stay only a short while and so he must study her face very carefully while she is there. He executes the miniature and finds upon delivering it that he was about to be summoned to paint a picture of the lately deceased daughter of the house from photographs. The photographs are of his elusive sitter.

Less successful and somewhat too long is "The House in the Wood." Two travelers pass the night in an isolated house where their hosts attempt to rob one of them. Possible murder is prevented by the other one, who is awakened and led to the other's room by a young girl. When he describes her to his friend, that par^{son} declares her to be his daughter who had died a few months before.

The next story concerns a rather unusual form of haunting. In "The Steps" a girl is persistently visited by invisible footsteps which she recognizes as those of a deceased suitor whom she refused to marry. Science is helpless, and the innocent victim is eventually hounded into her grave. Better still is "The Late Earl of D.," which uses the device of an old tragedy re-enacted in the present. A visitor to an old estate sees reflected upon the window pane a murder which took place some thirty years ago in that room, but the room itself is empty. The story is very admirably contrived.

Northcote's two masterpieces are entirely dissimilar. One of them, "Brickett Bottom," is a riddle story, and the other, "The Governess's Story," is the standard tale of a suicide's ghost unable to rest. In the latter the governess hears noises overhead at night, including a scream, but finds upon investigation that there is nothing over her room but a flat roof. Unable to bear it any longer, she finally resigns and learns before leaving that her mistress' husband had a son by a former marriage. Because of cruelty and restraint the boy threw himself from the window of a room (now torn down) directly over her bedroom.

"Brickett Bottom" is one of the best riddle ghost stories ever written, and appears frequently in the anthologies. A family with two daughters moves into a new part of the country. One of the daughters is something of an invalid and stays at home, while the other goes out and makes friends, including an elderly couple who live in Brickett Bottom. One afternoon she goes to visit these new friends and never returns. The grief-stricken family learn that no house has stood in Brickett Bottom for over fifty years.

OLIVER ONIONS

It is very disagreeable to settle down with an expective shudder to a book of ghost stories only to discover that many of them are not ghost stories at all. Such is the case with the Collected Ghost Stories of Oliver Onions. Like Henry James, Onions seems to be more interested in

psychology than in the supernatural, and his ghost stories suffer as a result.

For instance, in Onions' best-known story, "The Beckoning Fair One," it is never made clear whether the man was visited by a ghost or by some sort of delusion. However, it is only fair to give some opinions other than mine. The editors of Great Tales of Terror and The Supernatural call it "certainly one of the finest and most terrifying ghost stories ever written,"¹⁵ and Bennett Cerf says it is one of the two best ghost stories he has ever read.¹⁶ In the first place, it is too long to succeed as a ghost story. The plot revolves around a man who rents a house and begins to imagine he hears things, a woman combing her hair, for example. He gradually falls in love with his conception of this woman and as gradually loses contact with the world. When his former sweetheart insists on visiting him repeatedly, he (supposedly unconsciously) locks her into a small cupboard, where she is found a few months later, so that he can listen uninterrupted to the combing of the hair. The tale evokes a thrill of horror, but not horror of the supernatural.

Two more stories that could be shortened to great advantage are "The Rosewood Door" and "The Rope in the Rafters." The build-up in each of these is so prolonged that the reader is well-nigh exhausted before the super-

¹⁵ Wise and Fraser, p. 868.

¹⁶ Bennett Cerf, Famous Ghost Stories, Introduction, p. viii.

natural element ever enters. "The Rose-Wood Door" is an antique door built into a modern home. It causes a man to kill his bride because it transports him into a previous life in which his wife was unfaithful. Still less satisfactory is "The Rope in the Rafters." There is a ghost of sorts, but it is so vague and unconvincing that the reader is never sure what it is all about.

Two stories somewhat similar to each other are "The Out Sister" and "The Cigarette Case." In each the protagonist talks to someone, only to learn later that no such person exists. In the former an artist visits a convent to sketch, falls to day-dreaming, and wakes up to find her sketch done. She has a long talk with the Sister who lets her out. When she returns to the hotel, the sketch has become a blank sheet of paper, and upon investigation she cannot find the Sister she talked to. In "The Cigarette Case" two travellers visit an old lady and her daughter in a quaint chateau. The next day one finds he left his cigarette case there and returns for it, only to find the place a deserted ruin. . . but his case is in the salon. This is one of Onions' more successful ghost stories and is shorter than most of them.

"The Master of The House" is an excellent werewolf tale. Some people rent an old house with the understanding that the owner, his servant, and dog will occupy one wing. They soon discover that the owner and his man take turns inhabiting the body of the dog. The old man welcomes release, but it results in his death.

Onions' best ghost story has the intriguing title of "The Woman in the Way." Its effectiveness is heightened by the narrator's insistence that he does not believe his own story. A woman dies with a grudge toward a man, or possibly toward his mother. At any rate, her phantom begins to appear to the man's younger brother, and sometimes meets him two or three times in the course of a certain field. A visiting scholar is called on for help, and the woman is eventually exorcised.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

Vincent O'Sullivan has a rather indifferent collection called A Book of Bargains, in which are four stories of the supernatural. These have many of the faults common to the "mauve decade": attempts at wittiness, deliberate vagueness, and a jaunty, arty sort of bohemianism.

Neither of the two more orthodox ghost stories in the collection has much to recommend it. "My Enemy and Myself" is a story of a murdered man who seeks revenge by coming to his killer's house in the form of a corpse so as to incriminate him. In "The Business of Madame Jahn" Madame Jahn is killed by her nephew for her money. She returns from the grave to drive him to suicide.

More interesting is "The Bargain of Rupert Orange," which is a well-written variation on the Faust theme. Perhaps most original of all and strangely convincing is "When I Was Dead." In this a man dies from overwork and witnesses the reactions of his servants and sister to his death, which he just cannot realize. It is only when the funeral cortege leaves the house that he can doubt the fact no longer.

VIOLET PAGET

Violet Paget, under the name of Vernon Lee, has given us four stories of the occult which have been collected in the volume Hauntings. Montague Summers has bestowed extravagant praise upon Miss Paget; in the introduction to his Supernatural Omnibus he ranks her right at the very top with such a master of the ghost story as M. R. James.¹⁷ In this collection he reprints two of her stories, "Oke of Okehurst" and "Amour Dure."

I do not go so far in praise of Miss Paget as Summers does, but her stories are certainly well written and deserve to be better known. The other two stories in Hauntings are "A Wicked Voice" and "Dionea." This last is not actually a ghost story. Dionea is a reincarnation of Venus and causes everyone she comes in contact with to have passionate love affairs.

One criticism might be made here of all four stories: They are a bit too long for the very best effect. In fact, none of Miss Paget's ghosts, with the possible exception of the one in "Oke of Okehurst," are exceptionally frightening, and even that one is never pictured directly to the reader. This story is told by the artist who visited Okehurst to paint portraits of the owner and his wife, an exotic, languishing, fin-de-siecle type who, bored with her unimaginative husband, seeks diversion in imagining herself a remote

¹⁷ Montague Summers, The Supernatural Omnibus, Introduction, p. 35.

ancestress who had a love affair with a poet. The reader is never told so in so many words, but it is suggested that the lady is receiving visits from the poet who has been dead for two hundred years. The climax comes when her husband sees this "visitor" embracing his wife, and not realizing his spectral nature, shoots him. Of course the bullet goes right through the ghost and kills his wife.

"A Wicked Voice" is set in Venice. A young musician is trying to compose an opera in the rather heavy style of Wagner. He hears a local legend about an eighteenth-century singer who could cause the death of his listeners from pure ecstasy if he chose. He begins to hear a strange singing, and dreams of the legend. In visiting a country house he discovers it is the scene of the legend of a woman killed by the magic voice. That night he is drawn to the ballroom where he sees the drama re-enacted. All of this unfortunately has the effect of making him unable to finish his opera.

"Amour Dure" tells of a student who is studying the history of a small Italian town. He comes upon the history of a medieval femme fatale, a lovely woman who causes the death of her lovers. He becomes fascinated by her, and then obsessed. He believes he sees her, and eventually such a rapport is created that he does. One morning he is found in the square with an antique dagger in his chest, and the reader is left to imagine what took place at his midnight tryst.

All three of these stories center in a somewhat neurotic person, who, unable to face the present, retreats into the past and thus invites undesirable company. In other words, these stories are all of one piece.

BARRY PAIN

Barry Pain is the author of some seven short stories of the supernatural, which are found in the volume Stories in the Dark. With the exception of "The Moon-Slave" these are not particularly distinguished. Some of the stories are marred by a vague, languid exoticism so often typical of fin-de-siècle literature, while others are merely flat and uninspired.

"The Undying Thing" suffers from over-length. A wild family was cursed by a witch, and the wife of the baronet at that time was scared by a wolf during pregnancy. It is suggested that what she gave birth to was half human and half wolf. It was placed in a cave to die, but instead lived for at least five generations, killing an occasional cow or two. For some unknown reason it emerges from the cave at the time of the story and kills the present heir.

"The Gray Cat" is upon the often-used theme of a visitor to Egypt who buys an old carved cat. A gigantic Negro tries to buy it from him and failing, curses him. Back in England the man adopts a large cat because it reminds him of the statuette. The cat is savage and eventually kills the man, but can never be found. The antique carved cat is also

missing, and a large Negro was seen to leave the house at the time of the murder.

"This Is All" is told by the ghost. A man is warned by his doctor of a weak heart. He dozes in his library as usual that night and finally wakes and goes upstairs. The dénouement comes when he is not reflected in the mirror at the head of the steps. "The Case of Vincent Pyrewhit" is an extra-short ghost story with nothing to recommend it. A woman dies and calls her husband on the phone shortly after the funeral. She tells him he will soon be with her, and he dies the next day.

Pain has two stories in which it is never made clear whether the protagonist was actually haunted or if he was insane. In "The Diary of a God" a man retires to an isolated farm where he becomes increasingly eccentric. When he disappears, his diary reveals that he had come into contact with the ancient gods who invite him to become one of them. A much better story is "The Green Light." A man murders a woman, and the last thing he notices before he leaves is her face bathed in a greenish light through a curtain of that color. When he returns that night to get some money he forgot in his haste, he sees that window of that room filled with a greenish light. He looks at the light until it unsettles him so that he confesses his crime.

Pain's best ghost story, one of striking originality, is "The Moon-Slave." A princess has an overwhelming passion for dancing. One night she steals away from a boring ball and finds herself in a strange place bathed in moonlight.

When lovely music starts, she is compelled to dance and does so all night. Thereafter, each time the moon is full, she is seized with uncontrollable longing to return to the strange waste and dance. One morning she does not return, however, and searchers find one of her shoes, and near it the mark of a cloven hoof.

HOWARD PEASE

When one reads a collection purporting to be ghost stories and finds that less than one-third of them deal with the supernatural, he feels cheated. Such is the case with the Border Ghost Stories of Howard Pease. To add insult to injury there is not a really good ghost story in the whole book.

Two of the stories, "Kitty's Bower" and "Tale of The Three Antiquaries," are both of ghosts of the living or thought-projected images. Neither is at all distinguished. A story vitally lacking in clarity is "The Muniment Room," in which are found the bones of a man, but the ghost is that of a woman. No explanation is offered.

Of the only three ghost stories in the book that have any claim to literary worth, one is of possession. "In The Blackfriar's Wynd" tells of a wicked old man who takes possession of his servant's body at night for evil purposes. His nephew denounces him to the local priest, who puts things to rights. In "The Haunted Ale-House" a man traces his missing brother to a disreputable tavern where he suspects

foul play took place. When he finds his brother in a recently made grave, he hesitates no longer but accuses the owners of the ale house. They succeed in overpowering him when suddenly his dead brother comes to his assistance.

A family feud is revived in "The Lord Warden's Tomb" when a man innocently walking through a graveyard is struck a tremendous blow by an unseen antagonist. He later learns that he was right at the tomb of an ancestral enemy of his family and that hatred had existed for generations. All things considered, this is Pease's most successful story.

MRS. J. H. RIDDELL

Mrs. J. H. Riddell, nee Charlotte Cowan, was another Victorian novelist who tried her hand at the supernatural. She tried a full-length novel on this theme, The Haunted River, and in the early 1880's there appeared a collection of her short ghost stories called Weird Stories.

Mr. S. M. Ellis declares "Weird Stories" comprise some of the best ghost tales ever written."¹⁸ I am sorry to say I cannot agree with this. These tales are ghost stories, true, but the ghost is not the main focal point. There is no main focal point. The ghost is a means of solving some sort of problem, usually a hidden will or a miser's hidden hoard. (Mrs. Riddell seems to have been obsessed with money.) In each story this problem is always solved, and the ending is as happy as possible under the circumstances. In other words, these stories are flat, uninspired, and all of one

¹⁸ S. M. Ellis, Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others, p. 295.

piece. They fail to create any terror whatever in the reader, and could be shortened by half to great advantage.

The setting in "Walnut-Tree House" is very well contrived, but the ghost, that of a small boy, is treated so nonchalantly that it fails to make any impression on the reader. The child was mistreated by a distant cousin who inherited the house because a will leaving it to the child and his sister could not be found. Of course the hero finds the will and marries the sister. The ghost sees her happy and is satisfied, so haunts no more. This story sets the pattern, with one exception, for the other stories in the book.

"The Open Door" also revolves around a hidden will. A man is murdered by his wife because he made a will in another's favor. The door of the room in which he died cannot be made to stay closed until the will is found and the murderer detected. The setting here is very detailed and adds nothing to the story.

