

Are Ghosts Respectable?

By MARCUS MAYNE

FOR SOME TIME there has been a growing feeling among the public that ghosts are not all they ought to be. This, in view of the implicit faith which has so long reposed in ghosts, has caused a painful sensation in the spectral world, and I understand from my friends, Mrs. Wipsy, the medium, that she is being taken by the Society of Ghosts and Spectres to combat this growing distrust. Mrs. Wipsy, by the way, received her information from a ghost who haunts the wine-market at Hackmondwick and is on the Council of the S. G. S.

It appears that the trouble arose from the remarks which a well-known platelayer addressed to a ghost who haunts the Southern Railway and lays his head on the line for the 11.55 p. m. & run over. The platelayer accused the ghost, whose name is Pirkie, of stealing his pickaxe and half a bottle of stout. The matter was settled amicably enough, though it left a nasty taste in the platelayer's mouth and his views, given later to a lady reporter, have led to the feeling of which the S. G. S. now complain.

A brief survey of some of the denizens of the ghost-world is, therefore, not inopportune at the present time.

HEADLESS GHOSTS.

Considerable dislike has often been expressed in some quarters towards headless ghosts. Of these the most famous is the ghost of Flapwangle Castle, who, by the way, is not exactly headless, since he carries his missing top-piece under his arm. At one time he was a source of much annoyance to Lord Flapwangle's household, frequently awakening the members by dropping his head on the oak floor of the munition room. He has, however, given up this practice and is now tolerably respectable.

Not so the Spectre Laird of Auchterchie, that famous phantom of Glen Walkerhaig! It is he who, at nightfall, rides pell-mell round the old castle of Auchterchie, his red-eyed, red-cloaked, red-eyed pack of haggish-hounds. Old MacIsaac, the blind gillie of Auchterchie, will tell you the legend of how the Laird's ghost will never be laid until his pack of yelping, red-eyed haggish-hounds catch a white-furred haggish. MacIsaac is always blind when he tells the story.

Haggish-hounds having been excommunicated by the Pope in the 13th century, the Laird's persistence in his choice of hounds offends the religious susceptibilities of many in Glen Walkerhaig.

GIBBERING GHOSTS.

Churchyard ghosts call for little comment, since their respectability is practically undoubted, except in the case of those who play tricks with the bells in the belfry or tamper with the clocks, as does the ghost in the parish church of Bloody Wynatree (Gos.) on the eve of Pancake Day. This spectre, as countryfolk tell, is the ghost of a watchmaker who was crossed in love. Such ghosts being discredit on spectral life generally.

There is another class of ghosts in whose favor little can be said—i.e., gibbering ghosts, or ghosts who gibber. According to Mrs. Wipsy, the medium, the majority of ghosts are against gibbering, but have no power to stop it. Gibbering, apparently, is a ghostly vice akin to the mortal vice of talking eternally of wireless or singing duets in suburban drawing-rooms. The mere fact of being a ghost carries no right to gibber, said a well-known solicitor yesterday, and the sooner gibbering ghosts understand that, the better.

POLITICAL SPECTRES.

At one reckoned on finding gibbering ghosts at all, one would expect to meet them among political spectres, in which company, strangely, they are rare; possibly because gibbering in one world calls for a change in the next.

Political ghosts, are, nevertheless, worthy of study as a type. Perhaps one of the most notable of these is the ghost of Mr. Renben Damper, who was Minister of Night Clubs in the Melbourne Administration. As is well known, this illustrious spook haunts the tobacco kiosk in the House of Commons, wearing a funny little hat smoking a pipe and muttering to himself in Welsh.

WELL-MEANING APPARITIONS.

It would be unfair not to point out that some ghosts spend their lives—or is it deaths?—in doing good work. The Wrath of Oxwallwistle, near Blackburn, at once occurs to the mind as being a spectre of high ideals. This ghost haunts Clarence Road, Oxwallwistle, in winter, when the mornings are dark, and systematically removes the saucers from the milk-jugs on front-door steps. He is said to be the spirit of a departed cat's-meat man named Montmorency.

