

The Two Brothers

By Jessie Adelaide Middleton

The famous story of the Corsican Brothers, on which was founded the play of that name, tells of the strong bond between two brothers, which caused the apparition of one of them to appear to the other at the time of death. I have personally come across several cases in which the spirit of a person at the point of death has appeared to another—generally one in strong sympathy with the soul about to pass over the borderland; and there are innumerable other cases on record which may be frequently read in the newspapers of our own time or in the history of past ages.

I will relate one case which came to my knowledge through a member of the family in which it happened, and which I know to be authentic. Other members of the same family have also authenticated it as being absolutely true.

Two brothers, named, let us say, Thomas and Charles, were very great friends, and had all their lives been chums and playmates.

They grew up, and Tom, with his wife, went to Ceylon, where he became a tea-planter. Sad to say, the brothers had not parted very good friends, owing to a certain coolness on account of Tom's marriage and other family reasons, and the correspondence between them was not very voluminous.

As time went on, news came in fitful scraps from Tom. He was not flourishing, and said he had not been well; the climate of Ceylon did not suit him, and he had gone to America. After this there was a long silence.

One night Charles, who lived in London, was awakened from a sound sleep by a loud cry of "Charlie! Charlie! Good-bye!" and by some one tugging at his sleeve. He woke up, and saw Thomas lying in the big double bed beside him. He put out his hand to touch him, but there was no one there.

Getting up hurriedly, he switched on the electric light, and as he did so the church clock outside struck three. Everything was quiet in the room. He could see nothing, and yet he was positive that the vision of his brother had not been a dream. Very much upset, he returned to bed, and, as the fright had banished sleep for the time being, he took up a book and began to read. After a while he dropped to sleep, and slept soundly until the morning.

When he went down to breakfast he told his horrible experience to the other members of the family who lived in the same house. Just as he was describing the whole thing to his father, the butler came into the room with a cable in his hand, and Charles tore it open with many misgivings. It was from his sister-in-law at Chicago, to say that Thomas had died suddenly at three o'clock that morning.

A letter followed later, giving further details. It stated that Thomas had died from pernicious anemia, after being ill for some time. He had wasted away, like all sufferers from this form of anaemia, and had literally shrunk to skin and bone, losing all strength.

Just before he died he rallied wonderfully, and sat up in bed, putting out both arms and calling out in a loud voice, "Charlie! Charlie! Good-bye!"

The letter is still preserved by the family, and the members of it who heard the story of the vision, before it arrived, from the lips of Charles himself are still alive, and some of them have read and authenticated this story.