"The Old House in Vauxhall Walk" was owned by an old miser murdered for her money, but the assassins were unable to find it. The hero sees her sitting and counting her gold. When it is found hidden behind a mirror, the haunting ceases.

"Old Mrs. Jones" was another miser whose husband murdered her for her jewels. She establishes rapport with a girl living in the house where the crime was committed and causes her to dream that she sees the crime take place and also to walk in her sleep to where the murderer lives under an assumed name.

"Nut-Bush Farm" is also haunted by the ghost of a man murdered for his money. When his remains are found, and by the most amazing coincidences his murderer discovered, he ceases to haunt the beech wood. The story's only redeeming feature is a very diverting local character, Miss Gostock. The one exception of this series of problem stories is "Sandy The Tinker." A minister dreams that he makes a pact with Satan by which his soul is forfeited on a certain date unless he can send someone in his place. A dissolute old tramp, Sandy, dies just in time to serve as his substitute.

MAY SINCLAIR

The ghosts in May Sinclair's Uncanny Stories are of the earth, earthy. They are motivated or inhibited by physical considerations perhaps more than any other ghosts in fiction. For example, in "The Nature of the Evidence" an ethereal first wife returns from the grave to prevent her husband from having intercourse with her lascivious successor. If not a particularly frightening story, it is certainly a startling one.

"If The Dead Knew" is the story of a man unable to marry because of an invalid mother. He wishes she were dead and she dies, but after his marriage she returns to haunt him. However, as soon as he is really repentant, she ceases to trouble him any more.

A poignant story is "The Token," in which the wife of a very undemonstrative man dies without ever knowing for sure

that he loved her. She comes back after death to find out, is never seen by the husband but only by his sister, and once satisfied, she takes her leave.

"The Victim" is perhaps the best worked out story of any in the collection. A hot-tempered young man, mistakenly believing that his aged employer has advised his sweetheart to leave him, murders the old man. The ghost of his victim appears to him several times, each time more substantially, and finally tells him that he (the ghost) bears no malice because he has been delivered from pain into a much more agreeable existence. What the ghost does want cleared up is the mistake, and when the young man ceases to hate his victim, the ghost ceases to trouble him.

Two more stories are not exactly ghost stories--"Where Their Fire is not Quenched" tells of an adulteress doomed after death to commit adultery for all eternity, and in "The Finding of the Absolute" a man finds Heaven different from what he expects.

Miss Sinclair has another unusual psychic story in "The Villa Desiree," in which a young girl suddenly sees a phantasm of her bridegroom-to-be taking shape beside her bed. At first she thinks he must be dead, but soon realizes that what she sees is the astral-projection of his mere animal lust. The wedding is called off.

LEWIS SPENCE

In The Archer in the Arras we have an interesting collection of ghost stories and not-quite-ghost stories by

Lewis Spence. Some of the twenty-odd stories in the book are not ghost stories in any sense; there is one story, "The Firn," on the fairy queen, and another, "Himself," in which Christ appears. Several stories dealing with Mexican magic and Central American witchcraft must rank as failures. Spence's stories are shorter than the average ghost story; perhaps if they were developed at greater length they might be more successful. As it is, there is not a single really superior tale in the book, although several approach excellence very closely. These deserve to be better known.

One of the best of these is "The Horn of Vapula," which reminds the reader of some of M. R. James' work. A visitor to a small village sees on the roof of the church a fantastic figure which follows him home. He is amazed to find the same figure the next morning carved in stone on the church roof, but finds the local curate very reticent on the subject. Investigation proves that when the church was built the Bishop of the day immured his demon familiar Vapula in a stone gargoyle by sorcery, but the enchantment held good only by day, leaving the fiend free to roam at night.

Somewhat similar is "The Seat of Sergulath," in which a man recently heir to an old house notices a red glow at night in an unused room. He and his wife see a gigantic inhuman form sitting in a massive old chair, and learn that an ancestor had chained his familiar to the chair by magic. The spell is broken when its name is pronounced, and they are horrified to see the demon rush to the old

chapel to wreak revenge on the corpse of its captor, who is buried there. Still another variation on this theme is "The Hudart." Years ago a woman sold the souls of all her descendants in order to gain a familiar with power to foretell the future. The monster descends as a sort of family curse and predicts accurately various misfortunes until it is finally exorcised.

One feels "The Sorceress in Stained Glass" was written carelessly and in great haste. Two friends buy an old house by the sea and restore it. One of the main features is a stained-glass window in the library depicting a woman in red robes holding a knotted rope. The men find that on windy moonlight nights this lady leaves her window and walks about the library. They discover that she was a famous witch who tied windstorms up into a knotted rope and then untied them when a ship came by in order to wreck it.

Much less successful stories include "The Green Mirror," in which a lovely woman, a sort of sea-nymph, appears in a mirror and lures a man to his death. He is found with his head thrust through the broken mirror, but his death was caused by drowning. Another one, "Cook Lorel's Boat," tells of a man who finds his hotel room changed into a ship's cabin. When he smashes the figure of a boat carved on the mantelpiece, the room returns to normal.

The title story, "The Archer in The Arras," is one of ghostly revenge. The last member of a noble English family

spends the night in a French chateau. A remote ancestor had been responsible for the extinction of the family who owned the chateau. The bedroom is dominated by a tapestry depicting an archer, and during the night this archer sends his arrow into the descendant of his hated enemy. The story is undistinguished and too sketchy. A maudlin story of "The show must go on" is called "The Ghost in Hamlet." An old actor playing the part of the ghost returns from the grave to play his part; no one realized he was dead until afterward.

Another story which might have been much improved is "The Red Flasket," in which a man prolongs his life by means of a magic elixir which he got from an old wizard. When his supply of the elixir is gone, he sends his servant to the castle of the wizard, now dead, for more. The wizard resents this intrusion, however, and comes along too, and of course the elixir doesn't do any good. Still slighter are two stories told in Scottish dialect, "Maister Mudie" and "The Stane Finger." The former is the story of a spirit bound to, but outside, his castle because of a curse. The latter story tells of noble ancestors wreaking vengeance on an unworthy descendant, reminiscent of E. Nesbit's "Man-Size in Marble."

BRAM STOKER

In addition to being the author of Dracula, one of the best known novels of the supernatural ever written, Bram Stoker also has at least two short ghost stories, both possessing real distinction. These appear in Dracula's Guest,

which takes its title from an episode originally intended for inclusion in Draoula.

"The Secret of the Growing Gold" is a very original story of revenge. A man and woman live together for some time, until he finally abandons her and marries another. She returns to upbraid him and he murders her and hides the body beneath the hearth. Imagine his horror when her golden hair begins to appear through cracks in the hearth stones and gradually attracts the attention of his wife.

"The Judge's House," a story of sheer terror, is the familiar one of the student seeking a quiet place to study. In spite of warnings not to do so, he rents the abandoned house of a judge who led an evil life. The very rats which plague the house never come near the judge's portrait. The student becomes increasingly aware of a malign presence, and finally the old judge's ghost begins to manifest itself. The rats try to summon aid by swinging on the bell-pull, but run at the approach of the evil phantom who uses the rope to hang the helpless student. The mounting suspense is managed to perfection.

H. R. WAKEFIELD

One of the most prolific modern English ghost story writers is Herbert Russell Wakefield. I would not go so far as to rank Wakefield with M. R. James, but at his best he compares favorably with such masters of the ghost story as E. F. Benson and Marjorie Bowen. Like those of the former,

Wakefield's stories are very uneven in quality, but the mediocre ones are compensated for by such blood-curdling tales as "The Red Lodge" and "The Seventeenth Hole at Duncaster," both found in his first collection, They Return at Evening.

"The Red Lodge" is haunted by a particularly horrible ghost in the form of a drowned corpse dripping green slime which it leaves all over the house. There is a local legend to the effect that years ago a man had his wife so badly scared that she drowned herself in the river at the foot of the garden. At any rate the ghost is especially malevolent toward children and as the narrator has a young son the tale becomes very dramatic. Wakefield also shows his talent to advantage in "The Seventeenth Hole at Duncaster." This is a story of forces from an ancient Druid religion who resent a golf course being partially built on the remains of their ancient altar. Solitary golfers are heard to scream, but when they are reached it is too late. This story is of its kind as good as anything M. R. James wrote along similar lines.

They Return At Evening also contains four stories that have little to recommend them. In "That Dieth Not" a man kills his wife, who had married him for his money, and she returns to ruin his second marriage. "Professor Pownall's Oversight" deals with a fanatical chess player who kills his rival. In every game he plays thereafter the rival's ghost appears to aid his opponent. "The Third Coach,"

a story of second-sight, tells of a criminal whose partner is going to blackmail him. He puts her on a train he had "seen" wrecked earlier; the train is actually wrecked and she is killed. "The Echo" starts off with the phantom re-enactment of an old murder, and the rest of the story is on detective fiction lines.

Only slightly superior to these is "A Peg On Which to Hang," in which a hotel room is haunted by the ghosts of a suicide and the peg on which he hanged himself. More subtle is "Of Persons Unknown," which concerns the revenge ghost of a dog sent by its gypsy master to kill the man who deliberately ran over it. This story has an excellent development and is told to a prospective employer by the murdered man's valet.

One wonders if "He Cometh and He Passeth By" was influenced by "Casting The Runes." An evil man of great power suggesting Oscar Wilde is able to send some sort of fiend or familiar to kill his enemies by drawing a certain symbol and placing it to their foreheads. He is finally caught in his own net by the friend of a man whom he had killed. "And He Shall Sing" is also better than average. Every time the supposed author's name is put to a volume of poems, it is effaced and another substituted. We later learn that the supposed author had murdered the real author so as to get the glory for himself.

Another Wakefield collection, Others Who Returned, also contains several fine stories, some of which are of the

riddle type. It is easy to say too little in this type of story, but those of Mr. Wakefield, though unexplained or even seemingly unfinished, are yet always satisfactory. In "Look Up There!" the narrator, now insane, was a guest at a New Year's Eve party. No one had spent New Year's Eve in that particular house for over three hundred years because of a supposedly horrible haunting on that date. We are never told what he saw, but we infer from what it did to him (and the others present) that it was quite dreadful. Another story for which no explanation is offered is "The Cairn," the familiar story of two bold young men who are warned to stay away from a certain locality. Of course they disregard the warnings and neither is ever seen alive again.

Still better, and perhaps the best story in this book, is "Blind Man's Buff." A man finds himself in a strange house in total darkness. He is unable to find the door or to get any light, and in the darkness he hears vague noises and feels trailing fingers brush his face. This is as fine a story of mounting panic as I have ever read.

"A Coincidence at Hunton" tells of a man who drowned an overbearing sweetheart in a pond. He later skates on this pond and is dragged under, and when they find him a skeleton's arms are firmly clasped around his neck. In "Nurse's Tale" a nurse tells her small charge of a boy she nursed years before. In centuries past his family was cursed by a witch, and on visiting the place where she was burnt

the child went into convulsions. When they get him home the marks of burns appear on his body.

Less outstanding is "The Dune," a rather weak story of a man who sees another man drown himself, only to find that the drowning actually occurred fifteen years earlier and has been seen by many people since. "Present at the End" tells of a man who is haunted by the ghosts of a bird and a rabbit that he shot. When he contributes to the S.P.C.A., they stop haunting him. Least satisfactory of all is "The Last to Leave," in which a building is condemned. An old man is working there late at night when the building starts to collapse, but two friendly spirits conduct him out in safety.

"Unrehearsed" is more ambitious; an unscrupulous actor steals another's play and rewrites it as his own. The poor playwright cuts his throat in the actor's dressing room and that night, when the actor is supposed to be saved just in time from the gallows, the lights go out and he is found hanged. In "Surprise Item" we have the interruption of a radio program by a voice telling how the man he killed won't let him leave the room to get food. It is weird in the extreme and very well told.

One of Wakefield's best is very aptly named "Old Man's Beard." A particularly repulsive revenge ghost appears not to his nephew (who murdered him for his money) but to the nephew's fiancée. He has a nasty habit of caressing her face with his long gray beard, and the only solution is for

the nephew to commit suicide. One wonders if the central idea was suggested by Henry James' "Sir Edmund Orme." Four more stories in this book are not ghost stories.

Wakefield has at least three more collections of ghost stories, but the only one I could find is The Clock Strikes Twelve, which falls far short of the two previously discussed. There is much similarity between several of the stories, and some of them are not ghost stories at all.

As a rule the rather short ghost story is Wakefield's forte, but two of the stories here suffer from excess brevity. One of these, "A Fishing Story," is otherwise excellent: two Englishmen go to Ireland and while fishing in a deep pool where a bridge once stood, one is pulled into the water and narrowly escapes drowning. They later learn that a fanatical Irish patriot who hated the English was drowned there when the bridge collapsed. The other story, "Into Outer Darkness," must be ranked as a failure. Two friends sit up at night in a haunted house, and one of them experiences in a sort of trance a horrible death that took place there years before. His friend is unable to wake him from the trance.

"Ingredient X" is the pedestrian story of a man who rents a room only to hear odd noises and have strange dreams. After many disturbances he learns that a former occupant had cut his throat. Another story that fails to impress the reader is "The First Sheaf," in which the narrator explains how he lost his arm. The natives of the district in which

he lived as a boy practiced human sacrifice during a drought. When he investigates the ancient altar, something bites him, causing blood poisoning--it was a child's tooth.