Of animal ghosts, there are, of course, many, most of whom are well-reputed in the spectral world. The Barking Bull of Basingstoke and the Angry Rabbit of Peckham, however, are said to be ferocious in their demeanour, but, for the most part, animal ghosts are tame and harmless.

Why is it that women ghosts are usually deriding? There is not on record a single instance of a cheerful woman ghost. Mrs. Wipsy, the medium, attributes it to the inability of female spectres to talk, and to the fact that they are compelled to adhere to clothes which are hopelessly out of fashion. This is probably true, though there is at least one audible woman ghost, i.e., the Walling Woman of Wexpleston. Not a cheerful apparition, by any means.

MORE THAN EVER.

Women ghosts often walk minus their heads, though for what reason it is difficult to say, except it be a fur-

ther effort at gloominess. Compare these dreadful creatures with such lively spectres as Bloddie Jack of Shrewsbury, or the Phantom of Haywards' Inn, who are said to fill up poor men's glasses on Christmas Eve! Dear, kind ghosts are these!

There is yet another class of ghosts to whom reference must be made, to wit, the spectres known as literary ghosts. These queer beings occur especially in Fleet Street, where they may sometimes be seen lurking about the old taverns. They have a furtive look and jump when spoken to. Ghosts in this world, and ghosts in the next. Ghosts they were and ghosts they will remain.

Respectable? It is for you to decide. In any case, Marcus Mayne did not write this article, and, since the subject has drifted into a dangerous channel, his "ghost" will have no more of it.

Tell These At Your Party

THE person was trying to illustrate to the class of small boys what was meant by moral courage.

"Supposing," he said, "twelve boys were sleeping in a dormitory, and one said his prayers. That would be moral courage." The boys quite understood. "Now," he went on, "can any one give me an example?"

"Yes," answered a lad in the back row. "If twelve clergymen were sleeping in a dormitory and one didn't say his prayers, that would be moral courage."

THE line at the ticket window was very long and very mixed. A stout, coarse man amused himself during the long wait by whispering sweet nothings to a very pretty girl who stood next to him. Her chin tilted a

Christmas At a Fashionable London Hotel

—Society Kills the Family at Home Spirit—

By REGINALD TEMPLE

WITH each passing year it is becoming increasingly popular among society folk to close down their own establishments and take up temporary residence at their favorite rendezvous among the many palatial resorts of which the metropolis can boast. They are thus enabled to release their own household staffs for the holidays without personal inconvenience and enjoy themselves amid surroundings where gaiety and good cheer are furnished on a lavish scale.

Music, dancing and the cheerful environment are a never-failing attraction to those unable to entertain a large family gathering in their own homes. Scores of residences in Mayfair and Belgrave will be dark and deserted at Christmas for no other reason than that their tenants have preferred to flock to hotel-land to celebrate the Happy Season in appropriate fashion.

CHILDREN'S PARTIES.

Long before the arrival of Christmas Eve huge sums have been expended in fancy decorations and the extensive resources of each hotel are mustered for the benefit of its clientele. Giant Christmas trees, illuminated with tiny colored globes are soled in the foyers ready for the moment when each chef dons the raiment of Father Christmas and makes a welcome appearance among the juvenile population of each establishment.

The afternoon of each Christmas Day is set apart for children's parties, and for a few joyous hours the youngsters are given a free hand and allowed to roam wherever they will in the hotel.

Meanwhile the cuisine staffs are busily engaged in the preparation of a repast which will do justice to the occasion and sustain their individual reputations for skill and excellence. The odor of roasting turkeys and geese escapes from the kitchens and ascends with tempting insistence to the uppermost floors. Extensive cellars are ransacked for the choicest vintages. At the Savoy Hotel alone the value of the rare wines and spirits kept in stock is more than £800,000 and even then vast reserves have to be piled up to cope with the Christmas demands.

SURPRISE PRESENTS.

