

HAMPTON TRACTS

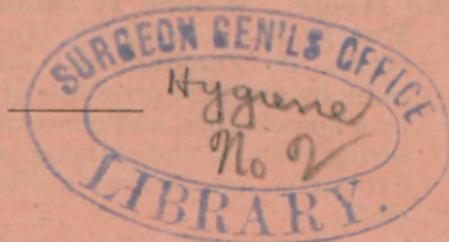
FOR THE PEOPLE

SANITARY SERIES

No. V.

A Haunted House

BY MRS. M. F. ARMSTRONG



NEW YORK

Published for the Hampton Tract Committee

By G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

182 FIFTH AVENUE

1879

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A HAUNTED HOUSE.

Some years ago, in traveling across one of our Middle States, I came just at sunset, at the close of a long day's journey through a fair and fertile country, to a little town, whose white houses and upward-pointing spires gave promise of comfort and welcome for the night, whose shadows were beginning to fall around me. The road which I was following led me along the shore of an inland lake whose waters shone under the slant sunbeams with the brilliancy of some strange jewel, while the low hills surrounding it were green with all the freshness of early summer.

As I neared the village, I saw that it was built well up on the gently-sloping hillside and had rather more than the usual proportion of pleasant, neatly kept houses with bright little gardens and other evidences of prosperity. Down, close on the lake-shore, at some distance below most of the dwellings, stood a small group of factory buildings, whose smoking chimneys and wide open doors showed me one source, at least, of the prosperity of the little town. The scene was altogether so pleasing, and the prospect of such a stopping-place for the night so attractive, that I quickened my steps and was soon within speaking distance of the knots of work-people who were standing about the factory doors or drop-

ping off in twos or threes along their homeward road.

As they seemed to be all going in the same direction, that is, up the hill, down whose gentle descent ran the main street of the little village, I joined them and walked on for a few moments, silently watching their faces in the expectation of finding some one or two among them whose aspect should encourage me to begin a conversation.

I had not long to wait, for just before me in the dusty path two pleasant-faced young fellows were walking arm-in-arm, and from the snatches of their talk which I overheard, as well as from their faces, I judged that they were not without ideas of their own. So, quickening my pace once more in order to keep beside them, I said:

“Good evening, friends. You’ve a flourishing little town here, I see. What’s doing in your factories now?”

“Oh, trade’s pretty lively, sir; it’s mostly work in ivory hereabouts, piano-keys and billiard-balls and such like,” replied the elder of the two men.

“I suppose, then,” I said, smiling, “that these pretty places which I see along the hillside have a foundation of elephant’s tusks?”

“Well, not exactly that, sir,” replied my new acquaintance, smiling in his turn; “but it’s true enough that that’s where most of the money comes from round here. It’s a good business enough and we’re mostly a pretty steady set of folks, both rich and poor.”

“Yes; your village speaks for itself,” I answered. “I never saw a neater, more orderly looking street than this.” Just as I spoke these words, my eye was caught by a house which seemed to contradict my assertion somewhat positively, and I did not try to check the half-surprised exclamation which rose to my lips. My companion’s eyes followed mine, and I could see that while

he knew quite well what it was that had attracted my attention, he was in no hurry to answer my next question. There was perhaps nothing really uncommon in what I saw, but, taken in connection with its surroundings, it certainly was a little surprising, and almost unconsciously I halted for a moment, as did the young man with whom I had been talking. We had just left behind us the last of the factory buildings and had passed one or two small dwelling houses, but had not yet reached the thickly settled portion of the town, so that for a little distance the road had quite a lonely air.

