

The Story of An Old House

CAHILL-CROFT

(The Maple Leaf, Oakland, Calif.)
Away back in the long ago out of the virgin forest my timbers were felled, barked, hewed and assembled with their pegs of wood in quaint but sturdy fashion. I am still a refuge and home, dear, I know, to the owner—the last of the children of the second generation who played about my door and lived the life of old-time childhood.

And let me tell you the history of my "inventors." Across the seas in the glow of young manhood and womanhood sailed a band of blue-eyed, fair-skinned, light-hearted people, destined to establish a new home in a new land, Kildare, Prince Edward Island, named after their beloved home in Ireland. Among the newcomers were my master and mistress, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cahill. Their family of eight children grew up in the "new soil," strong and sturdy both of heart and soul, each one loving the sweet home life so dear in days long since forgotten. Walter the second inherited the old homestead, where in due time I was built to replace the log house of my grand forebears. Within me all was life and love and laughter—the rafters echoed and the stairways groaned from the ceaseless stir of twelve children that blessed the couple in their sacred home life. As each portion of my frame advanced to completion, my loving mistress surrounded my grounds with flowers and also with a beautiful and delicious garden of fruit and vegetables. Snow-drops, Scarlet Lightening, Verbena, Candy-tuft, White-musk, Marsh-mallow, Roses, Poppies, Lupins, Columbine and all the dear old-fashioned flowers shone forth from the labor of her loving, capable hands. Beds were bordered with delicate coral and golden moss. Gradually, as each child grew to manhood or womanhood, he or she stepped across my threshold with a fond and tearful goodbye to the anxious and patient parents, who always longed for the return of loved ones on land or sea. My dear old master, an aged grandfather, was first to press on to Eternity. Silence and sorrow were in my being for many months. Walter the third was the new heir to my body now, and in a few years he brought home his lovely bride, nee Mary McAlduff, from Alberton, formerly a school teacher. Again my rafters rung with the noise and patter of childish pranks and play—the ten little girls who came into my "arms" and who played and romped around my door, have long since found new places in the far, far West—far from me in distance, but not, I hope, forgotten in memory.

As no son came into this third generation to bear the name of Walter, it was decided to dispose of the old homestead and move the family nearer town. My old mistress, Mrs. Walter Cahill, the second, had by now passed to the Great Beyond. For the first time in years I am empty and alone, no sound of merry voices, no clang of kitchen cooking, no sweet murmur of prayer,—just the whistling wind and the slumberous roaring from my nearby friend—the blue and gray Gulf of St. Lawrence. But I am not to be allowed to crumble and decay, the seventh son of Walter the second, widely known as Doctor Walter Cahill, of Hartford, Conn., reclaims me for his summer home. I am moved from my old stand, and with the same loving touch of tenderness as in days gone by, I am cleaned and refurbished by the Doctor's sister,

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Elizabeth, who is now listening to me tell my story. My new master and his sister, inseparable companions all their lives, renewed my old features, lifted my face as it were, so that once again I can look the world straight in the face and shout a welcome to Cahill-Croft Home.

Not many years of joy and laughter, not many happy summers did my loved ones spend under my roof when God called my new master to His eternal home in Heaven. Again I stand, a spectacle of grayness and loneliness, waiting and wondering. The sister came to my rescue and purchased me as her very own. A new life again springs within me. I know someone loves me. I am dear as ever to the descendants of my long gone children. A few more years have gone by, many visitors have called on my mistress, among them one of the third generation, Florence, a beautiful girl, now a teacher in golden Western Canada, but true to her native home and loved ones. She wanders through my rooms and sings to me a sweet goodbye, as she must return to her new found home and friends in Edmonton. When she comes again she may not know me for strange things have happened to me since 1930. When? Where? and Why? I have been cut up, quartered, piled on teams and hauled away to my mistress' new property in Alberton, close beside her devoted sister, Mrs. J. Whelan. Skilful hands have been working on me, putting me in order once again, but I wonder if I'll ever look the same to my loved ones. Just the other evening I heard my mistress say, "you dear old home, here we are again, and I wonder if you are lovable, as I have often been when far from you and the rolling, rollicking blue gray gulf with its God-given briny tang?"