Two more stories almost totally devoid of distinction are "Masrur," in which a man is haunted by a ghost cat, and "In Collaboration," where the ghost might be explained as a sort of persecution complex. Only slightly better is "Death of a Poacher," a werewolf story. A man shoots a hyena in Africa, and the wraith of a huge Negro leaves the animal. The man is then haunted by the were-hyena; and when his friends shoot a hyena on his estate in England, of course it is the man who is found dead.

This brings us to the four outstanding stories in the collection, none of which, however, show Wakefield at his best. "The Alley," a potentially fine story, is too indefinite; the ghost is hinted at but never drawn clearly enough to be recognized as such. A man retires to the country and restores an old house rumored to be haunted. All the manifestations are so vague that the reader is totally unprepared (and therefore sceptical) when two of the guests meet violent deaths. "Lucky's Grove" suffers from exactly the same faults. Wakefield, in attempting to suggest rather than state, has not suggested enough. A Christmas tree is cut from a forbidden grove formerly sacred to Loki, thereby setting off a chain of events resulting in several deaths and a fire.

"Jay Walkers" is not quite so vague, but the ghosts, while responsible for several traffic fatalities, are so

lacking in those qualities which inspire terror that the story falls somewhat flat. On the anniversary of their death two lovers return to stroll along their favorite path, now a main highway, with disastrous results to drivers who see them. Much better is "Used Car" in which a man buys a car that was the scene of a double murder. Passengers in it are likely to find, especially after dark, that they experience a choking sensation, hear a gun fired, and see peculiar reddish stains on the upholstery.

Mr. Wakefield has a facile invention and a great deal of originality, but he lacks the ability to use these to the greatest advantage. One has only to compare him to F. M. Crawford or M. R. James to see his shortcomings.

HUGH WALPOLE

Sir Hugh Walpole is the author of some very fine ghost stories which have appeared in various collections of the author's short stories and also in some anthologies. There is a need for a collected edition of his ghost stories; as it is, there were several which I could not find.

The Thirteen Travellers includes two ghost stories, neither of which shows the author at his best. In "Lizzie Rand" a woman is visited by the spirit of the first wife of the man she is about to marry, and is warned to give him up as the marriage would be a failure. In "Mrs. Porter and Miss Allen" an old lady is pursued by the ghost of her brutally domineering husband who finally drives her to the grave. He cannot bear to see her enjoying life.

"The Spow" is a rather conventional story about a woman who often quarrels with her husband. She is warned by the ghost of his first wife that if she keeps on hurting him she will be sorry. She disregards this, and then begins to see the ghost, hitherto invisible. After another ignored warning she is chased out into the snow, where she is later found, strangled. A much more original story is "The Tarn," in which an evil child drowns a friend in an isolated tarn. He is haunted that night by the waters of the tarn which seem to rise in his room. He is found the next morning apparently drowned in the water from his washbowl.

Walpole's most orthodox ghost story, one of superb atmosphere, is "Mrs. Lunt." A writer is invited by an admirer (a total stranger) to spend a holiday with him in a lonely old house. Once there he cannot shake off a sense of dread and foreboding. Then his privacy is interrupted several times by an evil-looking old woman, who is finally discovered to be the wife of his host, who had murdered her. She is now haunting him in revenge and finally succeeds in scaring him to death.

"Tarnhelm" is the author's masterpiece and is perhaps the most original werewolf story in the language. At any rate, it is the best story on this theme that I have ever read. A lonely little boy is sent to visit two bachelor great-uncles in a marvelously gloomy old house. One of the uncles shows the child a strange cap which he calls his "tarnhelm," and says it can enable him to change his form.

The child begins to be visited by a horrible brutish dog which snarls and slavers at him, and he also notices his other uncle seems to be under a growing strain. Finally, after terrific suspense, the younger uncle shoots the malevolent beast, and of course it is his elder brother who is found dead.

H. G. WELLS

H. G. Wells often appears in anthologies of the supernatural, yet I can find no bona fide ghost stories in his work. His stories of the supernatural suffer as a whole because their author is more interested in trying to be clever than in writing a good ghost story. Included in The Short Stories of H. G. Wells are four stories in which a person is projected into other worlds overhanging our own. These are "The Door in the Wall," "The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes," "The Plattner Story," and "The Crystal Egg," none of which fall within the scope of this paper.

Wells has two stories of possession. In "The Story of the Late Mr. Elvesham" an old wizard changes bodies with a young man. Thus the wizard can go on living for years with renewed vigor, while his wretched victim suddenly finds himself the unwilling possessor of old age and all its infirmities. "The Stolen Body" is a more original story of a man who invites disaster by deliberately trying to project his astral self across town to a friend similarly interested in psychic phenomena. He succeeds but finds when he returns to his body that it is now inhabited by an

evil spirit. The spirit causes the body to commit several crimes before its true owner regains possession.

"The Red Room" is a very frustrating story which would be superb if it only contained a real ghost. A man spends a night in a reputedly haunted room and the author's description of his mounting panic as first one and then all the candles go out is very fine. But no ghost ever appears. More successful is "The Moth," which treats of rivalry between two experts on moths. One dies and the other is then haunted by a new species of moth which he cannot catch, and which others cannot see. He finally goes insane and we are never told if the moth really existed or not.

"The Inexperienced Ghost" has a fine climax, but must be considered a failure because of lack of artistic harmony. The story opens with a man relating how he helped a frightened ghost go back where it came from; the style is like that of Jerome K. Jerome and John K. Bangs and is intended to be humorous. But when the narrator shows the motions the ghost made in order to return, he drops dead.

THE GHOST STORY
IN
AMERICA

AMBROSE BIERCE

One of the greatest names in the history of the American ghost story is that of Ambrose Bierce. While his stories often contain more of horror than of terror, they are a valuable contribution to weird literature-- a contribution all Bierce's own; moreover, for his own particular brand of grim, sardonic humor seems to have originated with himself and no one has matched it since. In speaking of Bierce, Frederic Taber Cooper says, "it is in his supernatural stories that Mr. Bierce shows even more forcefully his wizardry of word and phrase, his almost magnetic power to make the absurd, the grotesque, the impossible, carry an overwhelming conviction."¹

Bierce specializes in the extra-short ghost story; many of his stories give the impression of being brief pieces of reporting for a newspaper. This very brevity is sometimes a fault, but more often the fault is found in incongruous attempts at humor. I do not refer here to Bierce's ironically gruesome playfulness as evidenced by the subtitles to "The Damned Thing," but to frequent attempts at wit which add nothing and detract much. Most of Bierce's ghost stories appear in Can Such Things Be?

¹ Frederic Taber Cooper, Some American Story Tellers, p. 350.

Unwonted levity spoils two potentially fine stories, "Secret of Macarger's Gulch," and "A Jug of Syrup." In the former story a man spends a night in a deserted cabin and dreams he sees the previous owners. He wakes in the night to hear an old murder spectrally re-enacted and later learns a skeleton was found under the floor. In "A Jug of Syrup" the jug is bought by a man who forgot that the storekeeper had been dead for over a month. The story spreads and crowds gather outside the store, but when anyone attempts to enter, he is plunged into darkness.

"The Night-Doing's at Deadman's" is an absurd and confusing jumble. A crazy man ^{holds} the ghost of a Chinese earth-bound by keeping his pigtail. Death personified gives it to the Chinese and kills the madman. Sentimental and none too successful is "A Baby Tramp." A small child's parents die and he is taken out west by relatives. His mother's ghost is seen in the old graveyard, calling her child, and the baby finds its way back across the country to die on her grave.

Bierce has two stories of second sight, one of which, "A Wireless Message," is excellent. One night a man staying in New York sees an image of his wife and child hovering in the air over his head and surrounded by a red glow. He learns that they were killed in a fire in Chicago at approximately that time. "One of Twins" is less successful. A man walking on the street thinks he hears his brother cry out. He races to his brother's lodgings, only to find him on his death bed.

Bierce is nothing if not versatile; he has tried his hand at almost every type of ghost story. "Moxon's Master" is on the Frankenstein theme: Moxon creates some sort of monster which promptly strangles him. "An Inhabitant of Carcosa" reminds the reader of some of Poe's work. A startling tale is gradually unfolded and we finally learn that it is being told to a medium by a ghost.

"Staley Fleming's Hallucination" is better than the average extra-short ghost story. It is suggested that Fleming killed another man, who had a pet dog. The dog refused to eat and died on its master's grave. The murderer is then haunted by the ghost of his victim's dog, which finally bit his throat. Less outstanding is "A Tough Tussle," a riddle story. During the Civil War an officer is driven insane by the proximity of a corpse, and hacks at it with his sword. He is found the next morning all hacked up himself--by whom?

In "Beyond the Wall" a man establishes a signal with the girl next door by tapping on the wall. She dies, and he begins to hear the tapping again; the third time he hears it he dies. Even better is "John Bartine's Watch," one of Bierce's best stories. Bartine has a watch that belonged to a Revolutionary ancestor who had been hanged. For some reason he has a violent fear of looking at the watch around eleven at night. One night he is tricked into doing so, and dies with the mark of a rope around his neck.

"The Stranger" possesses a genuinely eerie atmosphere. Some campers in a desolate region out west are surprised when a visitor joins their campfire circle. They are even more surprised when he tells how he and three comrades committed suicide to keep from being captured by Indians. "An Arrest" is among the finest extra-short ghost stories ever written. A man hits his jailer in escaping from prison and flees. Some distance away he is stopped by the jailer. Feeling resistance is futile, he accompanies his silent captor back to jail, only to find the corpse of the jailer who had died from the blow.

Not so successful are two more extra-short stories, "A Cold Greeting" and "Present at a Hanging." In the latter a peddler's ghost appears beside a bridge to call attention to the suicide of his murderer, who had hanged himself from a beam of the bridge over his victim's grave. In "A Cold Greeting" the ghost is the result of a pact made between two friends that the first to die would appear to the other. A man sees his friend on the street, but the friend won't stop; the man later learns that the friend had died shortly before he saw him.

Bierce has an orthodox but excellent little ghost story in "The Other Lodgers." A man looking for a place to sleep in a Southern town is directed to a hotel. He wakes in the night to find the floor of his room covered with corpses. Next morning he learns that the hotel is now vacant, but had been used for a hospital during the Civil War. "The

Thing at Nolan" is a very original story. A man is suspected of murdering his father, but a body cannot be found. Since the father was seen by his cousin eight miles away at the time the murder supposedly took place, the son goes free. Much later the body is discovered.

"The Isle of Pines" is something of a riddle story. A man returning from a long trip is forced by a storm to spend the night with a neighbor. When he reaches home, he learns that his host had been dead a month. That night he returns to investigate with two friends, but their candle goes out, and when they relight it one of them is found dead. "A Fruitless Assignment" is another riddle story, too much so, and must be classed as a failure. A reporter is assigned to spend the night in a haunted house. He sees a whole troupe of ghosts, but for some unexplained reason tells his editor he saw nothing.

Bierce was fond of the riddle story in general and the story of a mysterious disappearance in particular. The following five stories, all of unexplained disappearances, are among Bierce's finest efforts. Perhaps the best known of the five is "The Spook House," a tale of pure horror. A family of seven vanish from a house, taking nothing with them. Years later two men seek shelter there from a storm and open a door into a room full of corpses. One of the men faints, and when he comes to in a hospital, six weeks have elapsed during which his friend has been shut in the room. He can never find the door to the room again, and everyone believes him insane.

In "At Old Man Eckert's" Eckert disappears, and three men plan to spend a night in his house. One of them arrives late and goes into an inner room without speaking to the other two. When they follow him, he too has vanished.

"Charles Ashmore's Trail" is a story of a boy who went for water and never returned. His footprints stop short in the middle of a field, and for months his family hear his voice in that vicinity, gradually growing fainter.

In the next two stories, both extra-short, the disappearances take place before witnesses. "An Unfinished Race" tells of a man who bet he could run a certain distance. Three friends who accompany him see him stumble and vanish before he hits the ground. In "The Difficulty of Crossing A Field" a man is seen to vanish in the middle of an open field, before his wife, children, and two neighbors. No explanation is ever offered.

We come now to Bierce's three best-known stories, two of which have become classics through frequent appearances in the anthologies. "A Vine On A House" is a strikingly clever story of a most original supernatural manifestation. Two visitors to a deserted house are amazed when a vine shading the porch trembles violently, although there is no wind. They dig it up and find the roots from the perfect outline of a body, only lacking one foot. The former owner's wife lacked a foot.

Although it is somewhat awkwardly developed, "The Middle Toe of the Right Foot" has definite power. A man is tricked

into a duel which, according to the custom of the locale, will take place in a dark room. However, he was recognized as a local man who fled after murdering his family, and he is lured back to his former home. There, instead of dueling, they lock him into a room where he is found dead the next day. Facing him are footprints, one lacking a toe--his wife lacked that same toe.

More skillfully contrived is "The Damned Thing," which is Bierce's masterpiece, all things considered. It is gradually revealed at an inquest that a murdered man had recently been haunted by an invisible entity which crushed grain to the ground and blotted out stars from view. The man was finally unable to bear it any longer, and fired at the thing, which in turn mangled him to death. Bierce's ghoulish humor is perhaps best illustrated in the subtitles to this story.

He also has a rather indifferent werewolf story, "The Eyes of the Panther," included in In The Midst of Life. A pregnant woman is so frightened by a panther that she goes insane. Her baby girl is born a few months later. The girl now grown, gives this as a reason for not marrying a man, but he discovers a better one--she can assume the shape of a panther herself.