On our right stood the house which had attracted my attention, and though it was far back from the street, I could see, even in the twilight, that it was large and well built and was surrounded by what had once been a beautiful garden. It was closed, by door and by window, but there was no evidence of any great precautions against those who might desire to enter, and, indeed, entrance looked to be an easy thing enough. The garden was overgrown with weeds and vines, and though an occasional rose-tree raised its hardy head above the tangle at its feet, it was plain that for many a year no careful hand had trained or pruned its thorny branches. In fact, the strange thing about the whole place was the air of total neglect which had at first struck my attention, and in this it was such a contrast to all that I saw of the rest of the village, that I turned at once to the man at my side for an explanation. He hesitated a moment before answering me, and then prefaced his answer with a slow shake of the head which showed me at once that something was amiss.

“Yes; it’s easy to see that things ain’t as they should be here, sir; but then it’s hard to say just what’s wrong. There are strange stories told about this old house, but

folks from out o' town don't generally believe 'em, so 'tain't often we speak of 'em."

"Well, I can't promise to believe all you tell me," I said, laughing, "but I must acknowledge that you have excited my curiosity and I should like to hear what you know about the house."

"'Tain't much that I know, sir, but you're welcome to hear it all." He hesitated here for a moment, and then went on slowly, "They do say, and I guess most folks round here believe, that the house is haunted."

"Ah?" said I, "do you mean to say that the house has been deserted and neglected in this way because people are afraid to live in it?"

"That's just it, sir. It's as good a house as any in town, and you see for yourself what the garden might be, but you'd have hard work to get anybody round here to take a lease of it."

"That's rather hard on the owner," I said; "who is he, and when was the house built, and what kind of a ghost is it that none of you people are clever enough to lay? Come, tell me the whole story, if you can spare the time. I'd like to get at the bottom of this matter."

"Oh, yes," answered my acquaintance; "I've the evening before me, and anyway it's no long story. You see, the house was built about twenty-five years ago by a gentleman who took great pains to have it just as he wanted it, for he meant to spend his days there. But he hadn't lived there more'n about five years when his only son took sick and died with some kind of a fever, and then his wife caught it and she died too, and that kinder broke him up. So he went off and the house stood empty for a year or two, and then he wrote back to his agents here, and they let it to some folks from out o' town, a real nice family they was, too. But they hadn't

lived in it more'n a year when one o' their children died, and after that the mother couldn't bear the house, and they moved away. Then it was let again, and that time there was two deaths in less than six months,—and so it went, sir, everybody that tried to live in the house either got sick and had to leave, or died; and the story got round that them that died stayed there, and the folks that come after see 'em and was scared to death. It's more'n six years since anybody's lived there, and it 'd be brave folks or crazy ones that 'd go there now."

While my companion was talking, we had walked slowly on and were, by this time, in the heart of the village and near the hotel where I intended to stop. But that which at first had been mere curiosity had now deepened into a strong desire to know something more about what was, at least, a very strange story, and I asked with real interest if no attempt had ever been made to discover a cause for the sickness which had made the house so fatal. "Did nobody ever look to the sewers and the cess-pools and so on?" I inquired.

"Oh yes, sir; they've had workmen there for weeks at a time, but nothing made any difference, the next people that took the house had the same luck; and at last old Mr. Grant (that's the gentleman that built it) said himself that there was a curse on the house, and he wouldn't throw any more money away on it, so there it stands. These new-fangled notions about drainage and all that, is very good, no doubt, but they can't help a case like this," and the young man once more shook his head ominously.

"Well," said I, "I must say good-evening to you now, but I'm going to be in town for a day or two, and I should like to talk this matter over with you. I don't believe in ghosts, in the first place, and then I'm a doc-

tor, and I tell you frankly that I don't believe all these people died without good cause; so if you'll tell me your name, and the name of the unlucky agent who has to take care of this ghost of yours, I think I'll take a look at the house myself. If I should make up my mind to stay in it for a couple of days, suppose you come and stay with me; you're a fine, stout young fellow—between us, I think we should be a match for anything we are likely to find.”

“I don't know about that, sir; but my name is Henry Johnson, and I'd certainly like to see you again. Anybody in the hotel can tell you where Mr. Harper, the agent, lives, and he'll let you have the house cheap, I dare say,” and with rather a grim smile, my friend left me at the hotel door.

