

TWO GHOST STORIES

Told By the Late Mr. Richard Owen and They are True. Sir Richard Owen, says a correspondent of the Daily News, had two remarkable ghost stories which it was his privilege to hear him relate. The one about a recorded here was perhaps the better of the two, but its quality can scarcely be judged of when detached from the peculiarly expressive style of the telling of the story. In his early days, when he held the post of surgeon to the poor, he once, as a negro died in the jail and a post-mortem was performed on the body. The body was put in the coffin and the lid screwed down to be ready for the funeral next day. Owen had at the time been already attracted to the study of comparative anatomy, and negroes' heads were not plentifully so he made up his mind that this case should not be lost to the cause of science. In the evening he returned to the prison with a black bag containing a knife from his pocket. He had a difficulty in getting admittance to the mortuary, where the coffin lid was unscrewed and screwed down again. During this process the brick and the negro's head changed places. The ground outside the principal entrance was covered with a layer of snow and Owen had scarped down the hill with a shovel. He had a long walk home with the head in his hand, and the head tumbled out and rolled down the paved way. He jumped up, caught the bag, and following the head, he found it as it is finished its career in a small shop where tobacco was sold. Pushing it into the bag again, he vanished out of the shop with all the speed he was capable of. Next morning, when Owen was going to his usual duties at the prison, he was called by the woman of the shop where the accident had occurred on the previous evening. He had had the seal, a bright night before, and among the West India goods, there were many deals were done that did not at that time require to be accounted for. Among these had been the killing of a negro, in which he had a hand, and the transaction had left a tangle of trouble and confusion. After giving these details, the woman told of the horrible event that took place the night before. He was sitting in his shop, all quiet, when he was called by a man who had been thinking of the negro, when suddenly he saw his very head roll into the shop in front of him. He had a look at it, followed by the Devil, all in black, with a black bag in his hand. The Devil snatched up the head, and both disappeared through the earth like a flash of lightning. The description was perhaps not quite complimentary to the young anatomist, but it was satisfactory to the old captain that his identity had not been recognized.

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