At last the job is finished and this is what I went through in the "operation." I have been cemented, plastered, shingled and painted, the chimneys and fire-place rebuilt, new pump installed, floors renewed and polished—flowers blooming, and everybody happy once again to be alive. Though my front walls are not adorned on one side by the English Honeysuckle or on the other by the English Ivy, as in days ago, I still have the Wild Cucumber and trailing vines to meet and greet you, as you enter Cahill-Croft.

The little brown house with its sloping red roof,
Has an open door for you,
Within its walls as in days of old
Is a welcome, warm and true.
The chairs on the porch and the latch on the gate
Await in good order the touch of your hand,
While the cooling sea-breezes are over the land.
The pump in the kitchen with its clear, sparkling spring
Shall render a "toast" while the tea-kettle sings,
The fruit from the vine and the goodies we hoard
Shall come forth from the larder to grace the plain board
Come away—to the little brown house in the field,
When the lure of the land and the sea
Are greater than din of the city's thronged streets
Where a true Cahill welcomes to thee.

—Elizabeth B. Cahill,
Alberton, P. E. Island,
November, 1932.

Used to think that Christmas was nothing but a day
To get a lot of presents and to give a lot away,
Greeted "Merry Christmas" and helped to trim the tree,
Just a day of Christmas was all that I could see;
Since I found that Christmas is more than any day,
Christmas came to our home and never went away.

CHRISTMAS

We may not be merry, the long years forbid it,
The years that have brought us such manifold smarts;
But we may be happy, if only we carry
The Spirit of Christmas deep down in our hearts.

Hence I shall not wish you the old "Merry Christmas,"
Since that is of shadowless childhood a part;
But one that is holy and happy and peaceful,
The Spirit of Christmas deep down in your heart.

—ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

Bethlehem Exalted

Hill with the little olives and the little town!
If rivers from their crystal fountains flow down,
If 'twas the dawn which did day's gold unbar,
Ye were beginnings of the best we are,
The most we see, the highest that we know,
The lifting heavenward of man's life below.

EDWIN ARNOLD

Transformation

You ask me, what is Death? It is exactly like a transformation scene. At the pantomime the scene was just like the world. There were trees and houses, and people, common people, like anyone. Then suddenly, click! Oh, it was wonderful. Everything was changed.

The trees had leaves of gold and silver, and the houses were like fairy palaces, and there were strange lights, red and blue, and there were great garlands of the most beautiful flowers, and the people were like angels, with gems, and shining clothes. Well, you understand, at first we had only seen one side of the scene—then click! everything was turned round, and we saw the other side. That is like life and death.

Always when we are alive, we can see only one side of things. But there is the other side, the under side. Never, so long as we are alive, we can never, never see it. But when we die—click! It is a transformation scene. Everything is turned round, and we can see the other side. Oh, it will be very different, it will be wonderful. That is what they call Death.—Henry Harland.

Spirit of Goodwill

Note with what eager spirits the little children enter into the preparation for their Christmas. They enjoy them more, much more, than they do the final receiving of their individual gifts. And so do you, my friend. And in the progress of the days this side of the pleasure of good will may come to be for you a continual feast as the mere taking of gifts could never be. You could not have, you would not enjoy, a bundle of Christmas gifts for every morning after breakfast. But the spirit of goodwill gets exercise and enrichment every day in wishing or in planning good for others. It is the secret of a perpetual zest in life, a never-ending pleasure of adventure, a wise investment which never gets into the court of bankruptcy. Think how stale and how distressed for the little folks the week before Christmas would be if they were strictly forbidden to buy or think of anybody's presents but their own! It would take away not only the pleasure of anticipation, but also of surprise. A purchase is a purchase, an unlooked-for gift with love behind it is a Christmas gift. And, worst of all, such a seclusion in a world of selfish thought would deprive them of the supreme pleasure of planning gifts of love for

—Anon others.