Now I am a physician and I have certain hobbies, one of which is that a great deal of the sickness, and consequently a great deal of the sorrow, from which we suffer in this world, comes from ignorance of, or, worse still, disobedience to God's laws. And I am willing to put myself to a good deal of inconvenience if I can help people to understand these laws, and to see what is the result of breaking them. Then, too, I think it a great pity that sensible people should allow themselves to be affected by nonsensical superstitions of any kind, and the idea that the whole population, or at least, a majority of the population of such a village as this should believe in the possibility of a house being made uninhabitable by ghosts, gave me a very unpleasant shock. My journey was merely one of pleasure, and I did not see that my vacation could be better spent than in disproving the existence of these same ghosts, if I could, in so doing, strike a blow for common-sense and against superstition. To begin with, I was pretty sure of my

ground. I had called upon the old doctor who had lived in the town for years, and had obtained some information in regard to the various deaths which had given the house its bad name, and I believed that a close examination of the premises would enable me to put my finger on the cause. It was of course possible that I was wrong in my conjectures but I did not feel that the risk was great, and even if I failed entirely no one would be the worse for my attempt.

So on Monday afternoon, I went again to the agent and got the keys of the two main doors, and then walked down to the factory to find young Johnson. He was alone when I met him, so I joined him at once and lost no time in getting to business.

"Good evening, Mr. Johnson," I said. "I'm going to introduce myself to the ghosts," and then, seeing his somewhat startled look, I continued more seriously, "I hope you have not forgotten the promise you made me; you know I count on your help in this affair."

"Well, sir," he answered, "I don't know as it was much of a promise, but if you ain't afraid, I guess I needn't be. I should like to know, though, how you're a-going to begin?"

"Oh, I mean to take you into all my plans; but, first of all, I must ask if you are a married man?"

"Yes, sir, I am that, and I've got as smart a wife as any man in town. To tell the truth, I told her about meeting you the other night, and what you spoke of, and the first thing she said was that she was glad that somebody'd come along that wasn't afraid of his shadow." I could not help laughing at the warmth with which the young man spoke, but I was very glad to find an ally in his wife, and I said:

"You're a lucky fellow to have such a wife as that,

and I think the best thing we can do is to go to your house at once and talk the whole matter over together."

Henry made no objections, and in a few minutes we reached the door of a little house of which, as he told me, he hired half—a tiny sitting-room, a bed-room, and the smallest of kitchens. The tea table was spread in the sitting-room, and Lizzie and the baby, a fine fellow of fifteen months, looked so neat and clean that I suspected her of having had a sort of expectation of my visit, though when I knew her better I found that Lizzie was never dirty or disorderly so long as she had strength to work. She welcomed me with a cheery "Good-evening, doctor Will you sit down and take a cup of tea? We're plain folks, you know, but Henry says you think we can be some help to you, and I'm sure I'd like to know what you think about our 'haunted house,' as they call it."

"Yes," I replied; "I do want your help, but before we make any bargain I want you to understand just what I mean to do; so, if you don't object, I'll sit here for an hour or so and explain my plans while you and Henry eat your supper." So without farther delay the husband and wife sat down to their meal, in which I was glad to see the baby had no share, his sensible mother having given him his bread and milk some time before, so that after a little romp with his father, he was all ready for bed.

"You see," I began "there is no doubt that all these deaths did occur in the house, just as they are said to have done. Dr. James assures me of that, and it is just as certain that there is a direct connection between the house and the deaths, as it is that the house stands there empty at this moment. Now, at the very outset, I want you to understand that I entirely reject the possibility

of any ghosts being mixed up with this affair. There isn't anything supernatural about it; whatever the cause may be, you may be sure it is a natural one, and though we may have hard work to find it, it is to be found, and found in just one way, that is, by careful examination and experiment. If I were to tell you that I have already made up my own mind from merely walking about the place and using my eyes, it might shake your faith in me, so I shall make no promises as yet, but will simply tell you my plan.

