

hindered by a distant hill crowned with modest woods that had already blushed at the welcoming kiss of bold Jack Frost and were now blushing ruby-red at the farewell kiss of the departing sun. From the northern window, I saw that the house fronted upon a broad lawn which was separated from the street by a high white fence of very involved pattern. To the right, about fifty yards from the house, rose the cathedral-like parish church of L——. Between the house and the church lay the former cemetery with its marble slabs and monuments. A narrow boardwalk led from the house door along the picket enclosure of the little burying-ground to the gate opening upon the public street. Just across the way, a dilapidated stone house attracted my attention by its air of utter desolation. It, too, was a landmark of the pioneer epoch and must have been quite a mansion in those early days. Its large proportions, its huge chimneys, its great deep windows and wide doors, its air of reserve in the midst of vast grounds, told to the observant a tale of former grandeur, select hospitality and boisterous conviviality. But now with its caved-in roof, its tottering walls, shattered doors and windows, its unkempt, lonely, forsaken garden, it looked like some hoary old sinner with bowed head and weakened limb, standing shame-faced and self-condemned amidst the scene of moral havoc and ruin he had caused about him. Beyond, on every side, stretched out the busy town of L——, lifting its arrogant head in a lofty municipal edifice and raising temples to its own proud spirit in the elegant homes of its residential quarter and the public buildings of its commercial section; for L——, be it borne in mind, is the

seat of the county government, and is, consequently, a place of some pretensions. So engrossed was I in my observation-taking that good Father M—— did not succeed in eliciting any response from me until he had called me for a third time to supper. After tea, I descended to the basement kitchen to have a chat with the hospitable old housekeeper, Mrs. Ryan, a woman of education and culture, but latterly of very straitened circumstances. She had in former years proved herself a true friend of mine and now gave vent to her affection for me by a most enthusiastic welcome. For an hour or more, in the almost mute company of Pat, the sexton, had we talked and laughed over joyous memories of bygone days, when suddenly she addressed me in a hushed and awe-struck tone:

“Do you know, Willie, that this house is haunted?”

“No,” I answered; and then to encourage her to further revelations, “Is it possible?”

“Yes,” she replied, “this whole house is haunted. Every room, with one exception, has witnessed the death of a quondam occupant. Yours is the first room on the left of the corridor on the second story, is it not? Well in that room a former parish priest died many years ago. In the room opposite, the succeeding incumbent of the parish breathed his last. The chamber next to yours and the one directly in face of it, heard the death-rattle in the throats of two young men—one a guest of the then parish-priest, the other, a young fellow who had been adopted by the same good priest. And now at times ghostly steps are heard wandering from one apartment to another and ghostly voices emit deep groans that chill the very blood of the listener. No