

**REAL GHOST  
STORIES, PP. 1-255**

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Real Ghost Stories, pp. 1-255 by William T. Stead & Estelle W. Stead

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**WILLIAM T. STEAD & ESTELLE W. STEAD**

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given

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

**REAL  
GHOST STORIES**

Collected and Edited  
BY  
**WILLIAM T. STEAD**

**NEW EDITION**  
Re-arranged and Introduced  
BY  
**ESTELLE W. STEAD**

**NEW YORK:**  
**GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY**

—  
1921

## INTRODUCTION.

DURING the last few years I have been urged by people in all parts of the world to re-issue some of the wonderful stories of genuine psychic experiences collected by my Father several years ago.

These stories were published by him in two volumes in 1891-92 ; the first, entitled *Real Ghost Stories*, created so much interest and brought in so large a number of other stories of genuine experiences that the first volume was soon followed by a second, entitled *More Ghost Stories*.

The contents of the two volumes, slightly curtailed, were, a few years later, brought out as one book ; but the three volumes have long been out of print and are practically unknown to the present generation.

I remember when I was a child my Father read some of these stories aloud to us as he was making his collection ; and I remember, too, how thrilled and awed we were, and how at times they brought a creepy feeling when at night I had to mount many flights of stairs to my bedroom at the top of the house.

Reading these stories again, after many years' study of the subject, I have realised what a wealth of interesting facts my Father had gathered together, and that not only the gathered facts, but his own contributions, his chapter on "The

Ghost That Dwelleth in Each One of Us" and his comments on the stories, show what an insight he had into and what an understanding he had of this vast and wonderful subject.

I felt as I read that those who urged re-publication were right, that if not a "classic," as some have called it, it at least merits a place on the shelves of all who study psychic literature and are interested in psychic experiences.

I demurred long as to whether I should change the title. The word "Ghost" has to a great extent in modern times lost its true meaning to the majority and is generally associated in many minds with something uncanny—with haunted houses and weird apparitions filling with terror those who come into contact with them.

"Stories from the Borderland," "Psychic Experiences," were among the titles which suggested themselves to me; but in the end I decided to keep the old title, and in so doing help to bring the word "ghost" back to its proper and true place and meaning.

"Ghost," according to the dictionary, means "the soul of man; the soul of a deceased person; the soul or spirit separate from the body; apparition, spectre, shadow"—it comprises, in fact, all we mean when we think or speak of "Spirit." We still say "The Holy Ghost" as naturally and as reverently as we say "The Holy Spirit." So for the sake of the word itself, and because it covers everything we speak of as Spirit to-day; these two considerations take away all reason why the word should not be used, and it gives

me great pleasure in re-issuing these stories to carry on the title originally chosen by my Father.

There is a large collection of stories to be drawn upon, for besides those given in the two volumes mentioned, many of equal interest and value appeared in *Borderland*, a psychic quarterly edited and published by my Father for a period of four years in the nineties and now long out of print.

If this first volume proves that those who advised me were right in thinking that these experiences will be a valuable addition to psychic literature, I propose to bring out two further volumes of stories from my Father's collection, and I hope to add to these a volume of stories of a later date, of which I already have a goodly store. For this purpose I invite those who have had experiences which they consider will be of interest and value for such a collection, to send them to me so that, if suitable and appropriate, they may be placed on record.

In bringing this Introduction to a close I should like to quote what my Father wrote in his Preface to the last edition published by him, as it embodies what many people are realising to-day. To them, as to him, the reality of the "Invisibles" is no longer a speculation. Therefore I feel that these thoughts of his should have a place in this new edition of his collection of *Real Ghost Stories*.

"The reality," he wrote, "of the Invisibles has long since ceased to be for me a matter of speculation. It is one of the things about which I feel as certain as I do, for instance, of the existence of the people of Tierra del Fuego; and while it is



of no importance to me to know that Tierra del Fuego is inhabited, it is of vital importance to know that the spirits of the departed, and also of those still occupying for a time the moveable biped telephone which we call our body, can, and given the right conditions *do*, communicate with the physical unconsciousness of the man in the street. It is a fact which properly apprehended would go far to remedy some of the worst evils from which we have to complain. For our conception of life has got out of form, owing to our constant habit of mistaking a part for the whole, and everything looks awry."

*Estelle W. Strad*

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KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2.

*Easter, 1921.*

## A PREFATORY WORD.

MANY people will object—some have already objected—to the subject of this book. It is an offence to some to take a ghost too seriously; with others it is a still greater offence not to take ghosts seriously enough. One set of objections can be paired off against the other; neither objection has very solid foundation. The time has surely come when the fair claim of ghosts to the impartial attention and careful observation of mankind should no longer be ignored. In earlier times people believed in them so much that they cut their acquaintance; in later times people believe in them so little that they will not even admit their existence. Thus these mysterious visitants have hitherto failed to enter into that friendly relation with mankind which many of them seem sincerely to desire.

But what with the superstitious credulity of the one age and the equally superstitious unbelief of another, it is necessary to begin from the beginning and to convince a sceptical world that apparitions really appear. In order to do this it is necessary to insist that your ghost should no longer be ignored as a phenomenon of Nature. He has a right, equal to that of any other natural phenomenon, to be examined and observed, studied and defined. It is true that he is a rather difficult phenomenon; his comings and goings are rather intermittent and fitful, his substance is too shadowy to be handled, and he has avoided hither-

## A PREFATORY WORD

to equally the obtrusive inquisitiveness of the microscope and telescope.

A phenomenon which you can neither handle nor weigh, analyse nor dissect, is naturally regarded as intractable and troublesome; nevertheless, however intractable and troublesome he may be to reduce to any of the existing scientific categories, we have no right to allow his idiosyncrasies to deprive him of his innate right to be regarded as a phenomenon. As such he will be treated in the following pages, with all the respect due to phenomena whose reality is attested by a sufficient number of witnesses. There will be no attempt in this book to build up a theory of apparitions, or to define the true inwardness of a ghost. There will be as many explanations as there are minds of the significance of the extraordinary narratives which I have collated from correspondence and from accessible records. Leaving it to my readers to discuss the rival hypotheses, I will stick to the humbler mission of recording facts, from which they can form their own judgment.

The ordinary temper of the ordinary man in dealing with ghosts is supremely unscientific, but it is less objectionable than that of the pseudo-scientist. The Inquisitor who forbade free inquiry into matters of religion because of human depravity, was the natural precursor of the Scientist who forbids the exercise of the reason on the subject of ghosts, on account of inherited tendencies to attribute such phenomena to causes outside the established order of nature. What difference there is, is altogether in favour of the