In the first place, if you, Henry can leave your work at the factory for a couple of days, I want you to spend them in the house with me, taking your meals at home here, as usual. If our examination should turn out as I think it will, I want you two with the baby to move into the house, the rent of which I will pay, and live there for a year, the only condition being that you shall live just as I shall direct. If at the end of that time everything shall have gone well with you, I will advance you the rent for another year, and I don't think that Lizzie will have any trouble in filling all these rooms with respectable lodgers, which will bring you in a nice little income." As I finished my little speech Lizzie's eyes brightened, and I had not long to wait for her answer. "I'm not afraid to trust you, sir, if Henry's willing we'll move in this week." Her more cautious husband put his hand on her shoulder, "Wait a bit, little woman," said he, "suppose everything should'nt turn out well, suppose there should be more in these stories than we think and something—" Here I interrupted him for I was not ready for discussions as to uncertain "somethings."

"We'll put off talking about that for the present," I said; "the first thing to be settled is whether you will

go into the house with me for a couple of days—and nights,” I added a little mischievously. “O yes,” replied Henry, “I can manage that well enough, there’s a mate of mine out o’ work, he’ll take my place at the factory. When do you want me, sir?” “To-morrow morning,” I answered, “for I’ve no time to lose, and if you and Lizzie should back out I must look for some one else, you know, for I’m not going to give up without good reason.”

The next morning I was at the door of the haunted house soon after sunrise, and as I stood there alone waiting for Henry, it seemed to me that the neglected building rose up before me, a monument to ignorance and superstition, those terrible twin sisters and as I thought of the victims they had found within this fair garden, I shuddered, remembering that their reign is not yet over, that still they are supreme in many a dark place, slaying day by day their thousands, and maiming and crippling multitudes of whom no man takes account.

But my thoughts were quickly broken in upon by a cheery “good morning,” from Henry, and in a moment more we turned the key in the lock of the front door. The wood was swollen with dampness and it was only after some pushing that we succeeded in getting into the hall, which we found ran through the body of the house and opened at the end into a large kitchen with numerous pantries and windows. The latter we raised without much difficulty and soon had plenty of sunlight shining in upon dusty floors and cobweb hung walls. There were two rooms on either side of the hall, there were front stairs, and back stairs, there were plenty of windows everywhere, the ceilings were high, the whole air of the house must have been in the days before it was haunted, cheerful and whole-

some. The second story was divided in the same way as the first, and over the kitchen were two or three bedrooms; the garret had no especial interest for me just then, so I passed by the stairs leading to it but otherwise I made a careful examination of the whole house, opening pantry doors and looking into all the corners, more, of course, for Henry's satisfaction than my own. "Well," said I, when we once more found ourselves in the kitchen "so far there is certainly nothing remarkable about the house, and and there's nothing left but the cellar. Come, Henry, light your lantern and we'll try that." Henry obeyed and followed me down a pair of steep, dark stairs which led somewhat to my surprise, into a well-lighted and cemented cellar extending under the whole house and thoroughly ventilated by single pane windows, from one or two of which we quickly knocked away the boardings. It was somewhat damp, of course, but for a cellar which had been unused for years it was in unexpectedly good condition, and contained nothing in the way of rubbish beyond a few harmless barrels. I was silent for a moment, and then turning to my companion said very seriously, "Well, Henry, this lays one of *my* ghosts." Henry stared a little and I continued, "I thought I should corner him here, but this place is altogether too clean and airy. My ghosts like dirt and darkness. We must look for them somewhere else." So I turned back up the stairs again, Henry following with a somewhat dubious expression on his face.

The fact that I did not find in the cellar what I had thought might exist there, that is, the evidence of defective drainage, only strengthened my conviction as to the root of all the trouble, and I wasted no more time in looking about me.

