

COLORADO SPOOKS.

(Opinion.)

On a ranch not more than a dozen miles from Denver some strange sights have been seen within the last few months, and those who have witnessed them are at their wits' end for a satisfactory explanation. In the neighborhood there are probably half a dozen families engaged in stock raising and agricultural pursuits, and some member of nearly all these families have been eye-witnesses of the queer goings-on referred to. The manifestations seemed to be confined almost entirely to one ranch, although some unaccountable proceedings have occurred on the adjoining farms. At unseasonable hours of the night mysterious lights appear, stationary for a few moments and then rapidly shifting to other points so quickly as to negative the theory that they are manipulated by human agency. A few weeks ago a ranchman sat up for several hours one night to investigate the matter, and when he retired was utterly at a loss to account for what he had seen. His observations were that the light appeared as if it were carried by some one who had lost and was searching for something, being lowered nearly to the ground, then raised, and then shifted from right to left. The light seemed to be approaching his house, and for a while he was quite convinced that some neighbor was making his way toward it. So impressed was he with this belief that he started toward the light to make inquiries, supposing that some neighbor was sick. As he neared the light he noticed there was nothing in the shape of a lantern, and on closer observation could discern no one in its vicinity. He then quickened his pace, when he was surprised to see the light quickly shift to another position at least a hundred yards away. Others who have seen the mysterious light have endeavored to find a cause for it, but with equally unsatisfactory results. About three weeks ago the wife of a ranchman in this uncanny neighborhood was suddenly awakened about midnight by a noise outside, and, hastening to a window, saw a blaze which almost blinded her in the direction of the barn, and was at once impressed with the belief that it was in flames. She aroused her husband and stated the startling conviction to him. Dressing himself hastily, he repaired with his wife to the back door, and lo! not a sign of fire was to be seen.

Further investigation at the barn demonstrated that there had been no fire near it. The ranchman then went beyond the barn nearly half a mile without finding any indication of a cause for the remarkable light seen by his wife. The people of the neighborhood are naturally very much interested regarding these strange occurrences, and at last accounts there had been a strong determination expressed to give the matter a most thorough investigation. Some of the more superstitious of the ranch people believe that a foul murder has at some time been committed in that vicinity, and that the manifestations are the work of the unquiet spirit of the victim endeavoring to direct attention to the spot where the remains are buried. These strange lights cannot be accounted for on the *ignis fatuus* or will-o'-the-wisp theory, because there is no swampy or marshy ground anywhere near where they make their appearance. Further developments are shortly expected as a result of the careful investigation that will be made, and the readers of the *Opinion* will be kept informed concerning them.

Tom McNeeley, of Aspen, is authority for another ghost story. With a partner, he is living in the haunted Haustrausser cabin, at the lower edge of Tourtelotte park, where, in 1880, Jacob Haustrausser was most foully murdered. Tom says he hears strange noises every night all about the cabin. Scarcely do they blow out the light and compose themselves to slumber, than they hear footsteps outside the door and moanings and groanings that would make each separate hair stand on end like the quills of the fretful porcupine, and the moment one of them gets up to investigate the noise ceases. Tom says he has shot with his revolver through the door and cracks between the logs until the cabin is like a sieve, but the impalpable ghost cares not for bullets. One night, they plainly heard the sound of digging in the earth beneath the floor, which they tore up the next morning, but there was no sign of the midnight grave-digger's work. These gentlemen are turning prematurely gray in their heroic efforts to outlive the ghost, which they have repeatedly attempted to catch a glimpse of, but without success.

If anyone doubts these nocturnal disturbances, they are invited to go to the cabin and stay but one night, and if they survive the ordeal they are to testify to the ghosts. It is said that every October the ghost returns to walk the earth, and hovers about the scene of the murder (which occurred in October, 1880) for several days, and then goes away again to return upon the next anniversary.

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