



Contents

Coins of Doom	URANN THAYER 6
<i>How a Dead Man's Curse Played Havoc with Three Lives!</i>	
My Daughter Who Never Existed	JOHN MILLER GREGORY 12
<i>I Wanted a Child to Love! Did Fate Send Me a Phantom, Instead?</i>	
Did the Ghost of Bismarck Warn the Kaiser?	ALBERT E. GALLIN 17
<i>On the Eve of the War, Wilhelm II Held an Astounding Séance. Read the Facts!</i>	
The Apparition in the Prize Ring	JOHN TAVEREL 19
<i>Did Ace Jessel, Negro Boxer, Have a Spectral Guardian?</i>	
The Strangest Murder Trial	A COURT BAILIFF 24
<i>Calloway Wronged a Woman—and the Other World Took a Terrible Revenge</i>	
She Walks in Beauty	ANATOLE FELDMAN 29
<i>Her Lover Was Dead—but She Tried to Find Happiness in His Ghostly Arms!</i>	
When the Yankee Ace Came Back	LIEUTENANT "PINKY" MARTIN 31
<i>I Faced Death Above the German Lines. Then—Did My Buddy Return to Help Me?</i>	
The Spider	GRACE OURSLER 36
<i>Chatrand Plunges into a Desperate Duel with the Law!</i>	
The Face in the Fog	TITO SCHIPA 43
<i>An Amazing True Ghost Story by a Famous Opera Star</i>	
A Medium's Memoirs	HORACE LEAF 45
<i>Do You Believe in Black Magic? Read What a Great Medium Has to Say</i>	
The House I Haunted	HELEN BROOKS 48
<i>This Courageous Girl Fought with Psychic Weapons for the Man of Her Dreams!</i>	
The Witch in the Next Room	WALTER GIBSON 54
<i>A Terrifying Experience with a "Powwow Doctor" in Pennsylvania</i>	
Skeletons in the Closets of Famous Families	GORDON HILLMAN 61
<i>The True Story of the Worst Haunted Castle in France</i>	
A Bad Half Hour	WALTER ADOLPHE ROBERTS 62
<i>The Green-eyed Woman Staked Her Life on One Chance to Talk with a Ghost!</i>	
Phantom Lovers	GRANT HUBBARD 66
<i>"Living or Dead, You Are My Bride!" the Hindu Gasp'd. Was It True?</i>	
The Meeting Place	ROBERT NAPIER 72
<i>How Margery, the Famous Medium, Tried to Finger-print a Ghost!</i>	
Taking Tea with a Spirit	MARIE McCRAW ROBINSON 74
<i>A True Story of Weird Happenings in a College Dormitory</i>	
Were You Born in April?	STELLA KING 75
The Spectral Ship	J. CHRISTY MACMANUS 77
<i>An Authentic Account of the Strangest Mystery of the Cattle Country</i>	
Spirit Tales	COUNT CAGLIOSTRO 79
<i>Lord Erskine's Phantom Butler—and Other True Stories</i>	
Was This Impossible?	GILBERT DRAPER 93
<i>The Incredible Apparition of Caroline Draper, the Daughter of a Canadian Prime Minister</i>	

Published Monthly by THE CONSTRUCTIVE PUBLISHING CORPORATION, Washington and South Aves., Dunellen, N. J.
 Editorial and General Offices, MacLadden Building, 1926 Broadway, N. Y.
 Charles Mendel, President William Thompson, Secretary
 M. L. Wilson, Jr., Advertising Manager, Graybar Building, 420 Lexington Ave., New York, N. Y.

Entered as second class matter April 30th, 1926, at the Post Office at Dunellen, N. J., under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Additional entry at New York, N. Y. Copyright, 1929, by THE CONSTRUCTIVE PUBLISHING CORPORATION. Copyright also in Canada and Great Britain. All rights reserved.
 Price 25c a copy in U. S.—30c in Canada. Subscription price \$2.50 a year in the United States and its possessions; also Cuba, Mexico and Panama. All other countries including Canada \$4.00 per year.
 Chicago Office: 168 North Michigan Blvd., C. H. Shattuck, Manager.
 London Agents: Atlas Publishing & Distributing Co., Ltd., 18 Bride Lane, London, E. C.

Contributors are especially advised to be sure to retain copies of their contributions; otherwise they are taking an unnecessary risk. Every possible effort will be made in our organization to return unavailable manuscripts, photographs and drawings, but we will not be responsible for any losses of such matter contributed.