RALPH ADAMS GRAM

Ralph Adams Gram is a distinguished ghost-story writer in addition to being a distinguished architect. He makes up in quality what he lacks in quantity, for Black Spirits

and White contains only six stories, one of which is not a ghost story.

"The Dead Valley" is also not a ghost story in the strictest sense, but does have some supernatural elements. Two children lose their way and come upon a weird valley where nothing grows. They hear a frightful and unearthly cry, and a mist begins to form. They escape just in time to prevent being lost in this mist, but the dog with them is found to be dead. When they get home, the younger brother cannot remember the experience; so the elder brother goes back. When he finds the valley again he is almost killed by a horror of the place and the panic it arouses.

The other four stories all possess genuine ghosts with the exception of "No. 252 Rue M. Le Prince," which is perhaps the most original of all. The new owner of an old house has some friends to spend a night there with him, and one of these wakes in the night to find eyes regarding him in the dark. He then feels a slimy jelly-like mass fall on him which proceeds to drain his life, like a sort of vampire. He is rescued just in time, and the walls of the room are found dripping with some sort of slime. This is an exceptionally well-told story with very effective description.

Cram occasionally gets carried away by description, however, and his settings for the next two stories are perhaps a trifle too long. "Sister Maddelina" is the time-honored story of a spirit unable to rest because it is not

buried in consecrated ground. The spirit is that of a nun who was walled up alive because of a love affair, to which most of the story is devoted. The ghosts in "The White Villa" are invisible, but quite audible, and they periodically state a violent murder of jealousy that occurred years before. It is a very good story, the only flaw being an over-lengthy introduction.

The last story does not suffer from this detailed description, and is really very diabolical, with a horrible surprise ending. In "In Kropfsberg Keep" two young men spend a night in a reputedly haunted castle, where one of them sees the ghosts of phantom dancers and their murderer. This last was a wicked nobleman who locked his guests in the ballroom and burned them to death, then hanged himself. The spectres are described with much empressement and the story is one of Cram's best.

F. MARION CRAWFORD

F. Marion Crawford is the author of two really excellent stories, "The Upper Berth" and "The Screaming Skull," both of which are favorites with the anthologists. These with five others were collected in the volume called Wandering Ghosts. Of the other five, four are second-rate, and one, "By Waters of Paradise," is not a ghost story at all.

"The Dead Smile" is as lurid as any Gothic novel at its worst. A malevolent old man who is about to die sees

his son planning to marry, but refuses to tell him that he is also the father of the intended bride. The supernatural element is provided by the woman the old man betrayed who comes from the grave as a banshee to claim his soul. All in all the story leaves much to be desired.

Not so lurid, but sickeningly sentimental is "The Doll's Ghost," in which an old man who repairs broken dolls for a living sees in a doll he mends a fancied likeness to his daughter. When the daughter goes to deliver the doll, she is hurt and the doll crushed to bits, but the doll comes to take the frantic father to his daughter's side.

Only slightly better is "For The Blood is the Life," a vampire story laid in Crawford's beloved Italy. Two men see a grave with a figure lying on it--the figure vanishes as they come closer; so one of the men tells the other the local legend concerning it. It seems that a girl was murdered and buried there in an attempt to prevent her beloved's inheritance from being stolen. After death, in the form of a vampire, she draws this youth to her and nightly drains his blood until the local priest puts her to rest for ever. The flaw in the story is that no reason is offered as to why the girl becomes a vampire.

Much better than any of these is "Man Overboard," which but for its length might be a really first-rate tale. An old retired sailor tells his crony about two men they once shipped with, who were twins and loved the same girl. The refused one let the chosen one be washed overboard in a

storm and then pretended to be the one who was drowned. However, the drowned twin comes back on board to whistle his favorite tune and also to leave his pipe lying around in prominent places. Not content with this he comes to his brother's wedding and forces him to walk into the sea-- the body is found tightly clasped by a skeleton in oilskins.

This story is very similar in the manner of telling to Crawford's masterpiece, "The Screaming Skull." Both are tales of wonder told by an old seaman to a friend, and the narrator's evident reluctance to credit the supernatural adds materially to the story. ~~The skull now materially to the story.~~ The skull referred to in the title is that of a woman who was murdered by her husband. She seeks revenge by biting her husband's throat and in harassing the narrator, who innocently suggested the method used by the murderer. The atmosphere is very well drawn and the details that gradually build up as proof of a supernatural agency are handled with admirable restraint.

Perhaps even better known through frequent appearances in anthologies is "The Upper Berth." This is a spine-tingling story of a ship haunted by the ghost of a suicide who compels people occupying the haunted stateroom to follow his example. The narrator shows much courage in grappling with the seaweed-draped revenant who has sent three people to a watery grave. A porthole which cannot be made to remain closed adds to the air of the unexplicable. The only solution seems to be to seal the door of the cabin and forget its existence.

AUGUST DERLETH

Perhaps the most prominent name in the modern American ghost story is that of August W. Derleth. Lovers of weird literature owe Derleth a great deal, for he has not only given us three collections of his own ghost stories, but has also been responsible for the collecting, editing, and reprinting of many more, often ones long out of print and otherwise practically unobtainable. Among those whose stories he has reprinted are H. R. Wakefield, Cynthia Asquith, H. P. Lovecraft, and Sheridan Le Fanu.

Derleth's work is very uneven in quality, ranging from mere pulp-magazine level to excellent stories possessing real spiritual terror. He specializes in the brief ghost story; the reader often wishes he were supplied with more detail, but occasionally the result is a little jewel, polished and precise, with no superfluities. Derleth's worst fault is that he is too imitative; his stories show plainly that he has read other writers in the field. The reader feels that Derleth could equal if not surpass some of the authors he consciously or unconsciously imitates if he would only rely on his own ability.

Derleth's first collection, Someone in the Dark, contains several first-rate stories. Among these is "Three Gentlemen in Black," in which a young man poisons his uncle. Years before, his father had drowned two of his uncles, and now their ghosts haunt their old home, after driving their

murderer to suicide. The young man moves into this same house, at first not realizing its connection with himself; and it is the gradual return of memory and subsequent terror that make the story so fine. The climax is reached when the uncle he murdered joins the two great-uncles his father murdered, making three gentlemen in black.

"McGovern's Obsession" also possesses considerable distinction. A man moves into a new house and finds that he does automatic writing every time he sets his pen to paper. His hand is possessed by a woman murdered in that house by her husband, a doctor. When the doctor learns that the man knows his secret, he attempts to murder him, but his wife's spirit takes possession of the hand again and kills him first.

"Bramwell's Guardian" is reminiscent of M. R. James' "A Warning to the Curious." A man finds a Druid ring and takes it home with him, but finds he is followed by some sort of monster sent to guard the ring. He ignores advice to return it, but finally gets so worried that he tries to give it away. He is found in four large pieces and several smaller ones. Similar is "Altimer's Amulet," in which a man steals a relic from Tibet, cutting off a priest's hands to escape. Back in England he is haunted and finally killed by the cut-off hands.

Derleth makes frequent use of the plot revolving around a nephew haunted by the aunt or uncle he either murders or wrongs, in some way. "A Gift for Uncle Herman" is a horrid

little tale of an uncle murdered for his money. He was adept at black magic, however, and turns the tables by taking possession of his nephew's body. In "Muggridge's Aunt" a dyfig woman makes her nephew promise to take care of her old servant. When he breaks his promise, she comes back and breaks his neck by tripping him on the stairs.

"Glory Hand" is similar to W. W. Jacobs' "The Monkey's Paw." A man inherits the property of a wizard, including a mummified hand. When he makes any evil wish, the hand carries it out, but the man refuses to believe it. When he decides to test it on himself, he learns, too late, that he was wrong.

Derleth acknowledges the influence of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman on the next five stories, but unfortunately they all suffer by comparison with her best ones. Two of his, however, possess real distinction, one being "The Shattered House." A man and his sister rent an old house and shortly begin to see various phenomena and to have disturbing dreams. The sister, the more impresionable of the two, is ultimately possessed by the spirit of a former owner of the house who went insane.

"The Sheraton Mirror," one of Derleth's best stories, has a revenge ghost. Aunt Hattie, now dead, hated her nieces and nephew but leaves them her home on the condition they live there. In the room in which she hanged herself there is a Sheraton mirror in which the nieces begin to see a vague form. Their brother, who has a weak heart, walks

into the room one day, and the blur in the mirror suddenly becomes his hated aunt. When the apparition swings around to face him, the shock is too much for his heart.

The other three stories are not as successful. "The Wind from the River" vaguely suggests "The Shadows on the Wall." A woman is loved by her step-nephew and drowns him to get rid of him. He returns, leaving a trail of water and the smell of the river, and forces her to return with him to a watery grave. In "The Panelled Room," a story with fine but unrealized possibilities, the ghosts are of secondary interest and the plot is very involved. "The Telephone in the Library" tells of a man murdered by his sister. His ghost annoys her by calling her several times on the phone before killing her. Four more stories in the book are not ghost stories.

Derleth's second collection, Something Near, contains twenty-one tales, eight of which are not ghost stories. "Pacific 421" is a rather original story of a man who uses a ghost train to scare his stepfather to death. The murderer, however, does not get off unpunished. Retribution also occurs in "A Thin Gentleman With Gloves." A lawyer who handled a sorcerer's estate appropriates some of the funds. He is then followed about by the sorcerer's familiar, who eventually catches him with fatal results.

Derleth is fond of the possession motif. "A Wig for Miss Devcre" tells of a movie star who wears a wig formerly belonging to an Aztec priest. She finds herself possessed

by his spirit, which causes her to kill several people. Another story of possession, but not quite so lurid, is "Headlines for Tod Shayne." Another movie star occupies a house formerly owned by a murderer, and the murderer's spirit takes possession of the actor and makes him murder several times. Both these stories seem uninspired, as does "The Inverness Cape." The cape causes its wearer to commit murder; if he feels remorse afterwards, it chokes him.

Not much better is "Lady Macbeth of Fimley Square," an unconvincing story of possession. An amateur actress plays the part of Lady Macbeth and is then possessed by that lady's spirit. "Lansing's Luxury" tells of a ruthless man who dispossesses a sorcerer, and in return the weird old man causes his death. A story with unrealized potentiality but yet possessed of an authentic note of terror is "No Light for Uncle Henry." Henry is killed by his brother Herbert for his money, and thereafter, whenever a light is brought into Uncle Henry's room, his phantom can materialize in the form of a shadow. Consequently, Uncle Herbert keeps the room dark until one night he is tricked into going in there while intoxicated, and Uncle Henry takes his revenge.

This brings us to the five outstanding stories in the collection; two of these are minor masterpieces, one is an excellent vampire story, and the other two are perhaps a little too brutal for true perfection. These last two, "Carousel" and "The Metronome," are fine horror stories, but they lack the spiritual note necessary for a good ghost story.

In the former story a little girl is abused by a sadistic stepmother. The child spends as much time as possible in an abandoned amusement park, where she makes friends with the ghost of the Negro who used to run the merry-go-round. When the stepmother goes there after the child, her "friend" kills the stepmother. "The Metronome" belonged to a young boy murdered by his stepmother. She hears the hidden metronome ticking but cannot find it. Just as she is on the verge of a breakdown, the child's ghost saves her from it by putting her out of pain permanently.

"The Satin Mask" bears a vampirish curse; all those who look through it have horrible visions and gradually lose their vitality. It was presented to a lovely girl who disregarded its legend and wore it, and died as a result. Now her niece is about to follow in her footsteps. Even better is "An Elegy for Mr. Danielson," one of Derleth's most original stories. An antiquary cheats a rival out of something, and the rival dies. Later, Mr. Danielson dies and his rival's ghost brings Danielson's sisters a piece of music to play at the funeral. It is actually an ancient magic chant for raising the dead; and when the sisters try it on the piano, the rival is able to make Danielson's ghost return his stolen property.

Best of all is "Here, Daemos!" which might easily have come from the pen of M. R. James. A new and ambitious vicar hears a legend of treasure buried in a tomb in his church. Old members of the parish warn him not to meddle

with a wizard's tomb, and the inscription itself warns against opening or moving it. Disregarding these, the vicar has the tomb opened and finds some antique jewelry, and also finds he is now pursued by a large and savage black dog. Of course, the dog is the sorcerer's familiar, and punishes the vicar for his rashness by killing him.

The third collection of Derleth's ghost stories is called Not Long for this World. Six of the stories in it are not ghost stories, and of the remainder, several suffer greatly from lack of detail; they are not sufficiently developed. Among these is "Nellie Foster," in which a woman prevents a newly created vampire from killing local children. In "The White Moth" a man is haunted by the wife he murdered. Her ghost, in the form of a moth, leads him into a river. "The Lilac Bush" is much too brief. Some children see lilacs picked by an invisible entity at their grandfather's old home and later find them on his grave. "Just A Song At Twilight" is another slight story in which it is suggested that a dying boy is a reincarnation of a former occupant of the house. At any rate, a ghost comes for him after entertaining the house with her singing.

Three more stories must be considered failures, but not because of this excess brevity. "Birkett's Twelfth Corpse" is an unconvincing story of rivalry between two men to see which can find more drowned bodies. The loser kills the winner, but his victim still wins because his ghost brings in the murderer's corpse. In "Mr. Berbeck

Had A Dream" the ghost of Berbeck's mother compels him and his wife to counterfeit money. Her laugh is heard in the courtroom as they receive sentence. "After You, Mr. Henderson" concerns an old lady who holds the honor of the family firm so high that she returns from the grave to foil her heirs' plans for some questionable dealings.

