

THE STRATHWAY HAUNTED HOUSE.

The Times of a recent date had a long article, entitled 'On the Trail of a Ghost,' from a correspondent who recently visited Ballechin, in Perthshire, with the view of investigating the 'manifestations' that were said to be taking place there. For two or three months past (said the writer) vague rumours have been afloat in London concerning a haunted house somewhere in Scotland belonging to the Marquis of Bute.

It was described as the most haunted house in Scotland, and as being the abode of some mysterious agency producing sights and sounds of the most portentous and inexplicable character. While many people, some of them holding high positions in the scientific world, were ready to give general assurances of the awe inspiring nature of these phenomena, it was unfortunately impossible to obtain precise information from any one. The most definite impression one could form was that appalling noises were

to be heard, alike by day and by night, in various parts of this mansion, but more particularly in four rooms. Apparitions were also spoken of, though less confidently, yet it seemed to be generally agreed that the orthodox gliding figure melting into thin air had been seen by at least one horrified observer.

Inquiries addressed to distinguished members of the Society for Psychical Research—or the S.P.R. as it is affectionately called by its votaries—elicited the information that Lord Bute had taken the house in question for three months, and had placed it at the disposal of the society for the purpose of a thorough investigation. For reasons which are differently stated in London and in Perth, where the agent for the proprietor is to be found, Lord Bute did not take the house in his own name, but in that of Colonel Taylor. The material fact, however, is that he did take it with the object just named, installed a staff of servants, and entrusted the conduct of the investigation to a lady well known in connection with the S.P.R., and also for work of a different and much more valuable kind. Lord Bute's original idea was a good one, but it was never properly carried out. Observing that the S.P.R. had made many investigations in a perfunctory and absurd manner by sending somebody to a haunted house for a couple of nights and then writing an utterly worthless report, he desired in this case a continuous investigation extending over a considerable period. He ought, therefore, to have employed a couple of intelligent detectives for the whole term, and thus secured real continuity. As things are, the only continuity is to be found in the presence—itself not entirely continuous—of the lady just mentioned.

ing that the Thomson patent lamp had not been fitted to the Ballechin pipes. These were all the noises I heard in the most haunted room of 'the most haunted house in Scotland.'

A GROSS IMPOSTURE.

After giving the results of his inquiries into the traditions connected with the house, the writer concludes:—'Lord Bute's confidence has been grossly abused by some one, and, what he will probably regret even more, he has been unwittingly led to do an appreciable injury to the owners of Ballechin. It was represented to him by some one that he was taking the 'most haunted house in Scotland,' a house with an old and established reputation for mysterious, if not supernatural, disturbances. What he has got is a house with no reputation whatever of that kind, with no history, with nothing germane to his purpose beyond a cloud of baseless rumours produced during the last twelve months. Who is responsible for the imposture it is not my business to know or to inquire, but that it is an imposture of the most shallow and impudent kind there can be no manner of doubt.'

LORD BUTE 'INTERVIEWED.'

A representative of the Morning Leader, who interviewed the Marquis of Bute as to the Ballechin spook-hunting project, writes as follows:—

'You are fortunate,' began his Lordship, 'for not only have you caught me, but also the lady who has charge of the house, Miss X.'

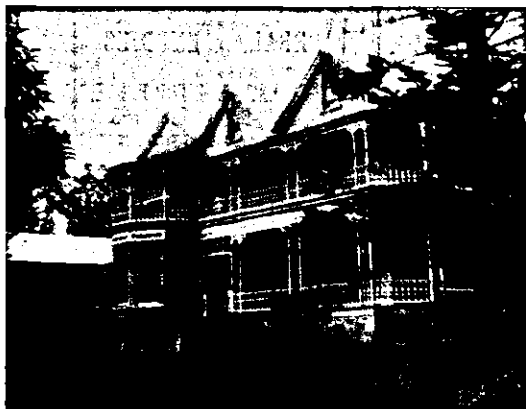
'Yes, I'm Miss —,' broke in the

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Four Boys passed the Senior Civil Service Examination.

Nine Boys passed the Junior Civil Service Examination, two of whom gained the 18th and 38th places in New Zealand on a List of 238 successful candidates.

Special Bus Arrangements for Day Boys.

Prospectus may be had on application to the Principal, or from Messrs Union and Co. Queen-street.

THE 'MOST HAUNTED HOUSE.'

