

The Franklin Press

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Obituary notices, cards of thanks, tributes of respect, by individuals, lodges, churches, organizations or societies, will be regarded as advertising and inserted at regular classified advertising rates. Such notices will be marked "adv." in compliance with the postal regulations.

The Press invites its readers to express their opinions through its columns and each week it plans to carry Letters to the Editor on its editorial page. This newspaper is independent in its policies and is glad to print both sides of any question. Letters to the Editor should be written legibly on only one side of the paper and should be of reasonable length. Of course, the editor reserves the right to reject letters which are too long or violate one's better sensibilities.

Weekly Bible Thought:

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them. Ephesians 5:11.

A Pleasant Surprise

RURAL roads have long been a troublesome problem, politically as well as physically. In many counties, Macon included, the public has had to put up with poorly attended country roads for so long that it has grown to accept the situation as one that just couldn't be helped. Delegations could go before the county commissioners and, sometimes, get temporary improvements for this road or that. But, inevitably, the roads would be in as bad condition as ever within a few months. Frequently farmers have found that if they wanted a passable road they would have to ditch and drain it themselves.

Then, last spring, the General Assembly voted to turn over the maintenance of all county roads to the State Highway Department. This action would never have been taken were it not for the fact that the counties themselves had failed miserably in keeping up their roads. The people, feeling that that part of their taxes devoted to roads was going for naught, were ready to welcome any change. Even then the General Assembly's action was received with considerable scepticism as to whether it would result in any improvement of conditions. The Press frankly admits that it was among the sceptical, fearing not only that there would be little or no improvement in the roads but also that the increased maintenance division of the Highway Department would be used for political purposes.

It has been less than six months since the Highway Department assumed its new responsibility and, we are glad to say, not one of our fears has materialized. The county roads in Macon, at least, are in better condition than they have ever been. And, as for the political angle, the enlarged maintenance forces seem to go blithely about their business in a most businesslike manner, utterly disregarding politics. That might be bad for politicians but it's fine for the roads and those who have to travel over them.

In the course of a few months more than 14 miles of county roads in Macon have been drained and scraped and given a surfacing of sand or gravel. By December 1, according to R. H. Plennmons, assistant district engineer of the maintenance division, every school bus road, not only in Macon but also in other counties in this district, will be similarly repaired. Many other roads in the county, some of them hitherto almost impassable, have been ditched and scraped.

Considering the limited funds set aside by the General Assembly for county road work—about \$50,000,000 for the whole state—the maintenance forces deserve the highest commendation for what they have accomplished thus far and the fullest cooperation that they might carry on the good work. The efficiency of the new system has been proved beyond a doubt and we are glad to say good-bye to the old conditions.

Join the Red Cross

THE best way we know for one to express a sincere Thanksgiving appreciation is to enlist in the Red Cross roll call and to join the Macon County Penny Club. Membership in the Red Cross is one dollar, but those who are able to give more are urged to do so. Fifty per cent or more of this money is to be used right here in Macon county. In joining the Penny Club one pledges to give, for aiding the unemployed, a penny a meal from now until the first of March. It is a small amount for each individual, but if everyone who can spare three pennies a day will join this club and abide by its pledge it will mean hundreds of dollars for those who are in dire need of food and clothing. This money will be turned over to the Red Cross for relief of the needy in Franklin and throughout the county.

Those who feel they are unable to give money but who have plenty of farm produce can "do their bit" by donating canned fruits and vegetables. Old clothing also will be appreciated. Red Cross headquarters in the Masonic Hall will be open each Saturday to receive such gifts as well as to act on requests for aid.

Most of us have a lot for which to be thankful and should welcome the opportunity to make thankful those who are less fortunate.

GUESS THE GHOST

Here's How To Win a Cash Prize

READ CAREFULLY

A cash prize of \$2.50 will be given for the best explanation of each story in this series. There are twelve stories in all. A Grand Prize of \$10.00 will be given for the best set of explanations or solutions for all of the stories, with a second prize of \$5.00; third, \$3.00; and fourth, \$2.00.