On one side of the kitchen was a pump which I found brought water from a well in the garden at some distance from the house, and it was to this well that my suspicions were now all directed. It was evident that from it the entire supply of drinking water had been obtained, and I only wanted a few more facts to change my suspicions into certainty.

It was now near noon, and I told Henry to go home to his dinner, and not to come back till after dark, when he was to bring the tools which I wanted and a couple of blankets for the night.

As for myself, I pumped diligently till the water ran fresh and clear from the well, and then pouring some of it into a bottle which I had brought with me, I went back to the hotel, where with the aid of a little microscope which I always carried with me, I had no difficulty in detecting that the water was, in its present condition, so impure as to be actually a slow poison to any who might drink it. This fact being established it only remained for me to prove that this impurity existed during the years when the various deaths had taken place. If I could do this I felt that I was justified in putting Henry and his family into the house at once, provided I could ensure them a supply of pure water, which I thought could easily be done, and then the rest of my experiment would take care of itself. Now in order to prove that the water from this well had been just as impure ten or fifteen years before as it was at the time of my analysis, I had got to discover the cause of this impurity, and it was just this of which I had from the beginning felt ~~very~~ sure. The whole village was built, as I have said, on a side hill, and the haunted house stood just at the beginning of the rising ground. The well from which came all the water consumed by

the occupants of the house had been dug at a good distance from all the outbuildings, etc., but quite near the fence which bounded the property on that side. On the other side of this fence stood a small house, the surroundings of which were not in very good order, and I had found from inquiry, that its condition had been much the same for the previous twenty years. Now it had struck me at first that the well from its position almost at the bottom of the hill might catch the drainage not only from the small house, but also from several other buildings which stood just above it. I thought this could be easily demonstrated but I also thought it quite possible that by a little digging I might find that there was even a more direct cause than this for the poisoned water of the well.

I wanted to do this digging at night partly because I did not want to be watched, but mainly because I thought it would be a good test of Henry's courage. So when he arrived about nine o'clock, I told him what my analysis of the well water had told me, viz., that in its impurity was to be found full cause for the illness and death of any one who should drink it for any length of time. I then carefully explained to him my idea as to the sources of the impurity, and his own common-sense assured him that I was probably right, so that when, between eleven and twelve o'clock I shouldered a spade and started out of the back door to commence my digging, I was glad to find that I had in Henry as steady and clear headed a companion as heart could desire.

We began our work at a little distance above the well but an hour's digging showed me that we were in the wrong place, and in a low voice I told Henry to stop for a moment while I looked about me.

Our digging was no easy work, for the night was dark and hot, and the air so close and heavy as almost to make us feel that some ghostly presence was surrounding us, and forcing us in spite of ourselves to believe that we saw strange shapes, and heard unearthly sounds. The little town was fast asleep, not a whisper or a foot-fall broke the stillness of the garden, it seemed that not even a leaf rustled, and I think it was something else than fatigue that made Henry's hand tremble as I took the lantern from him. I wanted to jump the fence and walk up for a short distance on the other side, but it was evident that Henry had no idea of being left alone in the darkness, and I can't say that I thought his nervousness at all unusual. However, sure I might be of what was before us, I could hardly expect a man to whom the existence of this haunted house had for years been a familiar fact, to give up his belief all at once, and in truth I was not myself altogether free from excitement though in my case the cause was very different. Henry feared a supernatural visitor, I felt, with every nerve in my body, that we were fighting death, and the closer we came to his hiding place the more determined I was that our night's work should end his reign.

So taking the lantern and telling Henry to follow me, me, I walked up along the line of the fence some thirty feet and after a quick examination of the ground said cheerfully to my half unwilling companion "Come on Henry, we'll make another attack here; it's too soon to give in you know." In silence we cut away the sod and began our work again and for another hour there were not many words spoken between us. My arms ached with fatigue and I began to think that we were again on the wrong scent when all at once I turned up a spade full of earth which settled the whole matter in a twinkling.

