

### The Timothy Riggs Ghost

It Philosophizes on Christmas

By F. A. MITCHEL

It was Christmas eve. In a princely mansion a man lay dying. He was attended by servants and nurses, but no wife or child stood by his bedside. Presently a physician laid his hand on the man's heart and said:

"He is dead."  
The dead man awoke to his new existence. He felt that he had the power to move over great distances in an infinitesimal space of time. He could see, hear and touch, but could not make himself seen, heard or felt. It was his corpse, not he, that was lying on the bed. Those who were in the room shed no tears, going out silently but without reverence.

"He was the meekest man that ever lived," said the butler to a maid. "A good time for him to die, or Christmas eve," the maid replied. "It wouldn't have given away anything tomorrow."

The spirit of Timothy Riggs heard and saw those who were passing out from the body he had left behind him. When a boy he had often picked up the shells of locusts or of marine animals, and he felt toward his body as he had felt toward those shells. When he had left the room he passed out of the house, going straight through the walls.

"If they hadn't discovered the X-ray and medium before I died," he said to himself, "I would not have understood how I do this." As it is, I see it very plainly.

Though he could be everywhere at once, for the present he concluded to remain in the city where forty years before he had begun life a poor boy and by thrift and stings had accumulated millions. But now his vast wealth had dropped from him as his body had dropped. All the treasures of the Indies seemed worthless to him. Yet, following instincts that elude him, he passed into the vaults of banks and other places for storing money.

Then he passed in among the houses of the rich. Those in them seemed to him to be satisfied with material possessions. He noted the poor and how many they were and how they suffered for want not only of comforts, but the necessities of life. Since he could be among the rich and the poor alike, the great difference between them came home to him as never before.

A rich family were preparing for Christmas, but without fervor. The oldest son had quarreled with his father because he had made a will leaving another son more property than his share.

"Money," thought the ghost of Riggs to himself, "that I have been heaping up all my life is, after all, a bad thing. It has made enemies of this father and son. It has been truly said that money is the root of all evil."

Then he took cognizance of the jails where men were stripped of clothes, marched in lockstep and when not working were kept in little cells. Not one of them had any enjoyment in Christmas.

"No," thought the Riggs ghost, "it is not money alone that is the root of evil, but the want of it."

Events succeeded one another in different lines from when he was a mortal and he had power to will them to move slowly or fast. He willed it to be Christmas morning. Everywhere children were waking from sleep and running to their stockings to see what Santa Claus had brought them.

"Why is it," thought the ghost of Timothy Riggs, "that the desire to possess comes with little children? Some of these are so young that they can neither speak nor walk. Yet when their parents hand them a bauble they stretch forth their hands eagerly to grasp it. Surely mortality takes its chief delight in possession."

Now that Tim Riggs had passed into a spiritual world and had no use for material things he wondered that he could have been so absorbed in this inherent passion to own things. Now he could understand it. These little ones did not know what it was to be without comforts and necessities. They were born covetous. Was it not this that had made him a mean man? From the time that he had accumulated a property to give him \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year he had all he needed. Why then, had he wanted more and more and more? His answer was, "For the same reason that a little child dives down into his stocking on Christmas morning for all there is in it."

When the spirit of Tim Riggs heaved a deep sigh. He had loved a girl in early life. Had he not been born with this universal passion of covetousness he would have married her, and, instead of passing through a life time heaping up riches that were new to him, he would have had a companion and would have seen children growing up about him. Instead of servants standing about his bed when he was dying, his loved one would have ministered to him.

Then the spirit of Tim Riggs passed away to his future dwelling place, thinking. And this is what he thought: "It is the natural desire to possess that moves the world. It enables those who have to confer pleasure on themselves and the needy by giving. It is the abuse of the natural instinct that is bad. Under proper restraint it is good. A child on Christmas morning represents it in its innocence."

**Origin of Vaudeville Turns.**  
We are indebted to John Chinaman for the modern vaudeville "turn." There were theaters in China when our ancestors were wandering about dressed in skins and blue paint, and the actors in those faroff times were just as anxious to please their patrons as the modern "artist" is to get the applause which gladdens his heart and—more important still—sends his salary up. The play over, each member of the troupe came forward to receive the applause to which he thought he was entitled, and one of them hit on the bright idea of performing some simple trick to prolong the enthusiasm of the spectators. His example was speedily followed, and these tricks soon became obligatory. One actor would produce a cat or a monkey from a hat; another would imitate an animal or "swallow" an object which he afterward found in his boot. Each tried to surpass the other, and feats of strength and dexterity were soon added to these simple tricks.—Pearson's Weekly.