RULES OF CONTEST

- (1) Open to any paid-up subscriber to The Franklin Press, or member of a subscriber's family.
- (2) No employees of The Franklin Press permitted to participate. However, community correspondents of this newspaper will not be regarded as employees.
- (3) Explanations or solutions submitted must be written on one side of paper only, with name and address clearly written in upper left corner, and must not exceed 250 words in length.
- (4) The readers submitting the most plausible explanations of the "ghosts" will be awarded prizes. Should two or more send in the same solutions, the prizes will be awarded to the one whose solution is first received. Some of the stories have more than one plausible solution.
- (5) Literary expression does not count—it is the solution of the mystery we want. Make your explanation brief and to the point.
- (6) Solutions must be received by The Franklin Press not later than Wednesday midnight of the week following publication of the story for which the solution is written. The author's solution of each story will be published in the issue of the succeeding week.
- (7) The contest will be judged by the editor of The Franklin Press and two other unbiased persons selected by him. Their decisions will be final.
- (8) The name of the prize winner will be announced in the second issue after the publication of each story.
- (9) Anyone subscribing to The Franklin Press during this contest is eligible to participate. Members of the family of a new subscriber also are eligible.
- (10) Only one solution by an individual will be considered. If you send in more than one, the first one opened will be considered as your entry.

SEND IN YOUR SOLUTION NOW
TO GHOST EDITOR

The Ghost of the Lonely House

By David McFall

(This is the fourth in a series of twelve ghost stories being published by The Franklin Press in its Guess-the-Ghost contest.)

EVEN in little England, with all its human hives, may be found places as desolate and seemingly as remote as any in the wilds of Canada or Australia. The moorlands of Yorkshire and of Devon, and certain areas in the lake district and in the fen country, comprise a number of them.

One of these spots was the scene of the experience I shall relate, merely prefacing that as the experience was recent and the house mentioned in connection with it is now occupied, it would be inconsiderate to give a clue to the exact time or place. But I may say this: The house is seated at the head of a small valley or combe, near the source of a spring-fed brook; on each side but on heavily wooded hills rise to a height of three or four hundred feet, cutting off several hours of the morning and of the evening sun; the open side permits the egress of the stream, and allows barely room for a rough and muddy road and narrow meadows beside it.

No possible artifice would ever have made the place cheerful, and everything seems to have been done that could have added to its naturally dismal aspect. The house itself was constructed of materials quarried from an older and much larger structure on the same site, as shown by fragmentary ruins of walls and arches. A moat, now dry, encloses the dwelling and grounds. The stream was at one time dammed up, to store a head of water, the useless dam and remaining water-gates alone remaining; the bed of the reservoir being marked only by a rank growth of rushes and bog-plants.

While the place may have been the scene of contentment and comfort once, all that can be seen of it now suggests a series of tragedies—the loss of an industry, decayed fortune, the extinction of a family. I witnessed the last of its tragedies up to now, and fervently hope the last of its kind I shall ever see. It is comforting to know that the present occupants of the house are an unlettered folk and are not likely to see this reference to it, or to appreciate it if they do.

In February, 1922, an old friend of mine brought the house for a song, for the one purpose of spending merely a month or so in it. He was on the verge of a mental break-down and hoped to find healing in the seclusion and quiet of the place. And for an underlying but unspoken reason its gloom suited his mood—the reason lay in the cause of his condition. He knew, and I knew, that neither physical disability nor overwork nor financial trouble had any part in it. He feared that he was doomed to insanity, and vainly hoped that this last fight against the impending misfortune, and against the fear of it might be successful—or should it fail, that no one would see him suffer the infliction of the most dreadful of all human maladies.