Among several mediocre stories is "The Return of Sarah Purcell," in which a woman's ghost forces her sister to find a hidden doll. The sister finds the doll she hid and Sarah's ghost promptly pushes her down the steps. The motivation is never made clear. Another tale which strains the reader's credulity is "The Second Print." A man took a picture of his stepfather (who was preparing to kill him) and then killed him in self-defence. However, the picture serves as a focal point for the dead man's hatred, and through it he can materialize. The stepson tries to prevent this by destroying the picture, but forgets he made a second print.

"Mrs. Elting Does Her Part" is more believable; a man plans to avenge his dead brother by scaring the man who cheated him. To do this he hires a medium's aid and impersonates the brother himself. The brother, however, is quite capable of revenging himself without any help. The mounting tension in "Mrs. Lannisfree" is managed almost to perfection. A woman who was murdered by her husband now returns to drip salt water and seaweed all over the house until the husband cracks under the strain.

Still better are "Those Who Seek" and "The Shadow On The Sky." In the latter an odd cloud with a noose hanging

from it haunts a man and eventually kills him. Years ago an ancestor hanged a criminal, and the criminal put a curse on his line. "Those Who Seek" is a riddle story concerning two men who spend the night in an ancient abbey, reputedly haunted. They find traces of an old pagan worship and one of them disappears in the night.

"The Drifting Snow" is a well-written vampire story, slightly suggestive of Mrs. Gaskell's "The Old Nurse's Story." An old lady will not permit anyone to look out the windows on snowy nights. This is because her father turned out a servant girl in the snow years before to perish in a blizzard, and the girl became a vampire. She tries to lure others outside to share her fate whenever it snows, and succeeded in making her victim the man responsible for her death. Now, years later, she succeeds in killing his grandson.

In "Baynter's Imp" the old theme of the imp in the bottle is given a new twist, for here the imp forces the man who lets him out to take his place inside the bottle. He is then forced to watch the imp marry his own sweetheart and raise a large family. "The Lost Day" is a story of astral projection. Here a man is forced to steal and rob while in a trance; a sorcerer had called out his astral self. In "Saunder's Little Friend" a man disregards his aunt's death-bed instructions. He is then haunted by an imp in the likeness of a little clay image in his aunt's room. When this image is thrown on the fire, the man burns to death from within.

Better stories include "The God-Box" and "A Collector of Stones," in which Derloth shows the influence of M. R. James. In the latter story a man intent on making a stone walk takes some tombstones from an apparently deserted graveyard. The first sign of trouble appears when people walking on these stones are tripped, but when the rightful owners take to materializing along the walk, the stones are hastily returned. "The God-Box" is on the theme of "Bramwell's Guardian." A man steals an antique box, not realizing it was used in Druid worship. He is warned to return it, but instead insists on opening it; when he does, a dense smoke pours out and kills him. These two stories are among Derloth's best work.

The next three stories are short and to the point; there is hardly an unnecessary word. "Feigman's Beard" tells of a man who mistreats several women, including his sister and a witch. His sister steals his mirror and some hairs from his beard, and the witch prepares an unpleasant surprise for him the next time he looks in ^{the} a mirror. His sister is unable to restrain her curiosity and looks in the mirror herself; what she sees kills her too. In "Mrs. Bentley's Daughter" a woman new in the town visits a neighbor and notices a child playing around a well. It is not until she returns home that she discovers the child was drowned in the well over a year before. "Wild Grapes" suggests Bieroe's "A Vine On A House," but far surpasses it. A man sees a light moving among the grape vines he planted

over his murdered uncle's body. When he goes closer to investigate, the vine seizes him and strangles him.

It is harder to attain perfection by writing little than by writing much, but in these last three stories Derleth has achieved just that. They are prime examples of the extra-short ghost story.

MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN

Two of the most outstanding American ghost stories, if not the very best, were written by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman. They are "The Southwest Chamber" and "The Shadows on the Wall." It is Mrs. Freeman's gift for creating an atmosphere of complete realism that makes her ghost stories so believable, and therefore all the more terrifying. Her ghost stories have been collected in The Wind In the Rose-Bush, and Other Stories of the Supernatural.

The two previously mentioned stories are so fine that the other four in the collection suffer by comparison. Certainly two of these four, the title story and "Luella Miller," deserve better recognition. The other two stories do not quite come up to the level of these four; "The Lost Ghost" is too sentimental and we cannot but feel that "The Vacant Lot" was carelessly done.

In "The Vacant Lot" a village innkeeper moves his family into town, buying a fine house surprisingly cheap. Shortly after moving they begin to see strange shadows on the vacant lot next door which eventually come into the

house. Loud knocks are heard, mirrors split from side to side like the Lady of Shalott's, and finally a group of phantoms in black draperies take possession of the house. The family is forced to move, and the weak explanation offered is that a person by the same name as the family who previously owned the house and vacant lot was found dead under suspicious circumstances years ago in the village inn.

"Luella Miller" is an interesting story in which a woman is a sort of vampire. Luella is one of those helpless women who have to rely on others to do things for her, but all who come to live with her go into a decline and eventually die. She seems somehow to drain their vitality, and is thus responsible (innocently, of course) for the deaths of six people. On the night she died her apparition was seen by a neighbor to leave the house escorted by the ghosts of all those whom she apparently drained of life. This supernatural climax is all the more effective because it was unprepared for, yet seems upon reflection to be the only suitable ending for the story.

An even better story is "The Wind in the Rose-Bush," which Mrs. Freeman evidently liked best, placing it first in the book and taking the title of the collection from it. A woman goes to get her niece to come and live with her. The niece's mother had been her sister; she died and the husband married again. Now he is dead and the aunt is making a long trip to get her niece and keep her from

having to live with a stepmother. Upon arrival the stepmother tells her the niece is visiting friends, but she is not bored while waiting, for marvelous things happen constantly. A rose-bush by the porch is continuously tossed to and fro when there is no wind, an organ plays by itself, sometimes in the middle of the night, and roses are left on the visitor's bed. She is called home before the niece returns, and after much correspondence gets a letter from the postmaster saying that her niece died over a year ago and the stepmother had been accused of neglect.

It is hard to decide whether "The Southwest Chamber" or "The Shadows on the Wall" is the better story--the former is perhaps more terrifying, but I believe ^{the latter} is perhaps more original.

"The Shadows on the Wall" is a subtle story, and its quiet horror is all the greater because it is only suggested. Three sisters and a brother meet at the old family home for another brother's funeral. The two brothers had a violent quarrel one night; one died the next day, and it is hinted that the other brother, a doctor, poisoned him. At any rate a shadow in the shape of a reclining corpse has appeared on the library wall. The effect on the sisters and then on the brother, and then the sisters' emotions as they watch the brother are described with consummate skill. The ghost obtains its revenge, however, and the death of the remaining brother is heralded by a second shadow on the wall.

"The Southwest Chamber" is also a fine study in character

and the effect of supernatural phenomena upon various temperaments. Two sisters inherit the home of a great-aunt who hated their deceased mother (her sister) because she felt that the sister had married beneath her. For years the sister and her daughters, now middle-aged old maids, lived in poverty and watched the unrelenting aunt live in state. Now, with no money left, they are forced to take in roomers if they want to keep the old mansion. The fourth boarder is put in the room the old aunt died in, the southwest chamber. In it she experiences several strange things: her clothes are sewn together and others are substituted in the closet in their place. She leaves, fearful for her sanity, and another boarder asks for the room. She in turn notices a change of drapes and bed-hangings, but in an hour the original ones are back in place. In bed she is awakened by a strangling sensation and finds a lace nightcap tied tightly under her chin. She removes it several times, once even ripping it to shreds, but shortly after she relaxes, it is tied on again, and she wearily returns to her old room. Then the young minister essays to spend a night there, but is met at the door by an invisible and immovable force, and can never gain access to the room. Finally one of the nieces decides to spend a night in the southwest chamber. When she does, she is dismayed to find herself possessed by the thoughts of the dead aunt, and finds by consulting the mirror that she even looks like her! The evil aunt triumphs and her hated nieces are forced to leave their family home.

HENRY JAMES

The Ghostly Tales of Henry James has one feature which I particularly like: it give his ghost stories in chronological order, thereby enabling the reader to trace for himself the development of the author in this field. Unfortunately the trend is away from emphasis on the ghost to emphasis on the intricacies of mind and emotions. Some of these are good stories, but they are not good ghost stories, and some included in this collection are not ghost stories at all. James was much more interested in how a ghost (or more often the suggestion of one) would affect the other characters in the story than in how his use of the supernatural would affect his readers. While unraveling all this subtle psychological analysis the reader is likely to forget the ghost, or at any rate to attach less importance to it than to other elements. This does not make a first-rate ghost story.

James' earlier ventures into the field of the supernatural are more readable than his later "riddles." His first ghost story, "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes," is among his most successful efforts. To be sure, the psychic element is not introduced until the last minute in the surprise ending, but it is a very skillfully contrived ending and most effective. The story itself is entertaining, telling of the rivalry between two sisters for the same man. The one who marries him dies but makes him promise to save her clothes and jewels for her daughter. He later

marries the sister and breaks his promise, with disastrous results.

"Sir Edmund Orme" is a brilliant study of a woman's conscience. A woman threw over a lover years ago because she found another she liked better, and the first lover committed suicide. Now that her daughter is grown and sought after, his ghost appears to the woman and also to prospective suitors. This haunting of the daughter, seen only by her mother and by the man she really cares for, is a very original idea and most effectively carried out. This story is one of his best.

In "The Ghostly Rental" a student tries to unearth the mystery surrounding a supposedly haunted house. An old man killed his daughter there, and her ghost returns four times a year to dole out enough money for him to eke out a miserable existence. When the old man falls ill, he asks the student to go to the old mansion and collect for him. When he does, he finds the "ghost" is flesh and blood; the daughter never died but has been posing as a ghost to punish her father. The tables are suddenly turned when she sees her father's phantom appear and finds later that he passed away in his bed some miles away at that same moment.

"The Third Person" is a very great disappointment because the delightfully weird setting and gruesome possibilities it offers at the start are unfortunately never realized. Two highly moral old maid cousins inherit an old family home and find it contains a ghost (an ancestor) of none-too-

savory reputation. Had James stuck to a straight ghost story instead of attempting humor, the result might be much better than it is.

"The Turn of the Screw" is unquestionably James' masterpiece in this field. Many critics would assign it the place of honor, and much has been written about it from nearly every possible point of view. The main problem confronting the reader is to separate what is actual fact and what is supposition on the part of the governess. The students of psychology are prone to read all sorts of disagreeable things into it, but I believe that James intended it to be a ghost story and nothing more. The mounting suspense and terror are most skillfully managed, and James is a master of subtle suggestion. For once the problem of leaving too much up to the reader to supply is nonexistent from an artistic sense. The ghosts of the valet and the former governess are permeated with evil, and their attempts to lure the children to death and possibly worse are horribly suggested in all sorts of devices. The characters of the new governess and the old housekeeper (a standard figure in the ghost story) are very finely drawn, and the former possesses enough verisimilitude to be accused of sexual starvation! Perhaps one might venture the opinion that the story would be much more effective if it were not quite so long, but all things considered, it is James' best.

H. P. LOVECRAFT

Howard Phillips Lovecraft is one of the greatest figures in American weird fiction. His genius is unquestioned, and he has often been compared to Poe. Lovecraft's stories have had a host of imitators, but none manage to infuse the master's note of individuality.

Lovecraft's reader is immediately struck by an exquisitely beautiful style of writing, vaguely suggestive of Poe and Dunsany, among others, and yet distinctly different from any. This style only serves to heighten by contrast some of the most loathsome descriptions in all literature, and herein lies Lovecraft's chief fault. Instead of suggesting spiritual terror, he must describe physical horror, and the reader is more often nauseated than terrified. Occasionally the horrors are carried to such an extreme that they are even funny. As Peter Penzoldt says, "A presence felt, rather than perceived by the senses, is beyond his inventive powers."² In addition to this, Lovecraft's stories are often somewhat repetitious.

A story may belong to weird fiction and yet not be a ghost story; this is true of most of Lovecraft's work. Consequently, many of his best-known stories are omitted from this discussion. I have used my own judgment in making a selection and have excluded those stories in which pseudoscience is predominant. In addition to many anthologies, Lovecraft's work has appeared in three collections from

² Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 170.

Arkham House, all unobtainable, and also in the Best Supernatural Stories of H. P. Lovecraft. There is also an Avon pocket-size edition of Lovecraft, Cry Horror. August Derleth has done a biography of Lovecraft called H. P. L., A Memoir.

"In The Vault" is a brutal story of revenge: a thrifty undertaker cuts off a man's feet so that he will fit into a small coffin. Later the undertaker is accidentally shut into the vault where this coffin is stored. When he stands on the coffin to reach a transom, something bites and tears at his ankles savagely. In "Pickman's Model" an artist who paints scenes of fiendish horror invites a friend to see some of his work. The friend accidentally discovers that the ghoulish monsters Pickman depicted were done from life.

"The Rats in the Walls" is perhaps Lovecraft's best known story, one of an ancestral horror lurking beneath an old house. A man makes a fortune and restores his family home. He finds his family had a terrible name in the neighborhood, and he also finds a sort of sub-basement where his ancestors practiced some very questionable arts. He is finally possessed by a sort of cumulative ancestral reversion, and is found eating the body of a neighbor.

