

# Between Two Worlds

True Ghost Stories of the British Isles



D A MacManus

him in a most heartless fashion as soon as it became known that she was to have a child. Shortly afterwards she had taken the most desperate way of putting an end to her distress and humiliation.

*Fear at Castle Carra*

My sister, Miss E. P. MacManus, has sent me this note of an experience she had when a young girl. She is the last person in the world to exaggerate.

"Once, I was overwhelmed with a sense of evil and desperate fear—I have never forgotten it.

"When we were on our holidays in my father's old Irish home in County Mayo, we went for many picnics to beauty spots. We were a rambling caravan—a pony-cart, a wagonette, a side car and a cheerful escort of young cyclists.

"One day, we all set off for Castle Carra on the shores of Lough Carra, in South Mayo. It was a long drive. At last, by a muddy lane which led off from the road, we reached our destination, a bay of the Lough, overlooked by the ruins of the Castle. At a thatched cottage near the end of the land we took out the horses, and our elders gossiped with the little farmer and his family and were promised kettles of boiling water for the tea.

"My father and some of the party strolled off to explore the shore. At a spot in the shade—a little way round to the right—the ladies began to lay out the repast. To the left side of the bay ran a long grassy sward with a fine bramble brake between it and the shore. On the other side of this grassy clearing, the ground rose and there were signs of the ruins among trees.

"Some of us young ones were given tins and told to pick blackberries, but soon my companions began to move back round the corner to where the picnic was being prepared. I was a greedy little girl and I continued to pick—but also to eat—blackberries, moving on further and further away from the party.

"Quite suddenly I felt frightened. I realised that I was alone, some distance from my friends. In the ordinary way I never minded being out-alone, but now a feeling of horror crept over me. The ruined building in the trees, and more particularly the grassy sward itself, seemed to be filled with something evil. I looked round fearfully. There was nothing to be seen. The sun was shining, small birds were singing—

but naked fear stalked beside me. I had an impulse to run, to call out, but I controlled it. My father was always teaching us never to be afraid. 'Look the other man straight in the eye, tell the truth and shame the devil.' That was one of his sayings.

"As well as being greedy, I was a fairly brave little girl and, in spite of the unseen horror all round me, I made myself walk slowly down the grassy sward and round the corner to rejoin the picnic party.

"My mother, who was kneeling by the cloth and putting out delicious food on plates, looked up. 'What's the matter child? You look pale, what's wrong with you?' I could not tell her. I made some excuse and joined the others. The fear left me, and soon I was making a good tea. But when we all reached home that night, the memory of my fear returned, and I told my dear Aunt Lottie, the aunt who understood things, believed in the unseen world, and was a beloved companion. 'There was a terrible slaughter there once, Emily. That old Castle has known tragedy. The spirits of those who lost their lives in that sad time made themselves known to you. There was no harm meant to you; only other people's anguish rose up and touched you. Don't worry about it any more, my little girl.'

"And so, child like, I soon forgot it, but when I have occasion to think of it, even now, as I write sixty years later, I can recall the cold prickly feeling down my spine and the terror that encompassed me on that long ago sunny afternoon on the shore of Lough Carra.

*"Epilogue.*—I loved my mother dearly, I adored my father, but, until much later on, I could not make my mother my confidant."

#### *The Stairs*

In an ordinary late Victorian house in a pleasant suburb of Dublin, there is a spot which has something very curious about it. It is against, or on, the outer wall of the house, about three-quarters of the way up the front staircase, and it seems actively repellant to anyone who is psychic. Although no story is attached to it as far as anyone now in the house knows, the place is as well defined for the sensitive as if it were clearly marked out in bright paint.

The house belongs to a prominent Dublin business man who lives there with his wife and several children, so it