He asked me if I would consent to live with him for a time. I foresaw the outcome, but complied readily, giving up my occupation in

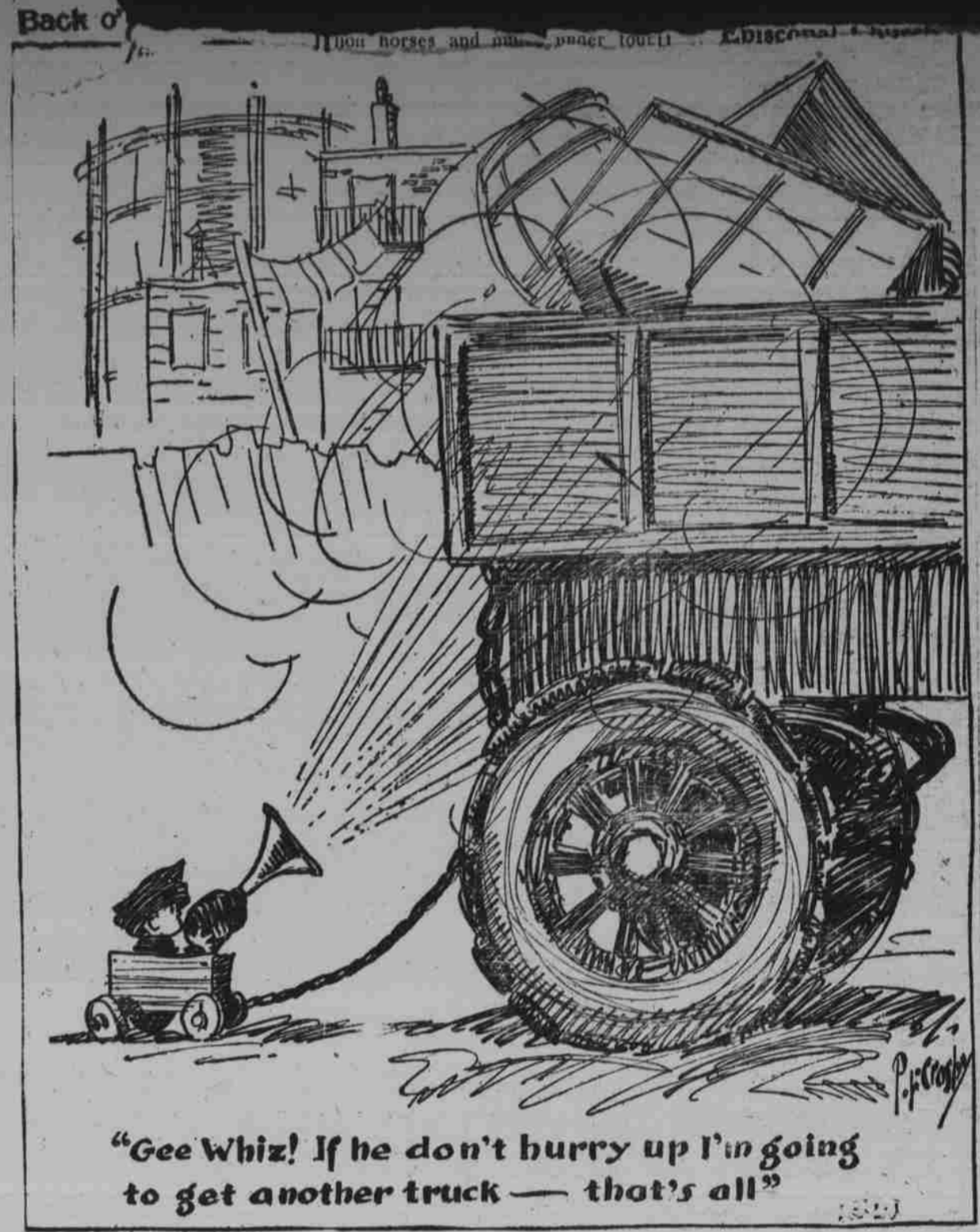
EXPLANATION Of Last Week's (Sunday's) Ghost Mystery:— The Ghost in the Swamp

