

Among all the readers who delighted, year after year, in the late Marion Crawford's novels, comparatively few ever thought of him as combining with

**"Wandering
Ghosts"**

his other talents a gift for ghost stories. Yet he had this gift to a notable degree, and it was a happy thought of his publishers to bring together these widely scattered tales into a single volume under the title of *Wandering Ghosts*. There are seven of these tales, ranging all the way from the dank and shivery creepiness of "The Upper Berth," in which a drowned man persistently returns to the berth he formerly occupied and the brine and the ooze of the sea drip gruesomely down into the berth below—to "The Doll's Ghost," a tender little story of delicate artistry, telling how an old German doll-maker has sent his little daughter out at nightfall to deliver a doll to an important customer—a favourite doll from which he parts with great reluctance; and how there is an accident in which the child is badly hurt and taken to a hospital, while the old man sits at home growing more and more

anxious as the hours pass by and no word comes. And then suddenly a little shadowy shape comes into the room with the swish and rustle of tiny silken skirts and the old man rises and follows the little shape out into the streets and on and on till it leads him to the hospital. The little daughter, it seems, is not seriously hurt; but the doll, as the reader has foreseen, is crushed beyond all cure. But the story that surpasses all the others in sheer grimness is that entitled "The Screaming Skull." After years of quarrelling between man and wife, the husband finally kills the woman by pouring melted lead into her ear. Fearing that some investigation may be made, he removes the head from the coffin after the undertaker has gone and buries it in quicklime. Subsequently, he too is found dead mysteriously, with his throat torn as though by the jaws of some animal. Such at least is the account given by the dead man's friend who enters into possession of his former home and comes across in one of the closets a curiously white and well preserved skull. To attempt to reproduce the atmosphere of uncanny horror surrounding that skull, the weird things that it apparently does, the gruesome way in which it manages to transfer itself from place to place, would be quite futile. It is a tale such as Poe might have written; the manner is not that of Marion Crawford as most of us know him; but it makes us wish that the spirit had moved him to do more of the same kind.