The Cauld Lad O'Hylton

Hylton Castle, in the County of Durham, England, overlooks a bend of the river Wear, about four miles from the sea. Centuries ago its precincts witnessed a tragedy whose strange particulars have become a legend handed down through the generations, and often repeated when the Yule clog glows and a star-lit darkness covers the land.

One St. Thomas's day, the shortest day in the year, the Lord of Hylton strode across the courtyard to the stables to look to the care of his horses, which, in those turbulent times, were but little less valued than his serfs. It was never known what displeased him, but, in ungovernable rage, he seized a straw fork and flung it at an unlucky stable boy, who happened to be the only attendant present. The fork struck the wall, rebounded and pierced the boy to the brain, and he fell dead at his master's feet.

Hylton was aghast: not from fear of the law for the King's justice hardly ran in that wild country. It was fear of the Church, which alone in those days stood up for the common man, that caused the noble to blench. The Lord Bishop of the County Palatinate, armed with both temporal and spiritual terrors, and invested judicially with the power of life and death, would not hesitate to call him to account, and he foresaw a heavy penance. He therefore concealed the body under the straw, and when the sunlight was fading from the western sky, carried it to a lonely pool in the woods, and, after weighing the clothing with stones, flung the corpse into the sullen depths. The father and mother waited long in their humble cot, but their boy returned no more.

Presently strange doings were whispered of in the castle. Domestic, passing along the gloomy corridors, heard footsteps but saw no living thing, while a chill wind, like an icy breath, fanned their cheeks. Doors opened and shut while no one was near. The vigilant, whatever it was, as if growing bolder, proceeded to other and more impish actions. It was the duty of the kitchen maids, after the last meal of the day, to wash the bowls and platters in the banquetting hall, and stack them on the sideboard, in readiness for the morning. What was their surprise on rising, to find the dishes, begrimed and dirty, scattered all over the dining table! Everybody denied knowledge of the prank, and awaited breakfast while the dishes were again collected and washed. This was bad enough, but when the trick was repeated the next night, and the night after that, it was felt that something must be done.

The house steward, whose domain was thus disturbed, determined to watch in concealment, all night in hope to catch the offender in the act. Next morning he had a strange tale to tell. Nothing had occurred till midnight, when, without a sound, the door opened and a dripping form, which he instantly recognized as that of the missing stableboy, slowly entered. The spectre (for such it was) made its way to the fireplace, where the dying embers still gave out a glow, and seating itself, rocked to and fro, muttering, "cauld, . . . cauld!" How long this continued the spell-bound steward could not tell, but at last the goblin snatched up wood ashes from the hearth and scattered them over the dishes which it then strewed about in confusion. It then retired as quietly as it came.

It was clear that only the spiritual arm could hope to prevail against an apparition, so the parish priest was called in to "lay the ghost." The good father came, but, as if suspecting trouble, the ghost did not. Still, an exorcism was repeated in the hope that "the cauld lad" (as it had come to be called) might be within earshot. Vain hope! Next night the confusion was every whit as bad.

The kitchen maids, for obvious reasons, concluded to leave the dishes unwashed and the hall in disarray. They got another surprise next morning, when they found the dishes clean and neatly stacked, and the hall in better order—as they admitted—than they themselves could arrange it. Naturally the "cauld lad" was left to tidy up undisturbed, though now and then some wakeful inmate would hear him singing as he worked:

"Wae's me, wae's me!
The acorn's not sown
That's to grow the tree,
That's to make the boards,
That's to haul the bairn,
That's to lay me!"

The years rolled on. Old Lord Hylton before he died, confessed his crime. But the harmless familiar spook remained at its post.