As everyone knows, a lantern or torch carried in the hand in the darkness CONCEALS all most as many objects as it reveals, for in shading the light with the hand to focus it on one object, others are thrown into the shadow, necessarily. When I approached the mound I must have focused the light on it, and in so doing I obscured a dead tree at one end of it. When I arose, a broken limb of the tree caught my sleeve, and my effort to free myself disturbed an owl that sat in the upper branches, bewildered by the light. The owl, commonly known in Florida at that time as the "laughing owl," has a most uncanny, screaming cry, and it emitted this screaming laugh. The bird is described in the encyclopedia as belonging to the genus *Strix Flammea*.

a most willing sacrifice which I was all too sure would be unavailing. For six weeks we lived together in two rooms of the eight-room dwelling, our only companion being Joe, my friend's big black Newfoundland dog, with a white star on his breast. My friend had the means to furnish our apartments comfortably, and he would have been comfortable had it not been for the intrusion of an unbidden guest.

Our long evenings were spent in discursive talk, punctuated by the ticking of a grandfather clock which was a family heirloom belonging to my friend. Many times I regretted that he had brought it with him. In the intense silence of the remote countryside at night its loud ticking was the only audible sound apart from our own voices. In every break in our talk the clock-filled in the lull, and the ticking sounded to my ears like the persistent reiteration of an unescapable sentence of doom. My friend also was disturbed and moved by it—and when at irregular intervals there was a spasmodic whirr of the winding gear, or an ill-timed striking of wrong hours, I observed a momentary shadow sweep over his face.

At the end of the sixth week I found it necessary to leave my friend for a day. I promised to return that night, and did. I got back very late, unavoidably. As I drew near the house, to my surprise I saw no light anywhere about it. I did not expect my friend to sit up for me, but I had supposed that, with his usual thoughtfulness, he would have left a light for me, as a beacon. I could scarcely see even the out-



lines of the house in the darkness and I stumbled toward it blindly.

When I reached the door I found it locked. I thought it an unnecessary precaution in a place which no stranger would ever find. I knocked and awaited an answering call. There was no sound within. I knocked again, loudly—in the stillness my knock sounded thunderous in my ears.

I waited in silence for a few moments, when I heard the step of stealthy feet in my room overhead. Someone came down the stairs, slowly and hesitatingly and as quietly as possible, and stood just within the door. I spoke, announcing myself, and asking to be let in. There was no reply, and in a minute or two I unmistakably heard the footsteps of someone going UP the creaky stairs.

I was alarmed, but knocked again, more loudly. After a long interval I heard the descending steps once more, and knew that the unresponsive listener was at the door. I spoke and explained who I was and begged that the door be opened. There was no answer. I pressed my face against a glass panel in the door, shielding my eyes with my hands to cut off any possible gleam of distracting light, and keenly peered into the dark room.

I could not see a thing—unless it was more than a fancy that I saw a blacker shade moving about in the dark, and a faintly glimmering gray object creeping over the floor. While I looked, the shadow melted away and I heard something again stealthily mounting the stairs, and then all was still.

There was but one thing for me to do. I went all around the house, trying the front, side, and back doors. I found them all locked, and they were too strong for me to break open. I tried each window, and found it securely fastened. Apparently every precaution had been taken to bar me out effectually, but never, I was certain, with my friend's concurrence. I stooped down and groped for a stone with which to break a window-pane, so that I could release the catch, when my hand came into contact with an outside flap-door leading into the cellar. I had forgotten about it, though I had stepped on it twice in going around the house.

Fortunately, it had not been bolted on the inside. I lifted the door, resting it against the wall to keep it open, and cautiously descended the rotten treads. The wide cellar, extending under the whole of the house, and broken only by the supporting walls and pillars, was damp, cold, and evil-smelling. It was full of broken barrels and boxes and the accumulated rubbish of many years. I had a few matches, which I struck one after another, being careful to extinguish the last spark on each one before throwing it away, lest I set fire to the litter strewn about.