Ballechin—the *ch* is guttural and carries the accent—is a house pleasantly situated in Strathway, a few miles above Dunkeld. The house was built in the second decade of the present century, but a wing was added at a much later date, and is the only part of the structure that is free from 'manifestations.' Underneath the wing are the present kitchens, to the isolation of which a wholly undue importance is attached as precluding the idea that noises willfully or accidentally made by the servants can account for the phenomena in the bedrooms. In the centre of the house is the main staircase in a square well, lighted by a cupola and having a gallery which runs right round it, and gives access to the upper part of the main building. At one corner of this gallery is a service staircase, at the top of which is the most haunted bedroom. Adjoining this are the two next in order of phenomenal importance, while at the opposite corner of the gallery, where another staircase leads to the servants' sleeping rooms above, is the fourth of the haunted rooms. The house has thick walls both interior and exterior, but their thickness is exaggerated by wood casing which everywhere gives a hollow sound on percussion. The rafters seem to be as flimsy as the walls are substantial, for the floors vibrate on the smallest provocation, and in any of the bedrooms it is quite easy to hold a conversation with another man in the attic. It follows that the house is one huge sounding-board, transmitting, and possibly intensifying, certain kinds of noise.

TOSING FOR POSSESSION.

I tosed with another man for possession of No. 3, the most haunted of the rooms, and won. He contented himself with No. 1, which is the second best from an investigator's point of view. On one of the two nights that I spent in the room, I slept without disturbance of any kind until 7 o'clock, when I heard a variety of noises floating up the back staircase, and all easily translatable into the early morning activities of the servants. There is a fixed washstand with the usual waste plug. This I left open on going to bed, and as the night was windy, a sound which an ardent imagination might have converted into a moan of a soul in pain came from the end of the wastepipe a few feet below, where it overhangs the water, according to approved sanitary principles. The second night I was very wakeful. I read in bed until past 1 o'clock, and was awake again about 3. My fire had gone out, and the fireplace in cooling down emitted a loud crack after the manner of iron fireplaces in such conditions. A sympathetic observer would doubtless have chronicled that as a ghostly noise. A distinguished psychical researcher told me just before I left town that when one sees a ghost the proper thing is to advance boldly and clasp it. In the hope of such an encounter I went out upon the gallery, but I saw nothing and heard nothing except the wind. I went to sleep after that for some three hours, and on awaking heard a pretty loud noise from the washing-basin, which, however, was only the jar of a waterpipe when the water is suddenly turned off. Presently a deep buzzing sound indicated that a servant was drawing more water, probably in the distant wing, and was duly followed by another resonant bang, show-



Beautiful eyes grow dull and dim As the swift years steal away. Beautiful, willowey forms so slim Lose fairness with every day. But she still is queen and hath charms to spare Who wears youth's coronal—beautiful hair.

Ayer's Hair Vigor

will preserve your hair, and thus preserve your youth. "A woman is as old as she looks," says the world. No woman looks as old as she is if her hair has preserved its normal beauty. You can keep hair from falling out, restoring its normal color, or restore the normal color to gray or faded hair by the use of

Ayer's Hair Vigor. GOLD MEDALS At the World's Chief Expositions.

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Advertisement for Bird's Custard Powder. Text: 'A DISH FOR PRINCES. Custard with the luscious Fruits of New Zealand, and all imported Fruits. BIRD'S CUSTARD POWDER Produces the Richest Custard, without Eggs. The best resource for every housekeeper—affording a constant variation in the daily menu.'

Advertisement for Vinolia Cream. Text: 'VINOLIA (SOOTHING) CREAM (EMOLLIENT) FOR ITCHING, SUNBURN, INSECT BITES, FACE SPOTS, Etc. The 'Baby' reports:—'For acne spots on the face and particularly for Eczema, it is undoubtedly efficacious, frequently healing eruptions and removing pimples in a few days. IT RELIEVES ITCHING AT ONCE. (In 4 Sizes.)'

Advertisement for Vinolia Powder. Text: 'VINOLIA (SAFE) POWDER FOR REDNESS, ROUGHNESS, TOILET, NURSERY, Etc. The 'Ladies Pictorial' reports:—'Superseding the old-fashioned toilet powders which are apt to cause acne spots on the face by blocking up the pores of the skin. IN WHITE, PINK, AND CREAM TINTS. (In 4 Sizes.) PREMIER VINOLIA SOAP (For Sensitive Skins).'