PRINTED BY THE ART COLOR PRINTING CO., DUNELLEN, N. J., U. S. A.



Terrified, I watched the sorcerer thrust a pointed stick through the wax model

THE old house on Morton Street had always fascinated me. As far back as I could remember—and I had passed it daily for nearly five years—there had been a sign *Room to Let* nailed beside the front door. It was an old sign when I first saw it, but it was never taken down. I often wondered about that sign. If it had said “rooms,” it would not have interested me; but the word “room” seemed to indicate that there was one apartment in the building which was not occupied and apparently never would be.

I always looked at the house whenever I passed in the street-car, but only once had I seen anyone entering it. That person was a stooped old man, muffled in a heavy overcoat, topped by an ancient derby hat. During my momentary view of him I could see only his back. Probably there were others

The Witch

Did the queer little man have power to inflict pain—and death—merely by muttering a charm? He claimed he did. Events seemed to prove—well, decide for yourself!

who lived in the two-story house, for the sign always said “room”—not “rooms.”

The second-story front room, I surmised, was the one that was untenanted, for the blinds were always drawn. They were old brown blinds, almost the shade of the smoke-stained yellow bricks of which the house was built. It was a dilapidated house; and I often wondered what the room looked like from the inside. Probably it contained an antique bed, a rickety table and two unsteady chairs, with a mirror or a chromo hanging on the wall. And if it was carpeted, the pattern would be old and colorless. Probably a most uninviting room. Many people must have looked at it; yet it was never taken. What was wrong with the room? Or with the house?

Two events occurred to change my living arrangements. The relatives with whom I had been dwelling left the city; and the factory where I worked was moved to another building. I decided that my best plan was to find quarters within walking distance of the factory. This was not easy, for the neighborhood was uninviting; but after making calculations I discovered that the old mystery house was within a mile of my new working place. Neither the house nor the neighborhood were pretentious; but I was not very particular about my abode, and my curiosity of five years' standing demanded satisfaction. Yet somehow I postponed my visit until the last possible day—and so I found myself standing before the house on a Saturday afternoon, with my trunk on a wagon, ready to take the room sight unseen.

After pounding on the door and ringing the bell for several minutes, I heard the slow click of a latch being turned; then the door was opened cautiously and I faced a strange old man—the very one whom I had seen from the street-car. His shoulders bent low; his face was saffron in color, but unwrinkled. His thin gray hair and short-clipped mustache added nothing to his expressionless countenance.

“I would like to see your room. Is it furnished?”

He studied me for a moment, and I felt in the position of a candidate for initiation. Finally he spoke in a thin, bitter voice, which seemed tinged with sarcasm.

“Yes. It is furnished. You can move in now. But I don't think you will like it. Nobody does—and I don't care.”

in the Next Room

By
WALTER GIBSON



I motioned to the two burly men on the wagon. "Bring in the trunk," I called.

I felt sure that the old man was impressed by my confident manner. Without seeing the room, without asking its price, without the least hesitation, I had taken it. Yet he showed no trace of surprise.

"This way," he said, and started slowly toward the stairs.

The lower hallway, the stairway and the second floor hall were bare. He took me to the front room as I expected, and when he had falteringly raised a shade I felt a thrill of delight at seeing the room almost as I had pictured it. I took off my hat and overcoat and laid them on a chair, and picked a corner for the trunk. The men went out while I raised the second shade, and I was alone in the room with the old landlord.

"The price of the room is four dollars a week," he said solemnly.

I nodded.

"Payable in advance," he continued.

I gave him the money.

"Here is your door key," he said, shuffling toward me. I took it and he left the room.

I was satisfied with my new home. I laughed as I watched the trolley-cars passing on the street. I felt that I had plunged into a pleasant adventure. The room was amazingly cheap; the old man was all right. Funny no one had taken the room before!

The first week passed smoothly. I was seldom in the room before midnight and I left before nine each morning. I learned that the old man's name was Crayton, and I conjectured that he was living on a moderate income. There were three rooms on the second floor. He lived in the back one; and someone occupied the large middle room; but the door was always locked. These were all the facts that I determined in the space of seven days.

Just one week after my arrival a queer thing happened. I had come in at midnight Saturday, and was reading in bed. I fancied I heard a noise in the hallway; so I extinguished the light and quietly opened the door.

