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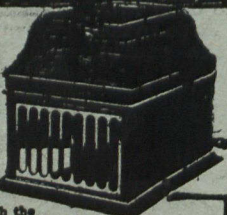
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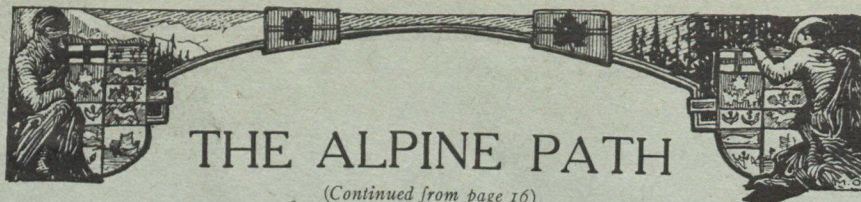
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(Continued from page 16)

promptly picked them off, generally with disastrous consequences to the beans.

Readers of "Anne of Green Gables" will remember the Haunted Wood. It was a gruesome fact to us three young imps. Well and Dave had a firm and rooted belief in ghosts. I used to argue with them over it with the depressing result that I became infected myself. Not that I really believed in ghosts, pure and simple; but I was inclined to agree with Hamlet that there might be more things in heaven and earth than were commonly dreamed of—in the philosophy of Cavendish authorities, anyhow.

The Haunted Wood was a harmless, pretty spruce grove in the field below the orchard. We considered that all our haunts were too commonplace, so we invented this for our own amusement. None of us really believed at first, that the grove was haunted, or that the mysterious "white things" which we pretended to see flitting through it at dismal hours were aught but the creations of our own fancy. But our minds were weak and our imaginations strong; we soon came to believe implicitly in our myths, and not one of us would have gone near that grove after sunset on pain of death. Death! What was death compared to the unearthly possibility of falling into the clutches of a "white thing"?

In the evenings, when, as usual, we were perched on the back porch steps in the mellow summer dusk, Well would tell me blood-curdling tales galore, until my hair fairly stood on end, and I would not have been surprised had a whole army of "white things" swooped suddenly on us from round the corner. One tale was that his grandmother having gone out one evening to milk the cows, saw his grandfather, as she supposed, come out of the house, drive the cows into the yard and then go down the lane.

The "creep" of this story consisted in the fact that she went straightway into the house and found him lying on the sofa where she had left him, he having never been out of the house at all. Next day something happened to the poor old gentleman, I forget what, but doubtless it was some suitable punishment for sending his wraith out to drive cows!

Another story was that a certain dissipated youth of the community, going home one Saturday night, or rather Sunday morning, from some unhallowed orgy, was pursued by a lamb of fire, with its head cut off and hanging by a strip of skip or flame. For weeks afterward I could not go anywhere after dark without walking with my head over my shoulder, watching apprehensively for that fiery apparition.

ONE evening Dave came down to me in the apple orchard at dusk, with his eyes nearly starting out of his head, and whispered that he had heard a bell ringing in the then deserted house. To be sure, the marvellous edge was soon taken off this by the discovery that the noise was simply a newly-cleaned clock striking the hours, which it had never done before. This furnished the foundation of the "Ghostly Bell" chapter in "The Story Girl."

But, one night we had a real ghost scare—the "real" qualifying "scare," not "ghost." We were playing at twilight in the hayfield south of the house, chasing each other around the fragrant coils of new-cut hay. Suddenly I happened to glance up in the direction of the orchard dyke. A chill began galloping up and down my spine, for there, under the juniper tree, was really a "white thing," shapelessly white in the gathering gloom. We all stopped and stared as though turned to stone. "It's Mag Laird," whispered Dave in terrified tones.

Mag Laird, I may remark, was a harmless creature who wandered begging over the country side, and was the bugbear of children in general and Dave in particular. As poor Mag's usual apparel was dirty, cast-off clothes of other persons, it did not seem to me likely that this white visitant were she. Well and I would have been glad to think it was, for Mag was at least flesh and blood while this—

"Nonsense!" I said, trying desperately to be practical. "It must be the white calf."

Well agreed with me with suspicious alacrity, but the shapeless, grovelling thing did not look in the least like a calf.

"It's coming here!" he suddenly exclaimed in terror.

I gave one agonized glance. Yes! It was creeping down over the dyke, as calf ever did or could creep. With a simultaneous shriek we started for the house, Dave gasping at every step, "It's Mag Laird," while all that Well and I could realize was that it was a "white thing" after us at last!

We reached the house and tore into Grandmother's bedroom, where we had left her sewing. She was not there. We swung round and stampeded for a neighbour's, where we arrived trembling in every limb. We gasped out our awful tale and were laughed at, of course. But no persuasion could induce us to go back, so the French-Canadian servants, Peter and Charlotte, set off to explore, one carrying a pail of oats, the other armed with a pitchfork.