By the light of the lantern I could see what my nose had already informed me of, that we had come upon the drainage from a cesspool, and ten minutes more of vigorous digging showed us that this cesspool which had evidently been for years left to take care of itself had leaked directly into the spring which formed the main supply of the well. We had our ghost now at close quarters and no white robed skeleton could be half so terrible to a reasonable man, as was this silent, stealthy, merciless demon of dirt, who, unseen and unsuspected had for so long been doing his awful, irreparable work. I had no need to say much to Henry, he had seen and smelled for himself, and we walked quietly, almost solemnly back to the house, from which, we believed, our night's work had lifted the curse which for years had hung over it. We did not sleep, for dawn was close at hand, and when half an hour later we parted at the garden gate, Henry had definitely accepted the offer I had made him, with all its provisos, and as soon as I arrived at the hotel, I wrote a note to Mr. Harper asking him to prepare a lease of the house for two years at the very low price at which he had already offered to me. Before the week was out, Henry, Lizzie, and the baby were established in the house, which for them had now lost all its terrors, I making the only alteration which I considered necessary, that is putting down at the cost of about \$12.00, a drive, or artesian well in the rear of the garden, entirely out of the way of any drainage from the slope above.

Through this well I obtained plenty of pure, wholesome water, and my tenants well understood the importance of using no other so long as they staid in the house. There was really nothing more for me to do except to give them in detail those directions in regard to

their manner of life about which I had already spoken to them in a general way, and this I wanted to do at some length. So the evening before my departure from the village in which, instead of one night I had spent ten days, found me sitting in one of the rooms which Lizzie's busy hands had already in a plain way made bright and comfortable. As a matter of fact I had no fear but that the house would now prove to be as wholesome as any in the village, but I wanted my young couple to feel how much depended upon themselves, and I was very much in earnest in desiring that they should make their housekeeping a model for all the young couples about them. They were beginning with great advantages, they had a large airy house, with plenty of space about it, and in good order, and as they had it rent free, they could afford to buy all that they needed in the way of furniture and clothing. I felt that their future was in their own hands, and it was with a strong desire that they should feel it too that I said, "Lizzie, I hope you realize how much depends upon you during the next year"? Lizzie was undressing the baby and she stopped to give him a toss and a half-dozen kisses before she answered, "I've only to look at Baby to know that, sir. You may be sure that I'll do my best to take care of him and Henry." I knew Lizzie meant what she said and I replied, "I don't think I need be afraid to trust you and Henry, I am sure, in fact, that you will do your best to fulfil your part of our bargain, but I want to-night to go over carefully the terms of the compact and to tell you just what I mean by them. You know I agreed to put this house in good order, and give it to you rent-free for a year, provided you would live during that year just as I direct. If at the end of that time I shall return to find that you

have done so, and that all has gone well with you, then I will advance you the amount of the rent for another year, which will give you an excellent start, if you are sensible and clever enough to take advantage of it." The young people assented to this eagerly enough, and Lizzie who was always the first to speak said, "You've only got to tell us, sir, what we are to do; we trust you, as much as you do us." "The foundation of all that I require, Lizzie," I replied, "is that you should be clean, and I am going to tell you just what I mean by cleanliness.

"In the first place, the house must be clean; there must be no decaying vegetables or fruit, no rubbish of any kind kept in the cellar, the air must be kept perfectly fresh and sweet, for you must not forget that it affects the air of all the rest of the house. Then be sure that your sink is clean, don't let the drain get stopped up, and once a day, at least, wipe it out thoroughly clean and dry. It is a good plan occasionally to put a little chloride of lime down the pipe of your sink or wash tub, but in using lime or carbolic acid, or indeed almost any disinfectant you must be very careful on account of their poisonous properties.