"The Outsider" is perhaps most suggestive of Poe; the vocabulary is almost identical. A man can remember nothing before his life in a great gloomy castle, and in climbing the tallest tower he opens the door into another world. He interrupts a dance and all flee from him in horror. When

he looks in a mirror, he learns the reason for this-- he is a corpse.

"The Haunter of the Dark" is a very well-developed tale on the familiar theme of the inquisitive student; this one investigates a shunned church. He finds it was used for worshipping a strange god who hates the light. The god establishes a rapport with the student, and the latter feels horribly afraid, but feels safe because of the street lights. During a storm, however, the electricity is out off, and the horror in the old church is then able to cross the darkened town to reach his prey.

My own personal preference is "The Music of Erich Zann," one of Lovecraft's most original efforts. A man in an old lodging house is fascinated by the strange music he hears from the garret. He becomes friendly with the old recluse who lives there seemingly in great fear of something. One night the visitor looks out the attic window, but instead of familiar city lights he sees only a black void. Horrified, he rushes out of the house, and when he tries to find it again, he cannot.

"The Dunwich Horror" is another of his better-known tales, strongly suggestive of Arthur Machen's influence. An old man practices sorcery, and his daughter mates with some creature from another world. She has twins, one human and the other like its father (invisible). When the human brother dies, the other one goes berserk and kills and eats several families.

"The Call of Cthulhu" is also similar to much of Machen's work in its style of narration. A man makes out

a case for the survival of some horrible ancient gods by comparing stray newspaper items and similar accounts. He investigates these coincidences and draws the conclusion that they are all a result of periodic revivals of memories of almost forgotten worship.

"The Thing on the Doorstep" is a disgusting story of possession, in which a man unknowingly marries a witch. Her power is so great that she can force him to trade bodies with her; so he grows frantic and kills her. She is still strong enough after death to take possession of his body and force him to enter her rotting corpse.

"The Hound" lacks clarity; it can only be said to be decadent. Two men rob a grave in search of thrills and steal a jade amulet from it. The grave is that of a legendary ghoul who was killed by a spectral dog. The friends begin to hear the baying of a hound, and one of them is found mangled to death. The other one tries to return the amulet, but it is stolen. When he digs the grave up anyway, he sees the amulet tightly clasped by the decayed, blood-smearred corpse.

"The Moon-Bog" could have been made into a fine orthodox ghost story, but again Lovecraft must introduce some undefined horror from an ancient city, which lies under the bog. A visitor to the castle overlooking the bog awakes to see its spectral inhabitants lure his host and the servants to a slimy grave.

"The Unnameable" is a short (for Lovecraft) story of some vague horror that lurks in an old attic. As two men sit on a tombstone behind the house discussing this thing's existence (one believes and one does not), it suddenly swoops down on them and proves it.

In "The Shunned House" a house is investigated by a man and his elderly uncle. The house has an evil reputation because so many deaths have occurred there. The men learn it was built over a graveyard, and find in the cellar the grave of a vampirish entity which kills the uncle before it can be vanquished.

FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN

One of the earliest masters of the ghost story in America was an Irish immigrant, Fitz-James O'Brien, whose untimely death resulted in an undoubted loss to weird literature. His contemporaries seem to have had little or no influence on him; his work merely shows the great Celtic ability for story-telling. His four stories of the supernatural, found in Collected Stories, show much variety.

O'Brien's best-known story is of the riddle type, "What Was It?" This is one of the first instances of the invisible haunter in the short ghost story and has influenced many later stories, among them Maupassant's famous "Le Horla." An invisible creature drops onto the bed of a man in a New York rooming house. He subdues and binds this creature, but never succeeds in determining its nature. It makes a

dent in the bed and can be heard to breathe, but refuses to eat and so eventually dies.

"The Lost Room" is another riddle story, this time of a strange disappearance. A man leaves his room and upon returning to it finds it occupied by several men and women enjoying a sumptuous feast. The decorations of the room now suggest the utmost luxury. When the man refuses to join the feast, he is promptly evicted from the room and, worst of all, can never find it again.

"The Pot of Tulips" is a more orthodox ghost story. A man dies leaving a hidden fortune, and his heirs cannot find it. His granddaughter's sweetheart sees the old man's ghost carrying a pot of tulips, which leads to the discovery of the gold behind a carved pot of tulips on a mantelpiece. Least successful of the four is "The Diamond Lens," an early attempt at science fiction. A man murders another to obtain a large diamond, which he makes into a lens. When he looks at a drop of water through this lens, he sees a beautiful woman with whom he falls in love. The drop of water eventually evaporates and his loved one with it; so his happiness is of short duration.

ELIA W. PEATTIE

Elia W. Peattie has an attractive little volume of ghost stories called The Shape of Fear. All thirteen tales in it are shorter than the usual ghost story, and yet Mrs. Peattie manages to give us several very effective ones,

which do not suffer from the lack of groundwork so dear to most writers of the day.

Her stories have the direct appeal of the primitive ghost story, and one of them, "From the Loom of the Dead," is set in Iceland and has the quality of an ancient saga. Two children are abused by their stepmother who gives them insufficient food and clothes. One night she awakens to see her predecessor weaving some strange cloth in which she wraps the frightened woman in her bed. When the stepmother buys the children warm clothes and feeds them well, she feels the cold invisible garment leave her.

In "The Shape of Fear" a man is afraid of the dark, but we are never told why. A friend finds him in the dark by chance, confronted by a white female figure who vanishes, and no explanation is offered. "Their Dear Little Ghost" relates how a little girl dies just before Christmas. Her brothers go down to look in their stockings and see their sister's ghost looking in vain for one for her. The story is spoiled by having a stocking prepared for her the following year which satisfies her.

Mrs. Peattie has a cleverly done humorous story in "A Grammatical Ghost." A family is haunted by a prim old lady who arranges the furniture and china to suit her taste. As a last resort a rather crude person is invited for a visit and the ghost, unable to bear his language, takes her leave. A sort of second sight occurs in "A Child of the Rain," when a bus driver sees a pitiful child riding the

bus for several nights, but only when it is raining. The bus later runs over a child like the one he saw, and on a rainy night. An evil presence haunts "The Room of the Evil Thought," and provokes people who stay there to ideas of murder and suicide. It is later found that a former occupant of the room first cut someone's throat and then drowned himself.

Two somewhat sentimental stories are "An Astral Onion" and "A Spectral Collie," both somewhat similar in idea. In the latter a man delirious from fever is saved by the ghost of his dog who goes to neighbors for help. The other story, "An Astral Onion," is similar, telling of a dying man revived by the cooking of his foster mother, who returns from the grave to feed the starving man some soup.

The "Story of the Vanishing Patient" concerns a doctor who was summoned one night to the bed of a dying woman, and leaves a prescription on the mantelpiece. He returns next day to find the house shut up and unoccupied for years, but his prescription is inside. "The Piano Next Door" is a variation on this theme. The piano, upon investigation, turns out to be nonexistent, for the young man, entranced by the lovely music he hears, finds there is no piano in the neighbor's house, nor has there been one there for years.

An exceptionally fine story is "The House That Was Not," in which a young bride seeks to visit neighbors in a distant house she sees from her window; but when she approaches it, the house vanishes. She learns that one used to stand there, years before but burned; it still remains visible but only at a distance. Even better is "On The Northern Ice," a

story of a ghostly guardian. A young man is skating at night to visit a girl in another town. He sees a figure before him and in an attempt to overtake it pays no attention to where he is going and finds on arrival that he had taken the longer route without ever catching the other skater. He then learns that girl he was coming to see died the day before, worrying that if he came by his usual route he would drown because of broken ice.

Perhaps the most original story in the book is the "Story of an Obstinate Corpse." A young man is called in to take photographs of a woman in her casket, but when these are developed the casket seems covered by a black pall, hiding the features of the woman. The woman's daughter explains it by saying her mother had always refused to have her picture taken and was used to having her own way.

JACK SNOW

Jack Snow is an avowed student of L. Frank Baum, but nothing any further from The Wizard of Oz than Dark Music and Other Spectral Tales could be imagined. This very diverse collection has some tales which are not spectral in the least, and several which degenerate into pulp magazine science fiction. Others show striking originality and at least two are excellent ghost stories.

One of these, "The Anchor," deserves to be better known: A man is afloat on a lonely lake at night, and a lovely woman suddenly climbs into the boat and embraces him. He

finds the next morning that she has disappeared, but when he draws his anchor up, caught on it is the body of a woman long-drowned. The other outstanding story, "Let's Play House," is told by an old nurse in the best ghost-story tradition. Two neighboring children are very close friends. Shortly after they receive a marvellous doll house for a present, they fall ill of an epidemic and die within minutes of each other. A few nights later the nurse investigates lights in the doll house and finds the two children playing together in miniature inside their beloved toy.

In "Coronation" the old queen who is celebrating her jubilee sees throughout the ceremonies a laughing young girl. She fails to recognize the child as the ghost of herself as she looked upon her coronation day seventy-five years before. "The Monarch" is almost poetic in tone: an old blind violinist is summoned in the dead of night to play before his ruler. His body is found in his hovel the next day; the monarch before whom he played was Death. Somewhat similar is "Business Hours," in which a tramp seeks refuge in an antique shop open at night. He is first treated to reading his favorite books, then to a sumptuous banquet, then to agreeable conversation, then to love-making and finally to sleep, from which he never wakes.

A very original story is "Faulty Vision." A woman laments the fact that she cannot make her husband look at her. At the ending we learn the reason why--she is dead. In "The Mountain" Snow seems to have been influenced by

Blackwood's "Special Delivery." An old man is warned of an impending avalanche by the spirit of the mountain on which he has lived for many years. Neither story is really successful.

In addition to these, there are four stories in the collection which are not even second-rate. In "The Penhale Broadcast" the voice of a long-dead opera singer is heard over the radio. "The Rope" is based on the Indian rope trick, but the man who learns how to perform it never reappears after climbing the rope and vanishing. "The China Tea Cup" claims the souls of all who drink from it, and their reflections can be seen in it when the cup is filled with tea. Poorest of the four is "Midnight," in which a sorcerer plans to project himself into unspeakable delights. His calculations go astray and he finds himself destined to roam the ether eternally, a lost soul.

EDITH WHARTON

Edith Wharton is a distinguished figure in the modern American ghost story. Her stories often appear in anthologies and are collected in the volume called Ghosts. Mrs. Wharton has much originality and considerable technical skill. Her stories run the gamut from such striking masterpieces as "Mr. Jones" and "All Hallows'" to the banalities of "Bewitched."

Mrs. Wharton's best-known story is "Afterward," which is a little too lengthy. An American couple move into an old English house and learn that it has a ghost. The legend

is that the ghost is not recognized as such until long after it has been seen. Instead of any ghost connected with the place, however, the one seen is that of a man lately deceased, whom the new owner once cheated out of an invention. It is at once confusing and unconvincing.

In "The Eyes" a man is haunted by a malevolent-looking pair of eyes which glare at him at night. He sees them, however, only when he is about to do something against his better judgment which he knows he will regret later. "The Triumph of Night" might be compared with May Sinclair's "Villa Desiree," since in both stories the ghost is an astral projection of a human emotion, in the one case lust, and in this instance, greed. A chance visitor sees not only the outward front presented by the uncle of a tubercular young man, but also the projected image of his greed as he waits for his nephew to die.

Another over-lengthy tale is "Bewitched," in which a girl comes back from the grave to claim a lover. The atmosphere is gaunt and stark, like that of Ethan Frome, but the plot is complicated, there are too many characters, and the ending is not made sufficiently clear. In "The Lady's Maid's Bell" a devoted maid-nurse stands between her beloved mistress and a brutish husband even in death. The story suffers from abruptness, vagueness, and sentimentality. Perhaps even more uninspired is "Pomegranate Seed." This is one of those frustrating stories that end unfinished, leaving the reader dangling in mid-air. A woman sees her husband

receive letters that visibly upset him. She first suspects and later confirms that the letters are from his deceased first wife. Meanwhile the husband disappears. Where is he? What did the letters say? Why were they written? Why did the author write the story?

Much better, and certainly more original, is "Kerfol," in which an old chateau is haunted by the ghosts of five pet dogs. Several hundred years previously the old and insanely jealous owner had married a lovely young girl, but suspected her of unfaithfulness and made her life miserable. Among other things, he left five different dogs she had shown affection for strangled on her pillow. According to an old manuscript, he was found bitten to death by these dogs, which are seen by a present-day visitor to the chateau.

"All Hallows'" is one of Mrs. Wharton's most original stories, and one of the finest riddle stories in American weird literature. A lady living in her old family home meets a strange woman coming up the drive on Halloween. This woman manages to evade her questions, and before she reaches the house the lady sprains her ankle. She is told to stay in bed, but the next day no servant comes at her call. She investigates and finds she is alone in the house. The following day all the servants are back and try to convince her she was delirious the day before. It is suggested that the woman on the drive was a witch, come to fetch the servants to a coven.

The best story in the book by far is "Mr. Jones." A woman inherits an old manor, but cannot see various rooms

or do this or that because an old caretaker, Mr. Jones, has charge. She never sees him because his instructions are delivered by other servants, who depict him as a monument of fidelity to past owners. The housekeeper warns the new mistress not to look in an old desk; but when she does, she finds papers throwing a bad light on an ancestor living a hundred and fifty years ago. The furious Mr. Jones kills the housekeeper, and her niece says it was because she let the scandal about his beloved master come to light. The climax is stupendous--when the mistress asks how he could serve a man so long ago and still be alive, she finds out he is not!