Three hundred years,—and great changes have come over the land. Where stood the gloomy forest, now are smiling fields. Hylton Castle

has lost its grimness: its owners have enlarged and ornamented the stately pile. The very people are different; kinder, more restrained, and law-abiding. Only the "cauld lad" is unchanged and now he is unwelcome.

It is the eve of St. Thomas's Day and the guests are assembled in the great hall. Story and song go round for each contributes to the entertainment after the fashion of that simpler day. The familiar legend of the castle's spectre is again recounted, and from a stranger comes the query: "Does none attempt to lay the restless spirit?" "Not for many years, since it seems useless," was the answer. "Then lay a cloak and a hood where the spirit can see them and watch the outcome!" How the stranger guest backed up his advice we are not told: enough that on the Christmas Eve a red cloak and hood were laid out before the fire ere the company retired, leaving a bolder retainer to watch.

At midnight the door swung open and the well-known form entered. It advanced to the fire and saw the garments lying, red as the fireglow itself. Hastily putting them on, as if in delight, it frisked fantastically about the hall. Then it sang:

"Here's a cloak and here's a hood,
The Cauld Lad o' Hylton'll dae
nae mair good!"

So singing it gambolled through the open door and vanished for evermore from mortal eyes.

Such is the legend of the Cauld Lad. It and others like it were the delight of the old and the terror of the young, in former days. We may picture the narrator, a born storyteller, worthy descendant of the last minstrel, sinking his voice to a thrilling undertone as he recalls the crime, and then calling up laughter at the apparition's freaks. These legends are fast dying out, not so much from our fuller knowledge, but because they depended on a local peasantry living generation after generation in the same place, living the same lives and handing down the same sayings to their sons. Modern conditions have altered all that: easy transport has intermingled men of many counties, and local habits and traditions are lost. (Note: cauld and hauld have the "l" silent)—Agricola.

A Hat Trick

This is a little trick that can be performed with little or no apparatus, and causes a great deal of fun and amusement at a party.

A clever boy will announce that he can place a glass of water upon the table, cover it with a hat, and then drink the water without removing the hat. It sounds impossible, and every one is anxious to see the trick performed.

This is how it is done. Stand a glass of water on a table, borrow a hat and place it over the glass. While doing this patter away about the wonder of the trick and inform the audience that on no account must they touch the hat.

Then go under the table and make a pretense of drinking the



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water through the table. Everyone is, of course, sceptical, and, after coming from under the table ask one of the audience to remove the hat to see if the water has been drunk or not.
As soon as that is done, seize the glass and drink the water. If you like you may announce to the surprised audience that you have done what you promised to do—drink the water without removing the hat someone else having removed the hat for you.

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Duchemin-Loughlin Nuptials

At a quarter past six Thursday morning Trinity United Church was the scene of a joyous event at this happy Christmas, when Rev. Dr. Ramsay united in marriage Miss Helen Gertrude Duchemin of this city, to Mr. Roland Gladstone Loughlin of Fredericton, N. B.

The bride, who was unattended, was given away by her father Mr. A. Ernest Duchemin. She looked very lovely as she entered the church on her father's arm to the strains of the wedding march played by Prof. A. R. Kendall who also played softly while the ceremony was in progress. The bride wore a most becoming costume of brown and navy blue, with head and shoes to match. Her coat was of Amethyst brocade with squirrel trimming. She carried a beautiful bouquet of tallisman roses.

The church was most attractively decorated for the occasion with evergreens and seasonal trimmings by the girl friends of the bride. After the ceremony the happy couple left on a trip to various points of the Maritime Provinces before taking up their residence at Fredericton, N. B.

The bride has been a teacher in the Model School for a number of years and has also been organist and choir director of the Central Christian Church.

The groom is the representative of W. C. Pliffield and Co., investment bankers, at Fredericton, N. B. and was formerly a resident of Charlottetown.

Edwin Arnold

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