A low moaning was audible. I thought of old man Cray-

*"My enemy
will suffer
agony in his
shoulder," he
rasped*

ton. Perhaps he was ill. So, in my stocking feet, I sneaked along the hall—but I soon discovered that the sound came from the middle room.

My curiosity rose. A tiny speck of light emerged from beneath the door. Evidently a strip of cloth had been

placed across the bottom. I looked for the keyhole, and decided it was stuffed with paper. The moaning continued, and with it I heard a *swish-swish*, as of liquid being stirred. Then began a weird chant, in a soft, musical language—the words were indistinguishable and yet the sound stirred the imagination strangely.

SO it continued: the chant, then the moaning, then silence broken only by the swishing water. Then I heard a frightened squeal, and immediately afterward a powerful voice sang a short melody of three or four notes. Quiet, for an instant—then a sound of padding feet.

I stole back to my room, locked the door and went to bed. I was not afraid; yet my hands trembled and it was some time before I could sleep.

At ten o'clock in the morning I arose and went downstairs. I found the old man waiting at the foot of the steps.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?" he asked.

I nodded.

He conducted me to the kitchen. There we sat opposite

each other at a small table with a percolator between us, and the old fellow studied me intently.

"This is the beginning of your second week," he announced dryly. "Do you wish to stay?"

I reached mechanically for a cigarette and tried to appear nonchalant.

"Certainly," I answered. "Why not?"

The old man chuckled, but there was no merriment in the sound.

"You're the first who has decided to stay. Some go without a word, some have coffee with me; but they always go away. The sign is still on the door. Did you notice it?"

Come to think of it, I had noticed the sign; but I had not spoken to Crayton partly because I had not seen him and partly because I had thought it none of my business. But there was something sinister in the old man's comment.

"Pardon me a moment," I said. I was piqued by Crayton's sarcastic attitude. I intended to settle his doubts at once.

I LEFT the room—and I honestly believe he didn't expect me to come back, for I went to the front door. There I pulled the old sign from its decaying fastenings. Then I returned to the kitchen and laid the piece of wood on the table.

"Put it away," I said. "You have a roomer who is going to stay—for a long while."

It was not easy to break the reserve of old age; especially when mistrust is its principal cause. But once their confidence has been gained, elderly people are eager for comradeship. So it was with old man Crayton. His bugaboo had been that no roomer would remain in his front apartment. He had been resentful toward all newcomers; he had waited sneeringly for their departure even though he had longed for them to stay. Now my emphatic action—the removal of the sign-board that was his fetish—had transformed him from a sour host into a willing friend. He thrust a faltering arm across the table and gripped my hand. He held the clasp for fully a minute; then abruptly dropped my hand and poured out two cups of coffee. He tried to cover his emotions; but I could see that words were beyond him for the time.

We sipped in silence. Then the old man, recovering his composure, leaned close to me and whispered.

"It's *him*—" with an upward thrust of his thumb—"Him, upstairs. He's why they won't stay."

"Who is he?" I asked.

"Shh! He hears everything! He's been here for five years or more—always just him. No one else will stay. You know why. You heard—last night."

I nodded. Further comment was useless. I did not want to interrupt the old man.

"Five years ago he came," continued Crayton in the same quavering whisper. "What he is I don't know—that is, I don't know his nationality. He may be a Hindu—a Malay—or a West Indian. He's been all around the world. He knows everything—that is, everything he shouldn't know."

The old fellow finished his cup of coffee.

"He has books up there, and pots—what do you call them caldrons? Yes, and he has mice and rats, and bats, and an owl and a funny little animal—I forget its name. It comes from India and kills snakes."

"A mongoose?"

"That's it! It's his pet. Sits in a corner of the room—always watching—for something. And Lord knows what he keeps in boxes and baskets up there. Terrible sort of man—he never did me harm, though—I shouldn't speak ill of him. And every Saturday night—nearly every Saturday night, he—"

The old man stopped abruptly. His left hand was poised in the air, and he spread his fingers in a gesture for silence, while his right hand hurriedly seized the coffee pot.

Before I could understand the interruption, there was a light rap at the door.

"Come in," said Crayton.

When the door opened, I expected to see a most villainous character. Instead, I beheld a rather small, dark-skinned

fellow whose face was impassive but not unkindly. He had the forehead of the thinker, a chin that was somewhat weak, and a nose that was not all flat. His thick black hair gave him a prophetic air; and only his eyes were sinister. He looked at me questioningly, and I could see his eyelids narrow instead of widening, so that only two tiny black gleams were visible between them.