Special menus are carefully prepared for the occasion, and with one accord the various managements take the opportunity to present visitors with surprise presents which are distributed after dinner on Christmas Day. With the Maitre d'hotel in the lead, a procession of waiters carrying a giant cracker is paraded around the restaurant and eventually wretched saunders showering sealed packages containing a variety of souvenirs about the floor. Even greeting cards are not forgotten and these arrive by post in the ordinary way.

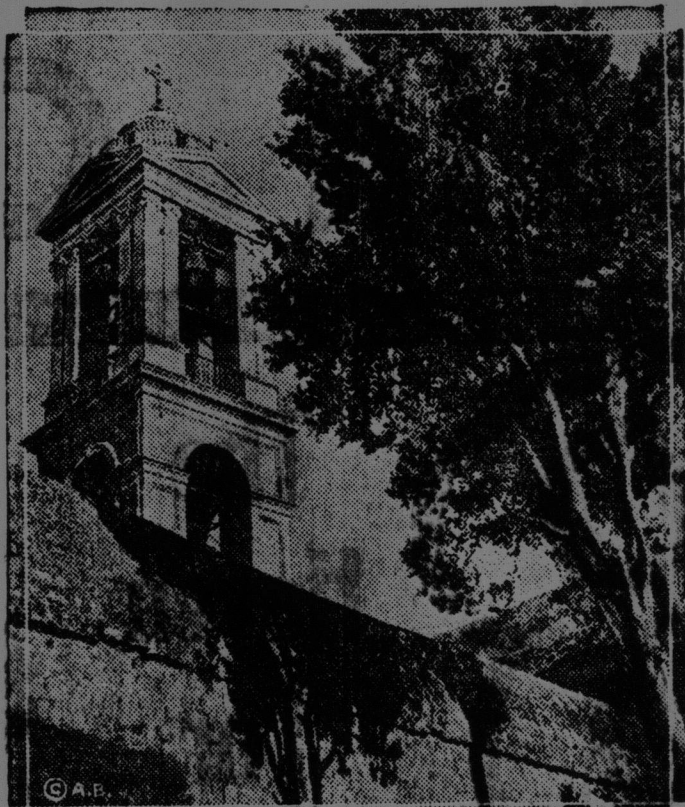
Every private salon a manager of the six famous hotels in the West End have already been booked up by private parties who will journey to the metropolis from all parts of the country for the Yuletide celebration.

At the Savoy two orchestras and six bands will be in attendance, and dancing devices will find the three large ballrooms and the restaurant floor available until the early hours of the morning. Chridge's and the Ritz have been selected by numerous foreign notabilities as venues for dispensing hospitality to wide circles of friends and compatriots and many private balls are being arranged. Indian Maharajahs and titled members of the Diplomatic Corps are among the number who intend to act as hosts at these establishments during the happy season.

MORE THAN EVER.

Accommodation for more than 10,000 guests is being arranged by the

"The Bells of Bethlehem"



On Christmas morning the silver bells in this tower at the Church of the Nativity will "ring out the glad tidings" to all the world that Christ was born in a manger near this same spot.

little higher each time he spoke, and then, exasperated, she turned on him. "I wish you would leave me alone!" "All right, all right, my dear!" said the plump one. "But don't eat me!" The girl looked him up and down scornfully. "You're in no danger of that," she replied. "I'm a Jewess."

THE garrulous old lady in the stern of the boat had pestered the guide with her comments and questions ever since they had started. Her meek little husband, who was hunched toad-like in the bow, fished in silence. The old lady had seemingly exhausted every possible point in fish and animal life, woodcraft and personal history, when she suddenly espied one of those curious paths of oily, unbroken water frequently seen on small lakes which are baffled by a light breeze.

"Oh, guide, guide!" she exclaimed, "what makes that funny streak in the water? No, there—right over there!" The guide was busy rebaiting the old gentleman's hook and merely mumbled "U-m-m-m."

"Guide," repeated the old lady in tones that were not to be denied, "look right over there where I'm pointing and tell me what makes that funny streak in the water."

The guide looked up from his baiting with a sigh. "That? Oh, that's where the road went across the ice last winter."

Vancouver Heard By Day in Digby



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