I knew the position of the steps leading from the cellar to the kitchen, and feeling my way by the intermittent light I soon found the stairway and mounted it. The kitchen door was not locked; I pressed the thumb-latch and it

opened smoothly. I entered, and stood for a moment listening, and then called out several times. I could not hear the slightest sound of any kind in reply—all I could hear was the gnawing of a mouse somewhere in the wall, which suddenly ceased when I spoke and quickly resumed when I was silent, and the ticking of the clock.

Yet I was aware of a presence in the room, though it was unheard and unseen—except that a formless shade, deeper than the inky darkness of the night, seemed near me. Once, and once only, and for the briefest instant, I felt a light, cold touch on my hand. But there was nothing there. I made wide sweeps in the air with my arms, but no piece of furniture or other object was within reach.

There was no lamp downstairs, but I easily made my way in the darkness to our upstairs living room, as I knew the position of the hall and the winding stairway so well. I went to my own room first, without knocking at my friend's door as I passed it, with the instinctive desire, no doubt, to relieve myself in the easiest way of the misgiving that distressed me. I had left my candle in its usual place on the table near the head of my bed. In crossing the room to light it with my one remaining match I accidentally touched a living, breathing, but SILENT AND INVISIBLE occupant of the bed. I withdrew my hand quickly, and with trembling but hasty fingers struck the match; and so near to the flame that it might easily have been set afire by it was a sheet of white paper, pinned to the head-board. I knew at once it was a message, but until I read it I could think of nothing else, not even of the occupant of the bed.

I lit the candle and took down the paper and read the few lines written on it. They were written with a firm hand—the last evidence of a courage that had outlived everything it had fought for. The words had been written by my friend late that afternoon just before dark, for he used the phrase "I can scarcely see—". They told me simply that he was going out for a long walk and that I might not see him again. He was prophetic. I soon learned what became of him, but I had not the heart to go to see him, for he would not have recognized me.

I have always been thankful that the only mention of his case in the press referred to the identification of "the man who was found wandering in Moorfields, while suffering from loss of memory." It was considerably expressed. But the reporter has not yet learned, and therefore cannot describe, the occupant who took possession of the house the moment my friend left it.

(The End)

He (as they drive along a lonely road): "You look lovelier to me every minute. Do you know what that's a sign of?" She: "Sure. You're about to run out of gas."

Oak Grove School

The Armistice Day program of our community was, as a whole, a great success.

After the program given by the different grades of the school the audience was addressed by Atty. R. D. Sisk, who as usual delivered a very eloquent and inspiring talk giving the reasons why one should join the Red Cross.

A bountiful dinner was served by the good people of the school district. Almost every family in the community was represented with well filled baskets and a spirit of good will and fellowship. At the noon hour Mrs. Harley Breedlove and her corps of workers secured several subscriptions of membership of the Red Cross, besides a number of donations of food and clothing.

After lunch the auditorium of the school house was filled to hear the very able and helpful address made by Rev. N. C. Duncan, who spoke on the theme of lasting world peace and the brotherhood of man. He also stated that people who accomplish things in time of peace should be held up before the school children of America as heroes, instead of those who accomplish momentary fame when urged on by the excitement of war.

After the regular program the parents and teachers met to gather in a special meeting, and discussed the plans already outlined for supplying running water for the school.

The membership and attendance of our school are increasing daily. Mr. J. J. Mann, principal, just won't quit hammering on us trying to get us to think. Mrs. Franks and Miss Meadows have the primary and intermediate grades climbing the ladder of knowledge.

Make Your Decision Now

One of the best habits you can form is the habit of prompt decision.

Start now—make up your mind that you are going to hold a better position a few months from today. Begin your business training immediately with other serious minded young men and women who make up our classes.

You will enjoy association with these young people and your progress from day to day will add further pleasure.

In a comparatively short time you will be ready for a splendid position and you will find a worthwhile opportunity awaiting you. Call or write the Athens Business College for information. Phone 771. ATHENS BUSINESS COLLEGE. —Adv.