"Our new guest?" he inquired in a smooth, even voice.

"Yes, Mr. Papaman," replied Crayton. "I shall introduce you. This is Mr. Gibson, who will be with us indefinitely."

"I am glad," said the dark man, extending a hand which I gripped without reluctance. "It is seldom that we have a permanent guest; and perhaps I am responsible. I work late at night—you may have heard me. "But—" he laughed—"I am really harmless."

He studied me as he spoke; and I did not like his eyes or his laugh. Yet the man was not repulsive.

"I didn't quite catch your name," I said.

Again the laugh.

"Papaman is the name I use. My other names are hard to say—to pronounce. But where I come from—one of the places where I have made my home—we have a king and queen: a 'papa' and a 'mama', we call them. I was once the king—the 'papa man'—so that is the name I use."

He turned to Crayton.

"You were talking about me," he said.

Crayton sought refuge in a gulp of coffee.

"Of course you would speak well of me. We have been friends for five years—and we must be friends for many more."

"Yes, Mr. Papaman," answered the old man.

"But people must not talk of what they do not know. Perhaps you have told Mr. Gibson of my room—of my caldrons—of my potions—of my pet. That is well, but I would prefer that Mr. Carter *see* instead of *hear*. He is welcome to call on me whenever he may please."

The last words were addressed to me as well as to the old man. I bowed.

"Whenever you may wish, you may call," said Papaman to me. "Any time. Knock on my door. You will not disturb."

He extended his hand in parting. Then he left the room without another word to Crayton.

"Queer—" I began softly, but the old man held up both hands.

"Yes, it is queer weather we have been having," he said rather loudly. "Tell me about your work, Mr. Gibson. Is business good?"

Again the signal for silence, and I fancied I heard a light step leaving the hallway by the kitchen door.

I carried on the synthetic conversation. I began to believe what the old man had said when he announced that the mysterious man in the middle room could hear everything. But finally, assured that Papaman was up in his room, we reopened the subject.

"THERE are men who come to see him," said Crayton.

"Men like him—but not so cunning—not so clever. They come in the back way—through the kitchen here—and they go away with little boxes and little bottles. And they give him money."

"Is he a chemist?" I questioned.

"Bah!" exclaimed the old man. "Chemists with rats and bats and owls? And frogs? He has them, too! I don't know what he is! But he isn't right."

Evidently the riddle of Papaman's vocation was beyond the old man. I wondered why he kept such a strange tenant.

But Crayton knew more than I supposed, as I learned a few weeks later.

Everything had progressed nicely. There were the same noises from the back room—every Saturday night and sometimes other nights. I met Papaman in the hallway several times and he spoke pleasantly on each occasion. Each Sunday old Crayton resumed his former theme but gave me no

real enlightenment until one morning when he became unusually confidential.

"I know what that man is," he whispered across the coffee table. "He's a voodoo—a witch! That's what!"

"How do you know?" I responded.

"Do you think I'd let him stay here if he wasn't? he asked.

"I wouldn't think you'd let him stay if he was."

The old man smiled sourly.

"Listen!" he said. "I used to complain about the noises. Said I couldn't get another tenant. That was five years ago. So he paid me more money. Still I complained. I was in his room, when I talked to him that time, and he picked up a little figure of a man in wax.

"'A man,' he said, 'has done me wrong. He will have a pain in the shoulder.'

"With uncanny fear I watched him thrust a pointed stick through the wax model.

"'And if he does me more wrong,' he said, 'I will put a pain in his heart—and it will be his past pain. But my friends—if they are old, I make them young. You are old. You should be my friend. I can be of service to you.'

"That was all. We didn't talk about it any more. But there was a smart man used to come to see that fellow upstairs. He and another man came together. Both dark-skinned. A couple of days later the smart man comes with a shoulder all hunched up. A week later his friend comes alone.

"WHERE is the other man?" I asked.

"'Dead,' was what he answered.

"The next time I was in that room upstairs I saw the little wax image. There was a sharp stick of wood through the heart of it."

The old man had told his whole story. I knew now why the mysterious roomer had stayed for five years and would stay as long as he wished.

That night I was in my room early. There came a slight tap at the door, a tap that I recognized, and I could not repress a shudder. I admitted Papaman, my neighbor.

