

**Island Ghosts**

Alex. MacDonald, '39

When our forefathers left their native land and came to this country, they brought with them a great number of ghosts. It is not known how they brought these spirits over here, but bring them they did. These ghosts were easily acclimatized and soon spread throughout the country. The great majority of them came to Prince Edward Island, and to-day we have the best ghosts in Canada.

Of the various ghosts found on the Island most common were the ones that haunted houses. At least there are quite a number of accounts of these, especially in the eastern part of the Island. One of these stories is about an old man who was forced to leave his old home when the family moved to a distant place. This grieved the old man very much, as he wished to spend his last days at the old home, and he spent most of his time thinking about his old homestead, and wishing himself back.

One evening, after he had died, one of his former neighbours was passing by the vacant house, when he saw some one standing by the back door, about to enter. It seemed strange to him, that any one should be going into the house. As he came nearer he saw, to his surprise, that it was the former owner. Finally the old man left the door, went around the corner of the house and disappeared from view. It is told that on many evenings the old man could be seen sitting by a window reading, but, as anyone came near the house, he would walk away.

In former times when people were not so prosperous as now-a-days, instead of buying a coffin, it was customary to have one made. This was usually a task for some carpenter or handy-man of the community. These carpenters were often warned about a death beforehand. They would hear in the workshops strange noises of hammering, and sorting of boards, but investigation would show the shop empty, the boards untouched. Within a few days they were always sure to receive an order for a coffin.

Funeral processions was another form of forerunner which our forefathers often encountered. They would see or hear these processions passing before the actual funeral took place. A man once told me of such an experience. He was walking in his yard one evening in late summer, when his attention was drawn by an unusual



sound. He could hear sleigh bells, a number of them, coming down the hill. They passed with the noise of horses feet in the slush, and then grew fainter, and faded away in the distance. He was naturally quite disturbed about this. Well, next winter he was standing in his yard one day, when he heard the same sound of bells, only this time it was real, for a neighbour had died, and the funeral was passing.

Speaking of funeral processions, I might say that the old people were very careful not to walk in the middle of the road after night, as anyone is apt to get caught in one of these. For this reason they always kept to the side of the road when walking after night.

These were not the only hazards encountered after night. A young fellow from the East was returning from a neighbour's house one night. As it was rather late he was walking rapidly. He imagined he had been walking a sufficiently long time to bring him home, when he realized he was getting no nearer his destination. He took a land mark ahead and found he was not making any progress at all. He tried repeatedly, but it was impossible for him to pass a certain place in the road. In order to get by, he was obliged to leave the road, and take another course across the fields.

Among the spirits which our forefathers brought to this country were a number of fairies. These tiny creatures are capable of working good or evil just as their inclination prompts them. But they always perform good acts as long as you do not prompt them to do evil ones. For instance, should they come to borrow some flour or other foodstuff they will always return more than they borrowed.

As regards their bad acts, it is a very common occurrence for the fairies to steal a horse during the night. You can always tell when they have been driving your horse, because the mane will be nicely plaited for they always ride on the horse's neck, and use these plaits as stirrups.

An old lady a native of Scotland who later came to Prince Edward Island, was bothered a great deal by these little creatures. One day I had occasion to pay a visit to her, and it happened to be her day for churning.

"The fairies are around again." She said irritably, "I have been churning for nearly an hour and the butter won't gather; I will have to get the poker."



I asked her what was the idea of the poker. She told me that sometimes the fairies get into the churn, and it matters not how much you churn, the butter will not gather. The only remedy is to drive them out with a hot poker.

Being very curious, I waited to see this process of exorcism performed. Shortly she returned with the hot poker, plunged it into the cream, and began to churn.

To my surprise the butter soon began to gather, and so the old lady was quite confident she had driven the fairies from the churn. I walked home convinced that there were somethings you can never learn from text books.



## SEAWEED

W. R., '32

In with the rush of the surging tide  
Many a sea-flower came;  
Rock-weed and eel-grass hither hied,  
With dulce and kelp and many we could not name.

But that was years and years ago;  
Now they are gone from the cove and bay,  
The sea's great gardens no longer grow,  
The seaweed's dead and boyhood friends are far away.

So here on the weed-bare shore I am walking  
Where we played when boys; and, as then, out there  
On the low-tide reef the seals are talking,  
(We thought them mermaids—sunning their stream-  
ing hair.)



Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.

—Pope.