

the utmost. About ten o'clock Roderick lit the lantern and went out to the barn, as was customary, to see that everything was secure for the night.

"When he had been absent about an hour the company became anxious concerning his whereabouts; a party of us determined to investigate, and we sallied forth in search of Roderick; but Roderick was nowhere to be found.

"On the further side of the barn we discovered the lighted lantern on the ground, the sole occupant of the place; and, as it had snowed during the early part of the night it was quite easy to discover any tracks. We soon came upon Roderick's footsteps leading down across the field away from the barn.

"At first we concluded that he must have gone to one of the neighbor's houses; but some of the party following up the footprints noticed something very peculiar about them.

"For the first few yards there was nothing to be remarked; but going a little farther we perceived that the steps were farther apart, as if he had been running, and that the impression in the snow was becoming fainter; proceeding further we found a step only here and there.

"On coming to a fence we noticed that the snow had been brushed off the top rail in two spots about three inches apart, as if the toes of two boots had rubbed over it, and beyond the fence the snow was undisturbed.

"The party returned to the house; but their mirth was dampened, and time hung heavily on their hands. The old people shook their heads in silent significance, and recalled all the old stories they had heard of people being carried away in some mysterious manner; but nowhere could they find a parallel.

"About two o'clock we heard steps coming to the door, and eagerly we all pressed forward to see who it was. Imagine our joy and surprise on again beholding Roderick