

"The Haunted House"

by ALFRED T. SORENSEN

"WOODHILL," Tivoli, near the end of Lover's Walk, Cork, was long in the possession of the Penrose family (Quakers). But in the present century an art dealer bought it and had the beautiful old house dismantled so as to resell the fireplaces and other fittings.

I want to tell two anecdotes of Woodhill House in its later days.

The art dealer sold it to a Cork builder of repute — a builder who among many other works had erected Egans new shop in Patrick

Street after the 1920 burning of Cork, and the remarkable Church of Christ the King at Turner's Cross. In the 1930s I was employed by this builder as an apprentice carpenter, and as I lived on the Lower Glanmire Road, quite near Tivoli, I was asked to "keep an eye" on Woodhill, then unoccupied. I would take occasional walks through the grounds, which were still in a fairly good condition.

I noticed that there was a belfry over the former servants' quarters, and being

young, airy and curious I decided to investigate. I climbed on to the roof, which was fairly high, and crawled along the ridge towards the bell which was hanging on a bar in a brick

arch, though the rope for pulling it was long gone.

I discovered that by shaking it I could get a loud peal out of it. Now for the sequel. The time was approximately 11.30 a.m. I rang

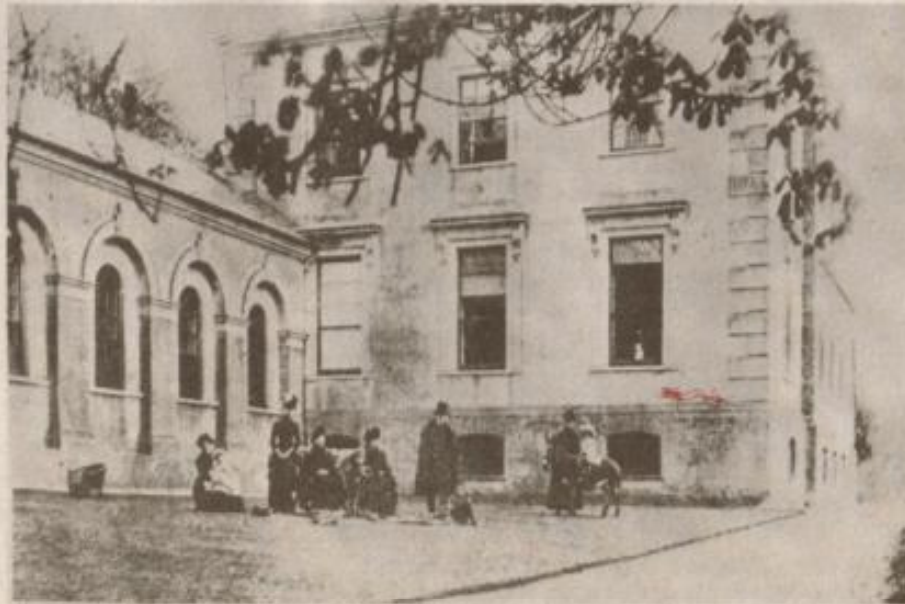
the bell loudly and I learned afterwards that the nuns in the nearby Honan Home and the Little Sisters in Montenotte, thinking it must be 12 o'clock, solemnly rang out their Angelus peals. I'm afraid I had a good laugh over this.

Woodhill is known locally

as "the haunted house." I happen to know one reason for this. It was because two young fellows conspired to frighten a third fellow late one stormy winter's night.

One of them was a tall, gaunt and sepulchral-looking youth, even in daylight. He got into Woodhill House and waited while his accomplice lured the third fellow to the house on the pretext that there was a stock of petrol tins there for the taking. They entered through a small window in the back and mounted the wide staircase to the first landing.

Suddenly a terrifying figure holding a lantern in his hand appeared on the landing, the dim light giving his face a weird and horrible look. The victim was scared out of his wits, poor fellow, turned and dived through a nearby window. Fortunately the ground below was very much overgrown and he was not injured as badly as he might have been. But he got a bad fright — and he spread the tale widely that he had been lucky to escape from the "haunted house!"



Woodhill House in its days of glory.

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