"You have not come to visit me," he said quietly. "Would you like to call this evening?"

A refusal was not expected. Furthermore, I wanted to see his room. So we walked quietly through the hall—for old man Crayton was already asleep—and I was ushered into the most curious apartment I have ever seen.

The blinds were drawn, and the room was illuminated by shaded electric lights. In the center stood the caldron, with no fire beneath it. On the walls were charts covered with strange signs. A long shelf was occupied with bottles of many sorts and sizes, bearing curious labels or no labels at all. There were three traps, each containing occupants. Three rats glared from one; mice ran restlessly in another; and the third held a living bat. There was the owl, too, perched solemnly in a corner; and the mongoose—so I surmised—huddled by the door. Boxes and baskets were in a pile. What they held, I could not guess.

Papaman pointed to a chair and I sat down.

"It is better that one should know much than little," he said, gazing intently at me. "You know a little; so I would

prefer that you know much. The old man has told you of my room—of my visitors—of my waxen image. I did not mind because he knew little when he talked to you. But you can talk to others. So I will tell you much—and you will not repeat it."

The definite firmness of his voice was evident. I nodded my agreement.

"You promise?" he said.

"Yes."

"I am not a voodoo as the old man has said," he went on, "but I know voodoo and I have governed the voodoo people. I am the man who knows many things—more than other men. The men who try voodoo come to me. I give them potions and powders for love—for ills—yes, for vengeance."

He went to a box in the corner and lifted a little toad from its hiding-place. It was the most curious toad that I had ever seen—red and tiny—a queer, loathsome creature.

"Many have heard of this toad," he said, "from the books of Agrippa—over there." He indicated a row of books behind my head, a feature of the room that I had not previously noticed.

"But where to find the toad? How to recognize it? I

alone have done that—today—although many did it years ago. I have many of these toads. Watch!"

With a knife he killed the toad, and cut a tiny bone from its left side. He dropped the bone in the caldron.

"Feel the water," he said.

I did. It was cold.

"This is not known to the voodoo," Papaman continued. "They know but few things. They are easy to control. Feel the water."

I PUT my hand in the caldron. Was it my imagination? The water was becoming warm!

"Now let me tell you this," said Papaman solemnly. "I can do many things. People must be my friends, if they do not wish to be harmed. I have power. Not just power here—but after death!"

"Do you believe in ghosts?" I asked.

"Believe in them! I have seen them!"

"Did they try to harm you?" I asked.

Papaman laughed. He signed for me to dip my hand in the caldron. I did so and drew back quickly. The water was extremely hot!

"Ghosts can harm you, but not me," he said. "They can frighten you. They can drive you insane. You cannot kill them, for they are spirit. Neither can I, but I can drive them away. So can you—if you know how."

"How?" I asked.

Papaman pondered.

"I shall tell you," he said. "But ask me no more questions. Others know this. It will not do any harm to tell you. You shoot the ghost."

"But you said ghosts were invulnerable."

"Yes," said the dark man, "they are—to ordinary weapons. But not to a silver bullet. Shoot them with a silver bullet. They will never return."

He was sitting a few feet from me. Neither of us spoke. The water in the caldron began to boil!

"Enough," cried Papaman. He went to the table and I could see him extracting a bone from the right side of the

Witches in Pennsylvania!

This country was startled recently by the "witchcraft murder" in York, Pennsylvania.

Nelson D. Rehmeier, accused of practicing the black arts and of having bewitched the Hess family, was killed by a man and two boys. Police investigation revealed that most of the inhabitants of York Township believed in magic and curses.

Do you want to know the facts about Pennsylvania witchcraft? Then don't miss this story! It is a vivid account of Mr. Gibson's terrible experience with a "powwow doctor."

toad. He threw the fragment into the caldron of water.

He pointed to the nearest cage.

"I can haunt the body of a rat," he said. "I can make a man's spirit enter the rat—when the man dies. Or that mongoose—my pet from India. I call him Gehenna. Perhaps some day Gehenna will have a man spirit. But if I dislike a man I will put him in a rat, or an owl—but not in Gehenna, my mongoose."

The soirée was becoming fantastic. Surely the man was crazy. Yet it was interesting to listen to him, although his preposterous statements were almost ridiculous.

"Feel the water in the caldron," remarked Papaman.

"It's too hot," I replied.

"Not now."

GINGERLY I dipped my fingers in the water. It was very cool! My doubts began to fade. This man must have a marvelous power. Was it hypnotism? I sought refuge in the subject of ghosts, which I could at least doubt.