Don't let rubbish of any kind collect in the house, keep all your pantries and cupboards clean, don't get into the habit of pushing things away into holes and corners, and be sure that your beds are well aired and that the bedsteads are occasionally wiped off with hot water and soap. The only way to ensure your bed's being properly aired is to shake it up thoroughly when you first get up, turn back the mattress (I take it for granted you are not so unwise as to sleep upon feathers), then open all the windows and leave the room for at least an hour before you make the bed. Empty all the slops every morning and wash out slop pails, etc., with clean water, tak-

ing care that any vessel which is used in the room during the night, is kept covered. By-the-by, it is a bad plan to let such vessels stand in a wooden washstand or cupboard, for the wood soon becomes saturated with the smell, which is both disagreeable and unwholesome. Don't be afraid of fresh air, by night or day; drafts are not such bad things as they get credit for being, and you ought always to sleep with plenty of air in your room, for the more you accustom yourselves to the air the less likely you will be to take cold. Another safeguard against colds is warm clothing, and I advise you, both in summer and winter to wear woollen underclothes, heavy or light according to the season.

But then, you know, if you don't take care of your skins, putting on flannels won't help you—and if I insist upon your washing yourselves thoroughly every day, or at least three times a week, you must not think that I am making you a great deal of unnecessary trouble. If you want to be well and keep the baby well, you must look out not only for dirt which comes from the outside but also for dirt which comes from the inside, and you must keep the pores of the skin open so that all the waste matter for which they are the proper channel of escape can easily be got rid of. Wash yourselves and the baby often and carefully and change all your underclothing at least once a week, oftener, if you find you can afford it.

“As to your food, I should like to say a good deal, but I can only give you general directions and then trust to your common sense. Eat oatmeal, mush, hominy, rice and all that sort of thing, with all the milk you can get; potatoes, and indeed almost all kinds of vegetables and fruit, boiled, baked, or uncooked, as may be, are excellent, and you ought to get fresh meat once a day, if possible. Eggs, of course, and bacon and ham, but

not too much fresh pork; and remember, Lizzie, that you are not to waste time and material in making pies and cake. Plain puddings you can always have; but in cooking food of any kind, you must realize that everything depends on the cook. Don't fry when you can help it,—

'Boil, broil or bake,
For health's and economy's sake.'

Have your meals always at regular times, and don't eat at all times. Take coffee, tea or cocoa with your meals, but don't drink anything between meals—no, Henry, not even an occasional glass of whisky, though about that I shall perhaps have to make a special bargain." Henry looked at me a little uncertainly, and I went on more seriously, "Yes; you'd better not take anything stronger than Lizzie chooses to give you; you can trust her, and I shall trust her too, to see that the money that might go for drink is kept for something better—beef-steak and potatoes, for example." As I said this, I laid my hand on Henry's shoulder, for I knew that he was not entirely safe in this respect, and I wanted my words to have full weight.

"Well," he said, slowly, looking at Lizzie as he spoke, "I'll engage to drop it; it's in the bargain, I s'pose, and besides, I should like to see for myself how a man can get on without any drink."

"That's a wise resolve," I replied, "and your head will be all the clearer for it. Shake hands on it, for I must be off, or I shall miss my train. One word more—remember, both of you, that this experiment is not merely for your good and my satisfaction, but if it succeeds, it is for the good of the whole village. If you prove that you can live in this house and be well and, in every sense, do well, merely by obeying a few simple

laws which he who runs may read, why—I think you will be giving a good lesson to the whole village. Once more, good-bye—in a year from to-day I shall come back, and in the meantime, if you want me, send for me”—and with a hearty shake of the hand I left my two friends, and for twelve months turned my back on the whole matter, for I did not mean to interfere any farther in the experiment, and, as the event proved, there was no need for it. Henry and Lizzie were, as I had judged them to be, an intelligent, energetic young couple, and the two letters which I received from them during the year which followed my visit, were full of good reports.

Time flew, as it always does with busy people, and on the appointed day I found myself at the gate of the haunted house. I had sent no warning of my coming, and I was glad to get my first impressions of the changes before I saw either of my friends. How pretty and neat the garden looked, with the paths clean and the shrubs trimmed; and as Lizzie, with the baby toddling beside her, came down the steps of the porch, I had no need to ask any questions as to their health and happiness.

