

MYSTERY AT MAPLE CREEK

The night was the inky blackness that precedes the dawn when the Midsummer dance at the schoolhouse in Maple Creek finally broke up and the last revellers began to wend their way, many rather unsteadily, homeward. It happened that Long Jim MacGee, a carpenter of no mean repute, was the only one who lived west of the Creek on a little "dead-end" road that led across the wooden bridge over the creek and wound through a wood for about three miles before it reached his house. Since he would have nothing to do with those "new-fangled car contraptions" and his faithful old mare had a lame leg, Long Jim set out for home on foot.

Those who saw Long Jim leave Maple Creek said afterwards that he was tottering a little but, as Sam Miller expressed it "I've seen him a lot tighter'n that, many's the time. Why the night of Jake Sam's son's weddin', he was so full he wasn't around for a week afterwards."

At any rate, late the following afternoon, Sam Miller's son, Cy, had occasion to be near Long Jim's house and, on sudden impulse, decided to see how that individual had survived the party and "p'raps have a snort or two with him." There was no stir of life about Long Jim's house. Young Cy sauntered up to the kitchen door—the front door was covered with vines—and pounded till the rusty hinges threatened to give way. When no answer was forthcoming, he opened the door and, entering, had advanced only a few paces when he halted abruptly and stood staring at the sight before him. Long Jim was cowering in a corner in an agony of fear. His eyes were wildly staring and his whole body trembled as with the ague. Then, as the eyes seemed at last to focus and to recognize Young Cy, the lanky frame of Long Jim went limp, he buried his face in his hands and began sobbing uncontrollably.

"Long Jim, what in tarnation is ailin' you?" demanded Young Cy. Certainly Long Jim's toots never affected him this way before.

The shaking man raised his head and the naked terror that Young Cy saw in his eyes sent icy prickles shooting up and down his spine.

"I seen a ghost, Young Cy. A ghost, I tell you. Heaven help me, I never thought as long as I lived on this earth to be so cursed. Lord knows, I'm not a saint but anyways I ain't no gosh-awful sinner neither. Am I, Young Cy? Am I, now?" Even the sight of Long Jim on his knees before him did not strike Young Cy as funny at that moment.

"Sure, you ain't no turrible sinner," he soothed in much the same way as he would calm a frightened young colt.

"Well, then, there's a curse on me. I tell you—"

"Long Jim MacGee, you know as well's I do, there ain't no such things as ghosts. Are you outa your head? How much did you drink last night anyway?" demanded Young Cy.

"I tell you, Young Cy, there was a ghost. Last night on the way home from Maple Creek, I seen one. I seen it, I tell you. I was walkin' up that hill in the bush this side of the Creek. This thing jumped out of the ditch. It looked sorta big and dark and I was so scared,

I couldn't do nothin'. Laws, man, I ain't never met up with a ghost before. Then I just took to my heels and off I ran, and fell, and stumbled, without ever stoppin' till I got home."

Young Cy was a fairly practical man. He did not believe in ghosts and so promptly dismissed the idea as an illusion of Long Jim's foggy vision after the dance. When two nights later, Long Jim, sweating and trembling, arrived in the village and absolutely refused to return home that night, Young Cy began to wonder.

The villagers laughed and jeered at Long Jim's "tall tales".

"Sure, he's been havin' too many drinks lately," was the general conclusion.

However, regardless of village opinion, a great change came over Long Jim. He had been busy building a new mission church in the village, but now all progress on it ceased. He was unable to work; he could not sit still, not even long enough to play a game of cards. Instead he wandered about like a man in a trance, completely oblivious to the remarks of his neighbours.

Three more times in the following week, Long Jim met with the same experience. The village began to grow alarmed; gossip and rumours began to circulate and soon went rampaging about the community. All the old superstitions were uncovered and discussed.

"It's the devil haunting him because he's building the church," whispered the old ladies over afternoon cups of tea and clicking knitting needles.

"There's a curse on Long Jim for sure." Even the menfolk were beginning to admit that some strange events were taking place in the woods near Maple Creek. Old Tobias Smith who, with his crony, Mack Powers, was noted for frequent lapses into periods of blissful intoxication after which time both were incapable of remembering any of their actions, shook his head.

"Tarnation, no. Sure Long Jim just gets too tight and imagines them things," he insisted. "There's no such things as ghosts. Haven't you noticed he's been hitting the bottle pretty heavy lately?"

It was true. He had. But it was also pointed out that Long Jim had not touched one drop after his second encounter with the unknown elements in the wood. For now he firmly believed that the apparition was a result of his misdeeds and a warning to reform.

One night two youths thinking to put Long Jim's "ghost" to the test, went up the Creek road to the wood. Soon they came running home in terror with tales of strange and weird noises in the bushes. They had seen nothing since they had dashed off as soon as they heard the noises.

Young Cy went into the "haunted" wood one afternoon, and, that evening, he persuaded, with great difficulty several men of the village to accompany him up the Creek road at midnight. Heavy clouds obscured the moon thus leaving the road in pitch darkness as the men proceeded cautiously and, in some cases, fearfully along.