"How long will a man's spirit remain in the rat or the owl?" I asked.

"Until the creature dies. Yet you cannot kill it. It will die only if you can drive the ghost from it—because it belongs to the ghost."

"What a horrible existence!" I said, shuddering.

"Not at all," replied Papaman calmly. "I may choose it for myself."

"Why?"

"If my ghost wants vengeance," he answered, "I shall have it enter the body of some creature. Then it can control that body and do greater vengeance than if it were free."

"Will you enter the mongoose?"

Papaman laughed again.

"You ask so many questions. No, I shall not enter the mongoose with my ghost or spirit. I shall choose a creature more of my liking—if I choose any. I just have my mongoose as a pet. He fights snakes. He fought them in India—in Haiti—in other places where I have been. I have him handy to keep snakes away."

"Are you afraid of snakes?"

The man became indignant.

"Snakes?" he exclaimed. "I love them. I have one of a very rare sort in one of those baskets over there." I glanced uneasily at the baskets, for I do not have any particular liking for snakes. "Did I not tell you I knew the voodoo—and the snake is sacred with the voodoo! I can call all snakes—and they will obey me. I have charmed the cobra in India. I can control the rattlesnake! But all snakes come to me; and I do not wish them around unless I choose. So I keep my mongoose. He drives away those that I do not wish. Feel the caldron again."

I did so. The water was extremely cold.

"You cannot heat that water," said Papaman, "unless I take the bone out."

He lighted a burner underneath the caldron.

"The people know little today," he said. "Yet much has been written. Still, it is not believed. Here is a chameleon—he drew a tiny lizard from the box where he kept the toads—"should I burn the liver of this creature on the house top, lightning would be caused. Some day I may show you. With the heart of a frog, I can—but what is the use? I do not do these things for amusement. Feel the water in the caldron. Feel it and believe!"

I dipped my hand in the water and found it colder than before, despite the blazing burner beneath.

"I have told you much," said the mysterious man. "I have shown you much. You may not believe, but you do not disbelieve. Remember your promise. I am your friend—so long as you do not seek to injure me. Do not listen to the old man. Remember that I hear all. I must ask you to leave me now. I have work to do."

Back in my room, I wondered if it all had been a dream. The man who called himself Papaman, who claimed control of voodoo worshippers and who kept a mongoose to

drive away the snakes that loved him was either a wonder-worker or a clever charlatan. In either event, it was not my business to interfere with him. So I would keep my promise. But before I went to sleep, I solved one problem that had been perplexing me. Papaman's room was directly over the kitchen. Through a hole in the floor he could hear everything that old man Crayton said.

Two or three more weeks elapsed, and I avoided both the men who lived in the house. Papaman continued his incantations nearly every night, and I attributed his increased activity to the fact that the moon was full. But I didn't discuss it with Crayton.

One Sunday the old man drew me into the kitchen for a cup of coffee. I went reluctantly. Sitting at the table, I glanced toward the ceiling and saw what appeared to be a small hole there. So I was decidedly ill at ease when the old man began to talk of his tenant of the second floor back.

"This man upstairs," he whispered, "wants me to take a potion that will make me young. Do you believe it will?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"He says he is older than I am," the old man rambled, "and he drank some from a bottle. Said it kept him young. Wanted to give me a bottle—to take in small doses. Said I'd have to go easy with it at first. What do you think about it?"

"I don't know what to say, Mr. Crayton. You know the man better than I do."

"I may try it," the old man said, "but he won't give me the potion, unless I make out a will leaving everything I have to him. That's funny, isn't it, when he wants me to live long?"

The plan did sound questionable; but I did not know how to handle the subject, especially as I was sure Papaman was listening in. So I made no comment.

"I may try it," remarked the old man, as I was leaving the room.

The week went by, and Saturday night came. I was in at midnight and went to bed. But somehow I couldn't sleep. I wondered why for a while, and then realized that there was no noise coming from the room at the back of the house. Once I had settled the cause, I slept; but when I awoke the next morning, I took up the problem again.

I encountered old man Crayton at the foot of the stairs.

"I didn't hear any noise from Papaman last night," I said softly. "I wonder why?"

"I didn't, either," replied the old man. "I listened, though."

His remarks struck me as peculiar. I recalled Papaman's invitation to call at any time. So I went upstairs and knocked at his door. There was no answer.