“Is it all right, Lizzie?” I asked, holding out my hand. The beaming smile on her face answered me better than words, but the words came, too, and fast enough, “Come in, sir, come in and see for yourself; isn’t the house pleasant?” The story of the year was on her lips, and I was almost at pleased to hear as she to tell.

“You see, sir,” she said, as I followed her into the bright room, “we hadn’t been here three months before folks knew all about it; and some of the clever ones, they said, that if we’d laid the ghost with a shovel, they’d no call to be afraid. And everything was so

pleasant and convenient that before long some of the overseers came to see if we wouldn't board 'em; so we took the money we'd saved for rent and bought some furniture—and now, sir, every room in the house is full, and last Tuesday, Henry took a hundred dollars to the bank.” Here Lizzie fairly broke down, and between laughing and crying was hardly able to speak, though she managed to say, “And I've got the name of being the best housekeeper in town, and it's all because I've done everything just as you've laid out for me.”

“And what does Henry say?” I asked.

“I guess he won't be long in speaking for himself, sir; he'll be home in a few minutes. Won't you look about a little, and see how things are?”

It was with real pride that Lizzie led me through her clean kitchen and sink-room, and out of the back door into the garden, where everything showed that Henry had been true to his promise, and that he and Lizzie were fairly started on the right road. They had found, as anybody may find who will try it, that though they were poor and not very wise, they could live clean, orderly, temperate lives, and that, in every sense, such lives “pay.” As Lizzie had said, her husband was not long in coming, and when I looked at their happy faces and at the rosy baby, and the cheerful house, I could well believe Lizzie's stories of the effect their experiment was having in the village, especially as it was evident that Lizzie preached as well as practiced. In a word, all I had hoped for was accomplished, and the time of my visit was spent rather in hearing their experience, than in giving any further advice. I renewed my offer to advance them the rent for the next year, but they both refused, feeling that they were quite able to pay it themselves, and when we parted, it was with thor-

ough satisfaction that I promised to visit them again the following year.

So last night I found myself once more within their gates, in the well-kept garden whose brilliant autumn flowers were not brighter than the faces of the little household gathered to greet me. All was well with them still; instead of any ghastly ghosts, another laughing, healthy boy had come to them, and had found warm and loving welcome. They, had, as before, only to tell me of a year of peace and prosperity—the terrible shadow of disease and death which had so long hung over the house had vanished, and, instead, was the sunshine of a happy home. “And how has this home been made?” I asked myself, as, after I left my two friends, (having drunk their healths in a glass of pure water from what we still called “the new well,”) I stood looking back at the house with its windows ablaze in the light of the setting sun. Will not my readers answer, as I did, “It is the work of a husband and wife who have undertaken in earnest to learn and keep the laws of God. They have learned that dirt and filth mean disease, that intemperance in food and drink means ill-health, that impure air and water mean poison, and they have learned that almost any one who chooses can avoid these things.”

There are more haunted houses than one in our land, but among them all there is not a ghost which cannot be laid, nor a demon which cannot be driven out by intelligent and patient endeavor. At least, this is what Henry and Lizzie and I said to each other, the last time we met under the roof of our no longer “Haunted House.”

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At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Social Science Association, held June 8th, 1878, Prof. Pierce in the chair, it was unanimously voted, as follows:

Resolved. That the American Social Science Association learns with pleasure of the work undertaken at Hampton, in Virginia, to spread among the people of Virginia, and of the South in general, a knowledge of Sanitary Science popularly set forth; and that from an examination of the three Sanitary Tracts of the proposed series, viz.: *The Health Laws of Moses, The Duty of Teachers,* and *Preventable Diseases,* the Executive Committee of this Association is persuaded that the important work, thus undertaken, will be well performed. We would therefore commend these Tracts to all readers, at the North as well as at the South, and would recommend their wide distribution in the way best suited to promote the circulation of them.

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