They came back and announced that there was nothing to be seen. This did not surprise us. Of course, a "white thing" would vanish, when it had fulfilled its mission of scaring three wicked children out of their senses. But go home we would not until Grandfather appeared and marched us back in disgrace. For what do you think it was?

A white tablecloth had been bleaching on

the grass under the juniper tree, and, just at dusk, Grandmother, knitting in hand, went out to get it. She flung the cloth over her shoulder and then her ball fell and rolled over the dyke. She knelt down and was reaching over to pick it up when she was arrested by our sudden stampede and shrieks of terror. Before she could move or call out we had disappeared.

So collapsed our last "ghost," and spectral terrors languished after that, for we were laughed at for many a long day.

But we played house and gardened and swung and picnicked and climbed trees. How we did love trees! I am grateful that my childhood was spent in a spot where there were many trees, trees of personality, planted and tended by hands long dead, bound up with everything of joy or sorrow that visited our lives. When I have "lived with" a tree for many years it seems to me like a beloved human companion.

BEHIND the barn grew a pair of trees I always called "The Lovers," a spruce and a maple, and so closely intertwined that the boughs of the spruce were literally woven into the boughs of the maple. I remember that I wrote a poem about them and called it "The Tree Lovers." They lived in happy union for many years. The maple died first; the spruce held her dead form in his green, faithful arms for two more years. But his heart was broken and he died, too. They were beautiful in their lives and in death not long divided; and they nourished a child's heart with a grace-giving fancy.

In a corner of the front orchard grew a beautiful young birch tree. I named it "The White Lady," and had a fancy about it to the effect that it was the beloved of all the dark spruces near, and that they were rivals for her love. It was the whitest straightest thing ever seen, young and fair and maiden-like.

On the southern edge of the Haunted Wood grew a most magnificent old birch. This was the tree of trees to me. I worshipped it, and called it "The Monarch of The Forest." One of my earliest "poems"—the third I wrote—was written on it, when I was nine. Here is all I remember of it:

"Around the poplar and the spruce
The fir and maple stood;
But the old tree that I loved the best
Grew in the Haunted Wood.

It was a stately, tall old birch,
With spreading branches green;
It kept off heat and sun and glare—
'Twas a goodly tree, I ween.

'Twas the Monarch of the Forest,
A splendid kingly name,
Oh, it was a beautiful birch tree,
A tree that was known to fame."

The last line was certainly a poetic fiction. Oliver Wendell Holmes says

"There's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth."

But even a tree does not live forever. The Haunted Wood was cut down. The big birch was left standing. But, deprived of the shelter of the thick-growing spruces, it gradually died before the bitter northern blasts from the Gulf. Every spring more of its boughs failed to leaf out. The poor tree stood like a disrowned, forsaken king in a ragged cloak. I was not sorry when it was finally cut down. "The land of dreams among," it resumed its sceptre and reigns in fadeless beauty.

Every apple tree in the two orchards had its own individuality and name—"Aunt Emily's tree," "Uncle Leander's tree," the "Little Syrup tree," the "Spotty tree," the "Spider tree," the "Gavin tree," and many others. The "Gavin" tree bore small, whitish-green apples, and was so called because a certain small boy named Gavin, hired on a neighbouring farm, had once been caught stealing them. Why the said Gavin should have imperiled his soul and lost his reputation by electing to steal apples from that especial tree I could never understand, for they were hard, bitter, flavourless things, good neither for eating or cooking.

DEAR old trees! I hope they all had souls and will grow again for me on the hills of Heaven. I want, in some future life, to meet the old "Monarch" and the "White Lady," and even poor, dishonest little "Gavin's tree" again.

When I was eight years old Cavendish had a very exciting summer, perhaps the most exciting summer it ever had, and of course we children revelled in the excitement. The *Marcopolo* was wrecked on the sandshore.

The *Marcopolo* was a very famous old ship and the fastest sailing vessel of her class ever built. She had a strange, romantic history, and was the nucleus of many traditions and sailors' yarns. She had finally been condemned in England under the Plimsoll Bill. Her owners evaded the Bill by selling her to a Norwegian firm, and then chartering her to bring a cargo of deal plank from Quebec. On her return she was caught in a furious storm out in the Gulf, sprung a leak, and became so waterlogged that the captain determined to run her on shore to save crew and cargo.

That day we had a terrible windstorm in Cavendish. Suddenly the news was spread that a vessel was coming ashore. Every one who could rushed to the sandshore and saw a magnificent sight!—a large (Continued on next page)

