

## **Dalby Sensation**

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Listen to this story of the occult; to a description of incidents which beggar description, details, as far as we are able to present them of events which have no equal in fact or fiction; and yet, which are solemnly vouched for by people whose sanity brooks no question. It is the story of what has been elsewhere described as "the Spook of Dalby"; a "spook" which is not a "spook" nor, if we accept the word of responsible persons, is it the invention of an unbalanced mental state.

Residents in the west of the island are being fanned into a state of amazement and incredulity as the result of strange happenings which are reported to have taken place at the small farmstead know as Dorlish Cashen Farm, Dalby.

We have no desire to enter into the realms of journalistic sensation, and must say that when we first heard of these "incidents" we were disposed to be sceptical; frankly, to disbelieve. After enquiry into some of the circumstances, however, we are less inclined to be openly cynical, on the other hand we have had evidence given to us, by a responsible person, which compels us to confess to an awesome respect for the existence of some uncanny creature which appears to have mental powers equal to those of any human being, some hybrid creature of the rodent type which, it is claimed possesses powers of speech and reasoning to an extent that leaves us hopelessly perplexed, and impelled to believe the unbelievable.

The stories which have been told to us of this uncanny creature are probably being exaggerated in the retailing, but there is no getting away from the matter-of-fact narrative told to us by Mr James T. Irving, who resides at Dorlish Cashen, nor of the corroborative evidence of his wife and his bright 13 years' old daughter. Now "Jim" Irving is not a crank nor a half wit he is a man whose credentials will bear the strictest investigation. For many years he was the European representative of the Dominion Organ and Piano Co, a Canadian organisation with an extensive trade in Britain, and held power of attorney in the British Isles on their behalf. He purchased Dorlish Cashen Farm, with the idea of retiring, during the war, and has conducted it after the fashion of a small holding to give him an interest in life.

Mr Irving is a man of good social standing and a member of the Glenfaba Masonic Lodge. He is a man bordering on 60, bright and cheery, and a minutes' chat with him would convince anyone that there are "no bats in the belfry" where Mr Irving is concerned. And, even it were so, it would be difficult to obtain such convincing corroborative evidence as is obtainable

from Mrs and Miss Irving of these amazing events which are the subject of comment, and of a certain amount of derision. Reflection, indeed, will give one cause to appreciate the fact that, in telling such a story, Mr Irving has nothing to gain; indeed, the fact that the story has got out has resulted in considerable annoyance and personal discomfort to him and even that of damage to his property, thanks to the crazy pranks of irresponsible young men from the Peel area, who have gone up to the house and committed several acts which are to their discredit.

In pursuit of fuller particulars about these peculiar happenings a representative of the "Examiner" set out, accompanied by a friend, on Wednesday evening. After parking their car at Glen Maye the pair commenced what promised to be a pleasant moonlight tramp, but were soon disillusioned, for they found themselves faced with a steep mountain climb up a narrow roadway, made treacherous by a glassy frozen surface. Only through the generous help of a glorious moon were they able to keep to the right path. During their climb they were entertained by some misguided youths who were endeavouring to pierce the still night with ghostly screams, but their efforts met with poor success. After many misgivings and fears as to having lost their way they eventually found the house they were looking for, perched right on top of the mountain, a lonely outpost over a mile from the nearest tenement. That night, however, the tenants were being kept company by a small crowd of curious sightseers, who met with poor reward for their strenuous tramp, as they stood about contemplating a building that offered little in the way of excitement or interest.

Our representative's reception by Mr Irving was anything but encouraging, when he learned the business he was on, but on being assured that we did not intend to fabricate a "cock and bull" story he kindly invited him into the house. Mr Irving immediately made it plain that he and his family were more than a little annoyed with certain newspaper reports that had put them in a ridiculous light. The crowds of idly curious had made them feel uncomfortable, and apart from the unpleasantness by notoriety, a few ruffians had even done damage to the property and had climbed on the roof and stuffed up the chimney, causing great discomfort to the tenants.

Embarking on his narrative with regard to the strange happenings, Mr Irving said that it was on Sunday, September 13th, when they first heard queer little tappings and knockings in the house, and put it down to the industry of some mouse. The noises continued for a few days and then they began to hear peculiar animal noises such as the blowing of a stoat or ferret, the spit of a cat and the barking of a dog. These noises continued for some time, and the narrator becoming perturbed, made many efforts to trap the animal, but without success. The family had by this time gained the impression that their uninvited guest was a stray rat, stoat or weasel.