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF AUTHORS

Mrs. Mary R. S. Andrews	Mark Lemon
L. M. A. Beck	F. B. Long
Robert Bloch	Brander Matthews
Thomas Burke	John Metcalfe
Sir Andrew Caldecott	Rosalie Muspratt
Robert W. Chambers	Alfred Noyes
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Eden Phillpotts
Lora Dunsany	Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch
Ellen Glasgow	A. I. Rowse
Thomas Hardy	Saki
Bret Harte	M. P. Shiel
Lafcadio Hearn	C. A. Smith
O. Henry	Wilbur Daniel Steele
Robert Hichens	Harriet Beecher Stowe
William Dean Howells	L. A. G. Strong
Violet Hunt	Montague Summers
Carl Jacobi	James Thurber
W. W. Jacobs	Henry S. Whitehead
	M. L. Wynne

According to a list given by Montague Summers, the following have also written ghost stories or stories of the supernatural:

N. H. Austin	Perceval Landon
Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes	F. O'Donnell
Grace V. Christmas	Roger Pater
Hugh Conway	Mrs. Campbell Fraed
Edward H. Cooper	Clark Russell
Arthur Gray	Fred G. Smale
John Guinan	Rev. E. G. Swain
E. and H. Heron	Katherine Tynan
Fergus Hume	Mary Heaton Vorse
Sir T. G. Jackson	W. J. Wintle
Arthur Johnson	Mrs. Henry Wood

LIST OF GHOST STORIES ACCORDING TO TYPE

I. THE RIDDLE STORY

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Benson, Robert Hugh

Father Brent's Tale

Bierce, Ambrose

A Fruitless Assignment

The Isle of Pines

The Night-Doings at Deadman's

Bowen, Elizabeth

The Cheery Soul

Pink May

Coppard, A. E.

Polly Morgan

De la Mare, Walter

All Hallows

A Recluse

Strangers and Pilgrims

Hartley, L. P.

Podolo

James, Henry

The Turn of the Screw

Lovecraft, H. P.

The Hound

The Unnamable

Middleton, Richard

Shepherd's Boy

B. "What Was It?" (Continued)

O'Brien, Fitz-James

What Was It?

Wakefield, H. R.

Blind Man's Buff
The Cairn
The Frontier Guards
Look Up There!

C. Disappearances

Baldwin, Mrs. Alfred

The Empty Picture Frame

Benson, E. F.

The Face

Bierce, Ambrose

An Unfinished Race
At Old Man Eckert's
Charles Ashmore's Trail
The Difficulty of Crossing a Field
The Spook House

Collier, John

Rope Enough

Coppard, A. E.

Gone Away

De la Mare, Walter

The Riddle

Derleth, August

Those Who Seek

Lovecraft, H. P.

The Music of Erich Zann

A. The Inconclusive Story (Continued)

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The Beckoning Fair One
The Out Sister

Pease, Howard

The Muniment Room

Peattie, Elia W.

The Shape of Fear

Wakefield, H. R.

The Alley

B. "What Was It?"

Asquith, Cynthia

The Follower

Bowen, Elizabeth

The Demon Lover

Broughton, Rhoda

The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but
the Truth

Derleth, August

Feigman's Beard

Harvey, W. F.

The Clock

Jacobs, W. W.

The Monkey's Paw

James, Montague Rhodes

The Diary of Mr. Poynter
Number 13
Rats

C. Disappearances (Continued)

Middleton, Richard

The Conjuror

Northcote, Amyas

Brickett Bottom

O'Brien, Fitz-James

The Lost Room

Onions, Oliver

The Out Sister

Pain, Barry

The Moon-Slave

Peattie, Elia W.

The House That Was Not

Snow, Jack

The Rope

Spence, Lewis

Cock Lorel's Boat

Wharton, Edith

All Souls'

II. THE MORAL GHOST STORY

A. The Avenging Ghost

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Benson, E. F.

The Man Who Went too Far
Naboth's Vineyard

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Bowen, Elizabeth

Hand in Glove

Crawford, F. Marion

The Screaming Skull

Dare, M. P.

Bring Out Your Dead

Derleth, August

Here, Daemos!

Muggridge's Aunt

Three Gentlemen in Black

The Sheraton Mirror

James, Montague Rhodes

Casting the Runes

Count Magnus

The Mezzotint

The Tractate Middoth

The Uncommon Prayer-Book

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A Warning to the Curious

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They Found My Grave

Spence, Lewis

The Red Flasket

The Stone Finger

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Mrs. Lunt

Wharton, Edith

Kerfol

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B. The Punished Ghost

Benson, E. F.

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Blackwood, Algernon

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The Bishop of Hell

Dare, M. P.

A Nun's Tragedy

Harvey, W. F.

Sarah Bennet's Possession

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The Residence at Whitminster
Wailing Well

Snow, Jack

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The Water Ghost of Harrowby Hall

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McAllister

Bierce, Ambrose

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III. THE HUMOROUS GHOST STORY (Continued)

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They Ain't No Ghosts

Collier, John

Old Acquaintance

Coppard, A. E.

Old Martin

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The Haunted Drawers

The Haunted Helmet

Irving, Washington

Adventure of My Uncle

The Bold Dragoon

The Devil and Tom Walker

Middleton, Richard

The Ghost Ship

Peattie, Elia W.

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Wilde, Oscar

The Canterville Ghost

IV. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL GHOST STORY

A. Dreams

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Collins, Wilkie

The Dream Woman

A. Dreams (Continued)

Northcote, Amyas

Mr. Kershaw and Mr. Wilcox

Peattie, Elia W.

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B. Insanity or Emotional Illness

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The Night-Doings at Deadman's

Derleth, August

The Shattered House

Gilman, Charlotte, Perkins

The Yellow Wall-Paper

Harvey, W. F.

Miss Cornelius

Kipling, Rudyard

At The End of the Passage

Lee, Vernon

Amour Dure

Oke of Okehurst

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

Green Tea

Pain, Barry

The Diary of a God

The Green Light

Wells, H. G.

The Moth

C. Guilty Conscience or Persecution Complex

Benson, E. F.

The Corner House

Bierce, Ambrose

Staley Fleming's Hallucination

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

The Familiar

Northcote, Amyas

Mr. Mortimer's Diary

O'Sullivan, Vincent

The Business of Madame Jahn

Stevenson, Robert Louis

Markheim

Wakefield, H. R.

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D. Possession

Asquith, Cynthia

God Grante That She Lye Stille
The White Moth

Barham, Richard Henry

Jerry Jarvis' Wig

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John Bartine's Watch

D. Possession (Continued)

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With Intent to Steal

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The Gambler's Room

Dare, M. F.

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Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins

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Dionea

Lovecraft, H. P.

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The Thing on the Doorstep

Marson, G. F.

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Expiation

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My Own Tale

Bierce, Ambrose

The Other Lodgers

Blackwood, Algernon

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Bulwer-Lytton, Edward

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Daly, Elizabeth

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Daro, M. P.

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Irwin, Margaret

The Curate and the Rake

The Earlier Service

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A Wireless Message

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B. Into the Future (Continued)

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Madame Crowl's Ghost

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VI. THE PROBLEM GHOST STORY (Continued)

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Walpole, Hugh

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The Shooting of Achmaleish

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Caterpillars

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Munby, A. N. L.

The White Sack

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Sir Nigel Otterburne's Case

A. The Types of Ghost

4. The Banshee:(Continued)

Blackwood, Algernon

The Tradition

Crawford, F. Marion

The Dead Smile

Matthers, Brander

The Rival Ghosts

5. The Poltergeist:

Dare, M. P.

The Beam

Harvey, W. F.

Miss Cornelius

Kipling, Rudyard

Haunted Subalterns

6. The Familiar:

Blackwood, Algernon

Smith: An Episode in a Lodging House

Dare, M. P.

The Demoniac Goat

Derleth, August

Here, Daemos!

A Thin Gentleman with Gloves

James, Montague Rhodes

Casting the Runes

Count Magnus

The Treasure of Abbot Thomas

Spence, Lewis

The Horn of Vapula

The Hudart

The Seat of Sergulath

A. The Types of Ghost (Continued)

7. Assorted Demons and Fiends:

Benson, Robert Hugh

Father Martin's Tale

Collier, John

Bird of Prey

Cram, Ralph Adams

No. 252 Rue M. Le Prince

Irwin, Margaret

The Book

James, Montague Rhodes

Canon Alberic's Scrap-Book

The Diary of Mr. Poynter

An Episode of Cathedral History

Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad

Lovecraft, H. P.

Pickman's Model

The Shunned House

Munby, A. N. L.

The Inscription

Wakefield, H. R.

He Cometh and He Passeth By

8. Remnants from Ancient Religions:

Benson, Arthur C.

The Hill of Trouble

Benson, E. F.

Bagnell Terrace

The Man Who Went Too Far

The Temple

Blackwood, Algernon

The Nemesis of Fire

A. The Types of Ghost

8. Remnants from Ancient Religions (Continued)

Buchan, John

The Wind in the Portico

Long, F. B.

A Visitor from Egypt

Lovecraft, H. P.

The Call of Cthulhu

The Haunter of the Dark

The Moon-Bug

Machen, Arthur

The Great God Pan

The White People

Pain, Barry

The Gray Cat

Wakefield, H. R.

Lucky's Grove

The 17th Hole at Duncaster

9. Forces from Other Worlds:

Benson, Arthur C.

The Closed Window

Blackwood, Algernon

May Day Eve

The Trod

The Wood of the Dead

Buchan, John

Skule Skerry

Cram, Ralph Adams

The Dead Valley

A. The Types of Ghost

9. Forces from Other Worlds: (Continued)

Hodgson, William Hope

The Gateway of the Monster
 The Haunted Jarvee
 The Hog

Machen, Arthur

The Novel of the Black Seal
 Out of the Earth
 The Shining Pyramid

10. Animal Ghosts:

Bierce, Ambrose

Staley Fleming's Hallucination

Blackwood, Algernon

The Empty Sleeve

Dare, M. P.

The Demoniac Goat

Derleth, August

Here, Daemos!

Harvey, W. F.

The Ankardyne Pew

Hodgson, William Hope

The Hog
 The Horse of the Invisible

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

Squire Toby's Will

Peattie, Elia W.

A Spectral Collie

Wakefield, H. R.

Masrur
 Or Persons Unknown
 Present at the End

A. The Types of Ghost

10. Animal Ghosts: (Continued)

Wharton, Edith

Kerfol

11. Invisible Ghosts:

Benson, E. F.

Outside the Door

Benson, Robert Hugh

Father Brent's Tale

Bierce, Ambrose

The Damned Thing

Blackwood, Algernon

The Empty House

Braddon, M. E.

The Cold Embrace

Cram, Ralph Adams

The White Villa

Hodgson, William Hope

The Horse of the Invisible

Marryat, Florence

The Invisible Tenants of Rushmere

O'Brien, Fitz-James

What Was It?

Pease, Howard

The Lord Warden's Tomb

A. The Types of Ghost (Continued)

12. Animated Corpses, Skeletons, or parts thereof

Benson, E. F.

At the Farmhouse

Bierce, Ambrose

A Tough Tussle

Crawford, F. Marion

Man Overboard!

The Screaming Skull

The Upper Berth

Chambers, Robert W.

The Messenger

Derleth, August

Altimer's Amulet

Glory Hand

Harvey, W. F.

The Beast with Five Fingers

Hodgson, William Hope

The Gateway of the Monster

Irving, Washington

Adventure of the German Student

Landon, Perceval

Thurnley, Abbey

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

Schalkin the Painter

Long, F. B.

A Visitor from Egypt

Lovecraft, H. P.

Cool Air

The Thing on the Doorstep

A. The Types of Ghost (Continued)

12. Animated Corpses, Skeletons, or parts thereof
(Continued)

Malden, R. H.

A Collector's Company

Munby, A. N. L.

The Alabaster Hand

O'Sullivan, Vincent

My Enemy and Myself

~~Quiller-Couch, A. T.~~

Wakefield, H. R.

A Coincidence at Hunton

13. Ghosts of the Living

Blackwood, Algernon

The Empty Sleeve

Burrage, A. M.

The Yellow Curtains

Gaskell, Mrs. E. C.

The Old Nurse's Story

Hogg, James

Tibby Johnston's Wraith

Molesworth, Mrs. M. S.

The Story of the Rippling Train

Pease, Howard

Kitty's Bower

Tale of the Three Antiquaries

Sinclair, May

The Villa Désirée

A. The Types of Ghost

13. Ghosts of the Living:(Continued)

Snow, Jack

Coronation

Wharton, Edith

The Triumph of Night

14. The Ghost as Narrator:

Bierce, Ambrose

An Inhabitant of Carcosa

Blackwood, Algernon

The Dance of Death
Transition

Bowen, Elizabeth

Green Holly

Lovecraft, H. P.

The Outsider

O'Sullivan, Vincent

When I Was Dead

Pain, Barry

This Is All

Snow, Jack

Faulty Vision

15. Orthodox Spectres:

Baldwin, Mrs. Alfred

How He Left the Hotel
The Real and the Counterfeit
The Shadow on the Blind

Baring-Gould, Sabine

On the Leads

A. The Types of Ghost

15. Orthodox Spectres: (Continued)

Benson, E. F.

