

to take his regular midnight stroll ere returning at cock-crow to the mystic regions of the unknown. Even the house itself has attached to its rain-battered walls many ghostly rumors and apparently impenetrable mysteries. During the dead hours of the night, strange and unaccountable sounds used to be heard within the darkened rooms, and queer stealthy figures were occasionally seen moving in unearthly silence about the premises. That these marvellous nocturnal sights and sounds can be attributed to other causes, altogether different from the midnight revels of either ghosts or goblins, this present sketch will satisfactorily show. Denny McShane, the former proprietor of the place, used to assert most emphatically that the old building and its surroundings was indeed "infested with *spirits*" but then a close observer could notice a peculiar twinkle in his left eye as he pronounced the last word.

For some of us this ancient farmhouse is an object of special and memory-honored interest. It is where many a pleasant evening was spent in the good old times, and, moreover, it was within its walls, or rather under them, that Larry McFury, an intimate friend of the Owl, once had the bold audacity to aid in defrauding Her Most Gracious Majesty. How, and to what extent, Larry offended against the mighty British Empire will now be briefly and lucidly explained.

As was said before, the south western end of this quaint old building was formerly used as a barn and stable. As you enter the barn and examine it more closely, you cannot help remarking something that at once calls forth an exclamation of surprise. A portion of the earthen floor has given way revealing a dark cavity the mysterious depths of which our eyes can hardly penetrate until they become accustomed to the unusual darkness. It is evidently a kind of cellar, but, from all appearances, was never intended to serve the ordinary purposes of a cellar. The solid clay of the barn floor has been quarried out to a depth of six or seven feet. The opening thus formed is carefully roofed over with heavy beams, laid close together, and these in turn are ingeniously concealed by a heavy coating of clay, so as not to offer the least possi-

bility of detection. The sides of this curious celler have never been built up, so its only walls are the slimy clay banks from which water is continually oozing. In one end is a primitive looking fire place, above which there is a big hole in the damp clay bank, evidently leading into some overground apartment, and answering as a very poor apology for a chimney. Not far from the fire place a spout admits a constant stream of clear water, which escapes through a sewer located on the opposite side. A few queer looking utensils, now almost completely demolished by the action of time and damp, are lying carelessly around. These tell-tale articles alone can give one any idea as to the use for which this primitive excavation once served. The vats, half-casks and other vessels scattered about the muddy floor, combined with the general appearance of the place, lead one to the legitimate conclusion that, this secret subterranean apartment was formerly employed for the purpose of illicit distillation. Such in fact is the solution of the mystery, although forsooth, be it granted that such distillery never brought very serious detriment upon the great British Empire, nor did it ever cost Her Majesty a single sleepless night.

Now at the time we speak of, Larry McFury was of an age and size, which, had he the happiness to be at Ottawa University, would entitle him to no higher position than that of Captain in the Short-pants Brigade. He lived only a little distance from Denny McShane's farmhouse, and was a constant visitor there during the time that the above mentioned illegal proceedings were carrying out in the silent depths under the barn floor. Still, for obvious reasons, he was never given to understand that said underground operations were in progress on the premises. This precaution, at least in Larry's opinion, was altogether unnecessary, for there never once entered his mind the slightest idea of doing or saying anything calculated to aid, even remotely, the unwelcomed representatives of British law. Now, although generally regarded as a kind of quiet chap, with no very marked tendency towards mischief, still Larry then had, and perhaps still possesses, a noticeable ability for finding out important