"Did he go away?" I called down to the old man.

"No," came the reply.

I PUT my hand on the knob of the door, and to my surprise, the door swung open—inward. There was Papaman, sprawled on the floor, in a débris of books, cages and boxes. The caldron was overturned, and two or three bottles lay broken on the floor.

I rushed downstairs and told the old man. There was no telephone in the house, so I went to the corner and called a hospital. An ambulance arrived with a doctor, who pronounced Papaman dead.

There was an inquest, and it was decided that the voodoo man had tried one of his own potions with disastrous results. In the agony of poisoning, he had probably upset many of the things in the room, and the broken bottles stood for a frantic search for an antidote.

Old man Crayton seemed helpless. So I stayed home from work and helped a man clean up. We released imprisoned toads; drowned the rats, mice and the bat; and sent the mongoose and the owl to the city zoo. We emptied all the bottles, threw the boxes in the rubbish, and turned the books over to a second-hand book store. Most of the boxes and baskets had been upset; those that remained

contained nothing but dead plants, dried leaves and rubbish.

That was the end of Papaman—so I thought. His death disturbed me for a while, but I continued to live in the house with the old man. We drank coffee together on Sunday but carefully avoided any reference to the deceased roomer until more than a month later.

Old man Crayton opened the subject on a Sunday morning.

"Do you know," he said, reverting to his old whisper, "I thought I heard that man upstairs again last night!"

"Nonsense!" I replied.

"But I did! I'm afraid, Gibson."

"Why?"

"Because I think he's haunting the place."

I remembered the dead man's comments on ghosts, and shivered.

"YOU know that elixir of life he was going to give me?" I asked Crayton, confidentially.

"Yes."

"Well, he gave it to me but I didn't drink it. It looked just like the bottle he had. Both bottles were full."

"Did you make out your will?"

"Yes," said the old man. "I did. And that made me leery. He was a clever man, that fellow—but I was cleverer—even if I am old. I was holding the bottle in my hand that Saturday night. He rummaged around in a box to find a little glass for me—and while he was doing it, I took his bottle off the table and put mine in its place.

"He gave me the glass and said, 'Drink!'

"'Do you drink this stuff?' I asked.

"'Certainly!' he said. 'See!'

"And he took a big drink from the bottle on the table.

"'I'll drink mine in my room,' I said, and I walked out with the bottle and the glass. Then I heard a lot of noise in his room—it was before you came in—and that was all. There was poison in that bottle, Carter—intended for me! He drank it instead! But I didn't kill him!"

I saw the old man's nerves were going to pieces. I poured him some coffee and changed the subject. This new insight into Papaman's death was indeed a revelation. I could appreciate the strain which the old man was undergoing.

So I made a practice of coming home early every night. I tried to cheer up the old man, and talked to him each morning before I went to work. All went well for a few days; then Crayton again protested that he had heard noises in the middle room.

"Call me the next time you hear them," was my reassurance.

The next night there was a tap on my door. I awoke. It reminded me of Papaman's tap; but I quickly opened the door and found old man Crayton.

"Listen!" he said.

There was a noise in the next room. It sounded like the *swish-swish* of the water in the caldron. I crept to the door and was sure I heard something within. But when I opened the door and turned on the light, the room was silent and empty.

"It's his ghost!" cried old man Crayton. "He's after me! I've heard him in the hall, at my door! I'm afraid!"

There was nothing to do but sleep in the old man's room. He hauled a cot from the closet, and I took up my residence with him. But nothing more disturbed us that night.

Two nights passed quietly. On the third the old man wakened me at about three o'clock by reaching out and shaking my cot silently. We listened, and I distinctly heard something in the hallway. I turned on the light and opened the door. Nothing there.

"Perhaps some of his rats got away," I suggested. They may be running around the house." But the old man doubted my suggestion, and I regretted it myself; for I remembered that Papaman had said a man's spirit could enter a rat. I kept the thought to myself—but the association suggested something that might help the old man. I told him in the morning.

"Papaman said a silver bullet would lay a ghost," I remarked. "Why don't you have one handy? Then the ghost will be afraid to come around."

Crayton responded instantly to the suggestion. He brought out an old muzzle-loading pistol that bore the date 1856, and from a slug that he furnished I had a silver bullet patterned that very day. The old man cheerfully paid the bill, and he slept with the gun beneath his pillow.