Expiation
 The House With the Brick-Kiln
 How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery
 Reconciliation

Bierce, Ambrose

The Middle Toe of the Right Foot
 The Other Lodgers
 The Stranger
 The Thing at Nolan
 A Vine on a House

Blackwood, Algernon

The Empty House
 The Listener

Bowen, Marjorie

The Avenging of Ann Leete
 The Crown Derby Plate

Broster, D. K.

Couching at the Door

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward

The Haunted and the Haunters

Burrage, A. M.

The Green Scarf

Derleth, August

The Metronome
 Mrs. Bentley's Daughter
 The Sheraton Mirror
 Wild Grapes

Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins

The Shadows on the Wall
 The Southwest Chamber
 The Vacant Lot
 The Wind in the Rosebush

A. The Types of Ghost

15. Orthodox Spectres: (Continued)

Hartley, L. P.

Three, or Four, for Dinner

James, Henry

The Turn of the Screw

Kipling, Rudyard

The Phantom 'Rickshaw
The Return of Imray

Landon, Perceval

Thurnley Abbey

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

Dickon the Devil
The House in Aungier Street
Madame Crowl's Ghost
The Spectre Lovers

Malden, R. H.

The Dining-Room Fireplace
Stivinghoe Bank

Marryat, Florence

The Invisible Tenants of Rushmore

Marson, G. F.

The Victory Ball

Middleton, Richard

On the Brighton Road

Molesworth, Mrs. M. S.

The Shadow in the Moonlight

Munby, A. N. L.

The Tudor Chimney

A. The Types of Ghost

15. Orthodox Spectres: (Continued)

Nesbit, Edith

Man-Size in Marble

Oliphant, Mrs. M. O. W.

The Open Door

Pease, Howard

The Lord Warden's Tomb

Reid, Forrest

Costello's Story
Courage

Snow, Jack

The Anchor

Spence, Lewis

The Sorceress in Stained Glass

Stoker, Bram

The Judge's House

Wakefield, H. R.

A Fishing Story
The Red Lodge

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

1. To Seek Revenge:

Asquith, Cynthia

The Playfellow

Baring-Gould, Sabine

The 'Bold Venture'
Mustapha

Benson, E. F.

The Corner House
Home, Sweet Home
Naboth's Vineyard

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

1. To Seek Revenge: (Continued)

Bierce, Ambrose

Staley Fleming's Hallucination

Bowen, Marjorie

Florence Flannery
The Housekeeper
Kecksies

Collins, Charles

The Compensation House

Crawford, F. Marion

The Screaming Skull

Derleth, August

The Metronome
Mrs. Lannisfree
No Light for Uncle Henry
The Sheraton Mirror
The Telephone in the Library
Three Gentlemen in Black
Wild Grapes
The Wind from the River

Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins

The Shadows on the Wall
The Southwest Chamber

Glasgow, Ellen

The Shadowy Third

Hartley, L. P.

Feet Foremost
A Visitor from Down Under

Harvey, W. F.

The Heart of the Fire

Hodgson, William Hope

The Whistling Room

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

1. To Seek Revenge: (Continued)

James, Henry

Sir Edmund Orme

James, Montague Rhodes

Lost Hearts

The Mezzotint

A School Story

The Stalls of Barchester Cathedral

A View from a Hill

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

The Familiar

Lovecraft, H. P.

In the Vault

Munby, A. N. L.

The Tregannet Book of Hours

Northcote, Amyas

The Steps

Onions, Oliver

The Woman in the Way

Riddell, Mrs. J. H.

Old Mrs. Jones

Spence, Lewis

The Archer in the Arras

The Red Flasket

Stoker, Bram

The Secret of the Growing Gold

Wakefield, H. R.

And He Shall Sing

A Coincidence at Hunton

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

1. To Seek Revenge:

Wakefield, H. R. (Continued)

Old Man's Beard
 Professor Pownall's Oversight
 Surprise Item
 That Dieth Not
 Unrehearsed

Walpole, Hugh

Mrs. Lunt
 The Tarn

Wharton, Edith

Afterward
 Mr. Jones

2. To Correct a Wrong:

Asquith, Cynthia

The Corner Shop

Baring-Gould, Sabine

Aunt Joanna
 The Leaden Ring
 White Flag

Benson, E. F.

The Confession of Charles Linkworth

Bierce, Ambrose

An Arrest

Burrage, A. M.

Browdean Farm
 Wrestler's End

Derleth, August

A Collector of Stones
 An Elegy for Mr. Danielson
 A Thin Gentleman with Gloves

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

2. To Correct a Wrong: (Continued)

Dickens, Charles

To Be Taken With a Grain of Salt

Hartley, L. P.

The Cotillion

Hogg, James

The Wife of Lochmaben

James, Henry

The Romance of Certain Old Clothes

James, Montague Rhodes

Lost Hearts

The Tractate Middoth

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

Squire Toby's Will

Marryat, Florence

The Ghost of Charlotte Cray

Molesworth, Mrs. M. S.

At the Dip of the Road

Munby, A. N. L.

The Topley Place Sale

Peattie, E. W.

From the Loom of the Dead

Sinclair, May

The Victim

Spence, Lewis

The Stone Finger

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

3. To Help the Living:

Andrews, Mrs. M. R. S.

Through the Ivory Gate

Benson, E. F.

Inscrutable Decress
Machaon

Blackwood, Algernon

The Return

Burrage, A. M.

Playmates
The Room Over the Kitchen

Crawford, F. Marion

The Doll's Ghost

Edwards, Amelia B.

The Engineer

Harvey, W. F.

Across the Moors

Marson, F. F.

Drop With the Left
Ever Faithful
Trumpeter, What Are You Calling Now?

Munby, A. N. L.

An Encounter in the Mist

Northcote, Amyas

The House in the Wood

O'Brien, Fitz-James

The Pot of Tulips

Pease, Howard

The Haunted Ale-House

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

3. To Help the Living: (Continued)

Peattie, Elia W.

An Astral Onion
A Spectral Collie

Wakefield, H. R.

The Last to Leave

Walpole, Hugh

Lizzie Rand

4. To Seek Proper Burial:

Baring-Gould, Sabine

McAlister

Benson, E. F.

The Confession of Charles Linkworth

Benson, Robert Hugh

Father Bianchi's Tale

Cram, Ralph Adams

Sister Maddelina

Riddell, Mrs. J. H.

Nut-Bush Farm

5. To Guard Something:

Andrews, Mrs. M. R. S.

A Messenger

Baring-Gould, Sabine

Little Joe Gander

Benson, Arthur C.

The Red Camp

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

5. To Guard Something: (Continued)

Blackwood, Algernon

The Other Wing
Special Delivery

Bowen, Marjorie

The Crown Derby Plate

Collier, John

Thus I Refute Beelzy

Derleth, August

Bramwell's Guardian
Carousel
The God-Box
Here, Daemos!

James, Montague Rhodes

Count Magnus
The Treasure of Abbot Thomas
The Uncommon Prayer-Book
A Warning to the Curious

Machen, Arthur

The Bowman

Marson, G. F.

The Face

Matthews, Brander

The Rival Ghosts

Munby, A. N. L.

The Inscription

Peattie, Elia W.

On the Northern Ice

Wharton, Edith

The Lady's Maid's Bell

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

6. To Fulfill a Threat or Promise:

Eierce, Ambrose

A Cold Greeting

Blackwood, Algernon

Keeping His Promise
The Tryst

Bowen, Elizabeth

The Claimant
Hand in Glove

Collier, John

Thus I Refute Beelzy

James, Montague Rhodes

The Ash-Tree

Munby, A. N. L.

The Tregannot Book of Hours

Nesbit, Edith

John Charrington's Wedding

Walpole, Hugh

The Snow

7. When its Grave is Disturbed:

Dare, M. P.

Bring Out Your Dead
Unholy Relics

Derleth, August

A Collector of Stones
Here, Daemos!

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

7. When its Grave is Disturbed: (Continued)

James, Montague Rhodes

Count Magnus
An Episode of Cathedral History
The Rose Garden
A View from a Hill

Maldon, R. H.

The Sundial

Munby, A. N. L.

The Four Poster
The Inscription
The Tudor Chimney

8. As the Result of a Curse:

Baldwin, Mrs. Alfred

The Weird of the Walfords

Benson, Robert Hugh

Father Jenk's Tale

Blackwood, Algernon

The Terror of the Twins

Braddon, M. E.

Eveline's Visitant

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward

The Haunted and the Haunters

Burrage, A. M.

Between the Minute and the Hour
Footprints
Furze Hollow

Dare, M. P.

Borgia Pomade
Fatal Oak
Unholy Relics

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

8. As the Result of a Curse: (Continued)

Derleth, August

The Inverness Cape
The Satin Mask
The Shadow on the Sky

Kipling, Rudyard

The Mark of the Beast

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

Ulton de Lacy
Wicked Captain Walshawe, of Wauling

Pain, Barry

The Gray Cat
The Undying Thing

Spence, Lewis

The Hudart
Maister Mudie

Wakefield, H. R.

Nurse's Tale
Of Persons Unknown

9. A Strong Hold on a Place or on Life Itself:

Asquith, Cynthia

God Grante That She Lye Stille

Baring-Gould, Sabine

Pomps and Vanities

Benson, Robert Hugh

Father Macclesfield's Tale

Bowen, Marjorie

The Crown Derby Plate

Molesworth, Mrs. M. S.

Lady Farquhar's Old Lady

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

9. A Strong Hold on a Place or on Life Itself: (Con't)

Quiller-Couch, A. T.

A Pair of Hands

Snow, Jack

Let's Play House

10. Evoked at a Seance:

Benson, E. F.

The Gardener
Inscrutable Decrees
Machaon
Mr. Tilly's Seance
Spinach

Shearing, Joseph

They Found My Grave

11. For other Purposes:

Asquith, Cynthia

The First Night

Baldwin, Mrs. Alfred

My Next-Door Neighbor

Baring-Gould, Sabine

Jean Bouchon

Benson, E. F.

Roderick's Story

Bierce, Ambrose

A Baby Tramp
Beyond the Wall
Present at a Hangina

Blackwood, Algernon

The Attic
The Decoy
The Deferred Appointment
The Return

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence

11. For other Purposes: (Continued)

Bowen, Marjorie

The Bishop of Hell

Derloth, August

Birkett's Twelfth Corpse
The Return of Sarah Purcell

Edwards, Amelia B.

My Brother's Ghost Story
How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries

Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins

The Lost Ghost
Luella Miller

Glasgow, Ellen

The Past

Harvey, W. F.

Sarah Bennet's Possession

Hodgson, William Hope

The Searcher of the End House

Le Fanu, J. Sheridan

The Sexton's Adventure

Malden, R. H.

The Blank Leaves

Marryat, Florence

Little White Souls

Northcote, Amyas

The Young Lady in Black

Pain, Barry

The Case of Vincent Pyrwhit

B. Reasons for the Ghost's Existence**11. For other Purposes: (Continued)**

Peattie, Elia W.

Story of an Obstinate Corpse

Reid, Forrest

Costello's Story
Courage

Sinclair, May

The Token

NOVELS OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Buchan, John

Witch Wood

Burnett, Mrs. Frances H.

In The Closed Room
The White People

Chambers, Robert W.

In Search of the Unknown

Cody, G. S.

The Witching Night

Collins, Wilkie

The Haunted Hotel

Cunliffe-Owen, Margaret

Emerald and Ermine

De la Mare, Walter

The Return

Denny, Norman

Arrival in Wycherly

Dick, R. A.

The Ghost and Mrs. Muir

Eohard, Margaret

The Dark Fantastic

Garland, Hamlin

The Tyranny of the Dark

Hodgson, William Hope

The Boats of the Glen Carrig
The Ghost Pirates
The House on the Borderland
The Night Land

Johnston, Mary

Sweet Rocket

Macardle, Dorothy

The Unforeseen
The Uninvited

Metcalf, John

The Feasting Dead

Nathan, Robert

The Bishop's Wife
Portrait of Jennie

Oliphant, Mrs. H. O. W.

A Beleaguered City

Owen-Wadilton, Maggie

Sarah Mandrake

Fendered, Mary L.

The Uncanny House

Hives, Amelie

The Ghost Garden

Stoker, Bram

Dracula

Novels of the Supernatural (Continued)

Stoker, Bram

The Jewel of Seven Stars
The Lair of the White Worm
The Snake's Pass

Watkin, L. E.

On Borrowed Time

Young, Francis Brett

Gold Harbour

Novels of the Supernatural Mentioned by Montague Summers

Falconer, Lance

Cecilia de Noel

Grant, James

The Phantom Regiment

Malet, Lucas

The Gateless Barrier
The Tall Villa

Murphy, James

The Haunted Church

Pater, Roger

My Cousin Phillip

Prest, Thomas P.

Varney The Vampire

Riddell, Mrs. J. H.

The Haunted River

Sicard, Clara

The Ghost: A Legend

Whitehead, Emma

The Haunted House

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Vita

Cameron Dunlop Hall, Jr., was born in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1934, the son of the late Cameron D. Hall and Hazel Hunt Perkins. Shortly thereafter he moved with his family to Petersburg, Virginia, where he lived until 1938 when he moved to Wilson, North Carolina. In Wilson he attended the Frederick J. Woodard School, and in 1946 his family moved back to Petersburg. Here he attended Anna P. Bolling Junior High School and Petersburg High School, graduating in 1952.

He entered Richmond College that same year, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1957; the same year he entered the Graduate School of the University of Richmond as a candidate for the Master of Arts degree.