"Now", said Young Cy, with the air of a general marshalling his troops. "Just keep still and wait."

The blackness of the night seemed to envelop the men as in a blanket; the feathery little breeze twirled the leaves about. Among the men was a tense, expectant silence. Suddenly came the sound as of a great threshing in the wood and, because of the preceding silence, it rang out with startling sharpness. As one man, the group of watchers turned to run, but they were halted by the sudden command of Young Cy. Then he dashed into the woods and, it seemed to the men, into the very midst of danger. After a few minutes the threshing stopped, and the men heard rather than saw Young Cy stumble over stumps and broken branches as he came out from the bushes dragging some object.

"Turn your flashlight on there, someone," ordered Young Cy. "Here's Long Jim's ghost."

And in the white arc of the flashlight beams, the men saw, first Young Cy and then beside him old Tobias who was evidently under the influence of a liquid much stronger than water.

"Come with me," said Young Cy and, leaving old Tobias lolling against a stump, he led them into the wood for quite some distance. Then he halted.

"Now, men, you've seen the ghost. This is where he gets his brew." And, as he flashed his light about, the men gaped and then, one by one, burst into uproarious laughter.

"A still! A still! Well?, I'll be darned. And there's old Mack up against that tree. Well, poor Long Jim! His troubles are over," laughed Sam Miller.

And much to Long Jim's relief they were, except, of course, for the ribbing which he never could get rid of for the remainder of his days. He returned to his former happy ways, and the "ghost" of Maple Creek took an immortal place in the annals of Maple Creek.

—MARGARET HAGEN '59

College Chronicle

Each new year swings in at St. Dunstan's bringing with it new faces and new companionships. This year, with four hundred and six students enrolled, there are more newcomers than ever before. But after a few months—one even—at the "College on the Hill", none are new; all are "Saints".

The Campus once more came to life, as the High School students trickled in to register on September 10. The next week they were followed by the Freshmen, who were welcomed by a battery of I.Q. tests and placement exams. Finally, two days later, the upper classmen arrived, to the refrain, "Hi! How did **you** spend the summer?"

Among the new students are four more boys from Hong Kong, and two Hungarian boys: Emil Nagy taking first year Engineering, and Andreas Toth, in Second year Engineering. The **Red and White** extends

to these boys, and to all the new students, a hearty welcome. We hope their stay with us will be both happy and profitable.

Undisturbed during the summer months by myriad hurrying feet, our Campus seems to have acquired a new dignity, an atmosphere of serenity proper to institutions of learning. The impression of seclusion is added this year by the neat cement walks which, laid out in precise geometric patterns across the lawns, replace the ruts and potholes of the old circular drive.

As we stroll along these new walks, it can be readily seen that this was a busy summer. Scarcely had the mortarboards from last Commencement Day been packed away when in moved the carpenters with their tools and machinery. For weeks the quiet of the Campus was punctuated by the clang of hammers as the men worked to make the extensive renovations necessary to provide accommodation for the rapidly increasing number of "Saints". These labors completed, we find a number of changes. The Extension Wing of Main Building has been converted into several sunny Administration Offices—a decided improvement over the old dark rooms, inconveniently tucked away in odd corners of the building. Further changes are noted on the fourth floor of Main. There, one of the old dormitories has been replaced by nineteen bright new rooms, occupied by Sophomore students who, incidentally, have a new private stairway. Also subjected to the operations of the carpenters was the basement of the Alumni Gymnasium, which now contains new classrooms and laboratories. In the midst of all this activity, the faculty has not been neglected entirely. The old Recreation Hall on the first floor of Main has been refinished and refurnished to provide a comfortable, long-awaited room in which faculty members may play auction for nickles, watch Hank Aaron hit a homer, or just relax.

"The Old Order Changeth", said Tennyson, and so, it seems, does the Faculty. First of all, we notice that Father Frank Aylward has relinquished his position as Bursar, in order to devote his time to his many duties as the University's Farm Manager, and Spiritual Director. Once more handing out receipts is Father William Simpson who, in addition, continues as Director of the Extension Department. A newcomer to this department is George LeBel, who is promoting agricultural education among the people of P.E.I. Born in Alberta, he is a graduate of MacDonald College and has for several years been associated with St. F. X. Extension Department, and with the Maritime Co-op Services.

And now let's turn to the professors. We find that since his duties as Rector require his full attention Father Sullivan is no longer teaching Philosophy. These courses are now conducted by Father Thomas MacLellan, who recently received his Ph.D. from Laval University. He is also the new prefect of Memorial Hall, Replacing Father Allan MacDonald who is presently studying Sociology at the Catholic University of America. Now occupying Father MacDonald's position as librarian is Miss Frances MacMillan, who was formerly with the Prince Edward Island Regional Libraries. With us again, but in a new capacity we find Dominic MacDonald, this year teaching Freshman English. A newcomer to the Math and Chemistry Departments is Gerald Arse-