Then, on October 20th, the father and daughter were given their glimpse of it, and they describe it as possessing a small ratlike body with a long bushy tail, body and tail being of a yellowish hue and the tail speckled with brown. Early in December they began to hear noises similar to a baby child beginning to talk and before long they heard definite words issuing from the walls. They were more curious than frightened, and tried to test their abnormal guest with little pieces of nursery rhyme, and before a week was out, they were hearing the rhymes repeated in a clear voice. From that time on this queer body has repeated parts of their conversations, has discussed their private lives with them, and has retailed gossip gleaned from outside.

On December 30th last, the animal again left his security behind the walls and emerged into the bedroom and threw one or two small objects from a shelf on to the floor. Mr Irving immediately made attempts to catch or kill it, but again proved unsuccessful. This time the family felt they had definitely established the identity of their "voice". This fantastic animal has sung to them and described their visitors to them, and on one occasion when Mr Irving timed it, it conversed and sang to them from 11pm to five minutes past three the next morning. Many more remarkable incidents were detailed by Mr Irving such as the throwing of safety pins and small objects through little crevices in the walls and other confirmatory items that we may not publish. By the time he had finished his strange story, our representative was more than a little bewildered. Asked if the strange animal had ever touched any food in the house, or damaged anything, Mr Irving emphatically told us that they had suffered no harm or inconvenience from it.

Answering other questions, Mr Irving said that there had not been any interference with his poultry, nor were the family at all scared of it. He was convinced that the strange thing had been with them for a long period and had become acquainted with their daily habits and conversation. Mr Irving agreed that the story bordered on the super-natural and ridiculous, but was anxious to get authoritative confirmation of the strange incidents. He stressed the point that there was no purpose in his inventing such a weird yarn, as he could not turn the thing to financial advantage; in fact it had caused him loss owing to the damage caused by ill mannered rowdies, who, apparently disappointed at the result of their trail into this lonely outpost, had caused deliberate damage to property. He did not agree with the suggestion that the noises were from the spirit world and definitely disagreed with spiritualism. His opinion was that the creature was a hybrid animal with a human mind and vocal powers. A few visitors to the house had heard the strange sounds and to support this, Mr Irving submitted a voluntary statement signed by three young men that had heard and witnessed strange happenings at the house, and 15 people altogether to vouch to this unique experience. Mr Irving was quite aware that his weird tale placed him and his

family in a peculiar position, but he appealed to us to make it plain in our story that he was not a fool or a crank, and that the story we had heard was told in genuine sincerity. He naively pointed out as emphasised previously that even if he were presumed to be a little "strange" surely the whole family could not be similarly effected.

After a very interesting evening listening to this amazing narrative, our representative wended his way down the hill, along with his companion. The sightseers had all cleared as they slid and scrambled their way down the icy pathway, and they were rather disgusted to find that some of the disappointed sightseers had again been busy and their path was obstructed by heavy tree trunks that had been deliberately thrown across the roadway, fences torn down and flung in the pathway, and a big roller stone used by farmers had been rolled over the hedge into the centre of the path.

Mrs Irving, during the visit of our representative, confessed to being a little upset by the annoyance of rowdy sightseers, but denied that there was anything supernatural in the happenings. The daughter is an intelligent young girl who spoke convincingly of the events which she had heard and witnessed.

Dorlish Cashen is a stone-built house, but has been lined with boarding, and the result is to provide a cavity behind the boards, in which it would be possible for a creature of the type described to secrete itself. The peculiarity, apart from the uncanny character of the creature, is that it has not interfered with food in the house, although it is not uncommon for certain animals of this type to consume only foods as they themselves shall recover.

Many newspapers to-day are publishing illustrations under the title of "Believe it or Not!" We present Mr Irving's story after the fullest investigation of his credentials, a plain matter of fact relation of happenings which, on the surface, seem credible, but yet to anyone with an intimate knowledge of the narrator, suggest the simple truth. It is said that there is nothing new in heaven or on earth, this maybe, is the preliminary to the discovery of a most weird and uncanny species of nature such as has never previously been heard or seen.

Our story may leave the reader unconvinced; it maybe unconvincing, but it is backed by the assurance of as sane a man as one could ever meet, and at that we must leave it.