**Quite a Run.**  
It's an overworked word, that poor little monosyllable "run."  
"I found a run started in my best stockings this morning," said the woman, "so I thought I'd run downtown and go into —s, where they are having a great run on silk hose. They ran an advertisement in this morning's paper, you know. Well, I ran my eye over the bargains on the 'way' down and I ran out of money before I got to the hose counter. Well, I'd run my legs off by that time, but I don't run a bill at —s, so I was in despair until who should I run into but my husband. I got some money of him—he's more generous than the general run of men—but when I got to the counter they'd run out of my size. Wasn't that a terrible run of luck?"  
And so she ran on and on and on.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**Made in Manchester.**  
The gentleman came on the railway platform with a bicycle just as the train was about to leave for Manchester. He put the machine into the van. A ticket collector followed him to the compartment and asked if he had a ticket for the bicycle. He had not, and as the official on the step was writing out an "excess" receipt the train began to move, whereupon he came in and traveled to town. The gentleman who had made this trip compulsory engaged the collector in conversation and found that the man would have to cross Manchester to get a train home again. "Why," he said, "then you'll pass over far from my office. Would you mind taking this bag there for me? I should like to get out at the next station and come to town by a later train." The dazed collector meekly agreed. It was a fine example of how to collect "excess."—Manchester Guardian.

**Painting Pictures on the Floor.**  
Albert Moore, the great artist whose works may be seen in the Tate and other public galleries, scorned the ordinary poses of the painter. He preferred his ease to an easel and painted all his great pictures, so dainty and charming, on the floor. His tubes of paint and his brushes and other accessories of his art were scattered about him, and he lay flat on his stomach, seldom remaining in one position five minutes at a time.

**The celebrated painter of "Christ Leaving the Pretorium" and the illustrator of Milton and Dante, that strange genius, Gustave Dore, had the same habit. The floor was his easel whenever possible, and, as he was a stout, heavy man, he seldom rose to an upright position except for his meals, and not always then.—London Telegraph.**

**Edward Young's Tragedy.**  
In Garrick's time the church had a decided leaning toward the stage. The great actor suffered a plague of stage-struck clergymen. He read many of their plays and produced at least one. The Rev. Edward Young of Welwyn parish and of "Night Thoughts" fame wrote a tragedy of "The Two Brothers," which Garrick produced. Its reception was a tragedy. It "was only fit to make an icelouse of a theater." Young, however, had counted his chickens. He had promised £1,000, the expected proceeds of his author's rights, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. And here he stood. He dipped deeply into his private purse and made up the thousand.—London Chronicle.

**Keep the Air Fresh.**  
Nothing causes chills more than hot, stuffy rooms. We often hear people complaining that they took cold when they came out into the night air. Yet it was not the night air which did the mischief, but the poisonous atmosphere in the room itself, due to the accumulated exhalations of many lungs, etc. Had the apartment been well ventilated the so-called chill would never have occurred.—From "Nervous Break-downs."

**Treading the Grapes.**  
In the wine region of Spain the method of treading the grapes is everywhere about the same. The grapes are well spread out in the press, and barefooted men or men wearing sandals or wooden soled shoes tread them.

**Truth Teller.**  
Marion—Did you ever receive a love letter? Adeline—Oh, yes! Marion—From whom did you receive it? Adeline—The postman.—Kansas City Star.

**Ignorance is less distant from truth than prejudice.—Diderot.**

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**Panama earthquakes are more ominous than naught.**  
No woman is supposed to look her age, no matter what it is.  
New York's idea of luck is getting in to see a new play before the police stop it.

**Nowadays children have to have a lot of patience to get along with their parents.**  
Wooden shoes, which are gaining in popularity, must be due to throw at a serenading cat.

**Bombita—a Spanish bullfighter has killed 3,000 bulls and made \$600,000. One has retained the beef.**  
One disease that is becoming exceedingly rare is housewife's knee—and no thanks to the doctors, either.

**Of course after every "father's day" the family will be willing for him to take a week off to "recover"**  
Oysters haven't joined the food trust. Still it's hard times having to pay your way on a slow pearl hunt.

**An aviator was arrested for shooting ducks from his aeroplane. Have to station game warden on the clouds.**  
A Cleveland man gave his wife a knife and told her to kill him. And she fooled him by trying to make good.

**"Should a woman whistle?" asks an exchange. That is a dangerous question. If you tell the truth she's liable to do it.**  
If, according to Dr. Wiley, woman preceded man in creation, why didn't she seize the ballot when she had a chance?

**"Thanks for the lobster" is the latest catch phrase in Paris. We're certainly glad that they have come to appreciate us at last.**  
A returned missionary says they have had woman suffrage in Central Africa for 500 years. Yes, and just look at 'em!

**Boston man works restaurant because he got forty two beans for 15 cents. How many did he want forty-three?**  
A St. Louis man has written a grand opera—in which nobody is poisoned, stabbed or betrayed. That must be a eugenics opera.

**With the perfect man dead at the age of twenty-nine, some of the rest of us can become resigned to our physical imperfections.**  
On the other hand, however, those of us who don't have to worry about the income tax are made mighty uneasy by the outgo tax.

**Queen Mary of England is after the grafting servants in the palace. Evidently the cook has been surreptitiously feeding the policeman.**

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