I set up rat traps and armed myself with a revolver of small caliber. I was convinced that the phenomenon was physical; and that if the rats or frogs—or whatever they were—were unwary, I would get a chance to test my marksmanship and the trouble would be ended.

The noises still persisted. The old man was losing his grip on himself; his condition was pitiful.

Then one night came the *tap-tap* at the door. It was terrifying—it sounded just like Papaman's *tap-tap*.

With revolver in hand, I turned on the lights and opened the door. Nothing there. Crayton seemed delirious. His voice quavered, and he was a pathetic figure, sitting in bed, with his ancient pistol ready.

I suggested that we leave the house; but the old man would not listen.

"It will follow me everywhere," he declared. "It will drive me crazy! Can't we end it?"

The *tap-tap* came every night after that! Certainly it was not a rat; yet was it a ghost? I began to half-way believe it was. But I resolved to let the thing in—whatever it was; and one night I left the door ajar, without telling the old man.

A loud scream awakened me. I sat up in the cot, and turned on the floor lamp beside me. Crayton was sitting up in bed, trembling and waving his hands frantically.

"I saw IT!" he cried. "I saw HIM!" His face was right beside me! It's his ghost!"

I heard a noise in the hallway, and I went to the door; but my investigation was useless. Nevertheless, the opened door had brought results. I locked it for the night, and thought out another plan.

The next night I left the door unlatched and stayed awake. I didn't tell the old man my scheme. I saw that he went to sleep early. Then in the darkness I listened, and waited.

At last I heard a noise in the hall. It was quite distinct. A slight bumping—an indefinable noise—certainly not a rat. Then came the *tap-tap*—and in the gloom I fancied the door swung open slightly. Still I waited, but heard nothing more. Then, after long, long seconds came a noise from the corner of the room. I peered through the darkness, but to no avail. The corner was away from the old man's bed. Crayton stirred restlessly, and spoke in a mumble.

While I still looked away, I heard him scream.

"Save me! It's here!"

I PULLED the cord of the lamp. It did not light. In a brief quarter second, I realized what had happened in the corner of the room. Someone—Something—had disconnected the wire from the floor socket!

A strange form arose above the old man—just beyond him. It was a head—a head with gleaming eyes! There was no time to think of the light. I seized the pistol, leaned across Crayton—to within four feet of the sinister face—and poured the whole volley of my automatic between the leering eyes. I had scored a direct hit—yet the thing remained there!

I was helpless. The old man was sinking back on his pillows. There was a sharp, sibilant sound—and the invulnerable head rose higher, and came downward toward the old man's face.

At the same instant the old man raised his right hand. His forearm grazed my cheek and I could feel him tremble. There was a flash of light a foot from my eyes—and I was deafened by a tremendous roar. I could see nothing for fully a minute—then I realized that the eyes were—gone.

Trembling with dread and excitement, I went to the cor-

ner and fumbled with the light socket. Suddenly the floor lamp gleamed. Crayton was sitting upright in bed, still holding the ancient pistol pointed toward the wall. The terrific noise had been the discharge of the silver bullet.

On the floor I found—it. It lay dead—a hideous thing—a huge cobra—the dread snake of India. Its spectacle-faced hood was riddled with bullets.

MY automatic had done its work—but it had not killed nor had it wounded. For the cobra had raised its head after I had shot.

While my steady hand, holding a modern gun loaded with steel bullets had failed, the trembling, quavering hand of an old man, with the single shot of a silver bullet, had killed the threatening carrier of death.

Some may have their doubts, but I believe. Those who examined the cobra declared that one shot from my gun should have caused instant death to the snake. Who, ever before, heard of a cobra with human intelligence—a snake

that knocked at a door—that released a light socket—that planned vengeance?

I know now why Papaman kept the mongoose in his room. I know now that he spoke the truth when he said his spirit would enter the body of a living creature—and I know that he chose the form which most appealed to him—the form that was most suited to his evil nature. When he died, he overturned the basket—and with the escaping cobra went his ghost.

His remark to me—my suggestion to allay the old man's fears—these were the two chance steps that stopped the evil vengeance of the voodoo master, the man who knew much—but not enough.

Crayton is still alive, and may have many years ahead of him. The middle room is unoccupied—but there is no *Room to Let* sign outside the door. I still live in the front room, and Crayton and I have coffee together Sunday mornings. But the haunting of the house has ended. It ceased the night when the old man laid the ghost with the silver bullet.