

A Ghost in the Garret.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.
"This is the garret door. It's a relic of the past," said Miss Pettigrew. "They do not build such garrets now. The house is more than a hundred years old. It was my grandfather's grandfather who built it. By the way, continued the lady, turning on her guest in a sharp and bird-like manner peculiar to her—"by the way, this garret is haunted."

"How delightful! Do tell me about the ghost!" cried the young lady who had followed her into the great room which covered half the large house.

"The ghost, Miss Walker, is a soldier, an officer who was killed by a jealous husband in a duel, which took place here. He walks up and down, trailing his sword after him, and is said to be as pale as death; however, he hasn't been seen for ten years, though the servants are terribly afraid of him yet."

"They sleep," said Miss Pettigrew, "in that half of the garret which is partitioned off, and use the back stairs. They wouldn't come here for the world, so I make a sort of store closet of those shelves there, and feel perfectly safe about my sweetmeats."

"Here," said Miss Pettigrew, opening a little door—"here is still another pair of stairs. They lead to the orchard. It is said that that idiotic lady who caused the duel had built that her lover might come to the garret without discovery. It may be true. It's evident that they were never built in the original house. Nobody ever uses them now; and they are actually moulder away."

With some difficulty she moved a rusty bolt, and the young lady peeped down the rickety stairs.

"I can fancy the ghost coming up," she said, with a little, soft shriek, as she drew back. "How romantic!"

Descending the large, well-carpeted stairs that ran down the middle of the house, the two ladies entered the parlor, where an elderly gentleman sat waiting. The young lady then addressed him:

"So we've caught you," said Officer No. 12.

"And we'll find how ghosts like being locked up in jail," said Officer No. 14, as he pulled a wet handkerchief with two holes in it from the ghost's face, and revealed a very pale human countenance, adorned with a mustache which had most carefully waxed points, and, under other circumstances, might have been very fierce, indeed:

"And this young woman—your servant, most likely—shall we arrest her along with the burglar? Do you make a charge against her, Miss Pettigrew?"

At these words the female ghost, who had hitherto done nothing but wring its hands, tore its form the sheet in which it was enveloped and revealed the face and figure of Miss Elsie Walker, who instantly went down on her knees at the feet of Miss Pettigrew.

"Elsie, dear, go out and get into the carriage," said the old gentleman. "Miss Pettigrew and I will have a word about terms."

The young lady tripped lightly away.

"I have but one condition to make madam," said the old gentleman, the instant she was gone. "That you will take no single gentlemen boarders."

"I have one sir," said Miss Pettigrew. "Mr. Jeffers, seventy-five years old, and quite rheumatic."

"Ah! I don't mind him," responded Mr. Walker. "I—mean—I fact, I have brought my daughter to this quiet place to separate her from a person who is paying his addresses to her, and I am afraid he will follow us."

"Not into this house," said Miss Pettigrew. "My other rooms are filled; two families, mother, father, and children; a widow lady and her daughter; and Miss Budwick, principal of a school in—"

"The place will suit me perfectly," said Mr. Walker. "We'll come over to-morrow morning;" and with a bow, he trotted down the path and also took his place in the carriage.

About a fortnight from the day on which she had received her first boarder, Miss Pettigrew descended to the dining-room at an early hour, as was her wont, and in a very cheerful mood.

"This is very comfortable, indeed," thought she to herself, "very comfortable. Why shouldn't I turn a penny as well as my neighbors? Certainly my house is full of gentle people, and it's really pleasanter than to live alone." And Miss Pettigrew regarded her well-spread breakfast table with just pride and pleasure.

"Very comfortable, indeed—My goodness!" The latter portion of the sentence did not belong to the former. It was an ejaculation forced from her by the sudden appearance of her two servants, pale as death, hollow-eyed, and with compressed mouths, who having made each a courtesy, ground themselves against the wall and stood looking at nothing, in a way, as Miss Pettigrew afterward said, calculated to freeze the blood of an observer.

"My goodness!" repeated Miss Pettigrew. "Fanny Ann and Abby Jane, what's the matter? Is the house on fire?"

"No, Miss," replied Fanny Ann.

"Have you seen a ghost?" proceeded Miss Pettigrew.

"Yes, Miss," replied Abby Jane.

"And please, Miss, we can't sleep in that awful place no more," continued Fanny Ann. "If you can't put us somewhere else, we must go. We've seen him three times."

"Three nights hard-running," said Abby Jane.

"Why didn't you tell me before?" asked Miss Pettigrew.

"We thought you wouldn't believe us," said Fanny Ann.

"Well, I believe you've seen something terrifying," said Miss Pettigrew. "And I see what I can do. Don't mention this to anybody. You'd frighten some of my boarders away, perhaps. I'll talk it over after breakfast, and I'll wager I'll lay the ghost."

Fanny Ann and Abby Jane departed, promising silence, and the boarders ate their breakfast as usual. Afterward, behind closed doors, she heard this narrative:

At eleven o'clock every night for the past week the girls had heard a noise in the outer garret; but the last three having been lit by a brilliant moon, they had been able to see through a crack in the door, and espied—"as sure as she was a living woman," Abby Jane declared—a ghostly soldier in complete uniform, pacing up and down.

The first time the figure vanished rapidly. The second time it was longer in going; but on the third night they saw it enter by the disused stairway, and heard it speak. What it said was: "Darling, I would die for you! I would risk all to meet you!"

"We could look no longer, Miss," said Abby Jane. "We thought we should take spasms."

Miss Pettigrew rubbed her nose.

"This is unpleasant," she said.

"Certainly, the ghost was an officer; and my Aunt Lydia declared that she saw him. That was before her daughter, Grace, eloped with—Good gracious! I have never told you that she had been your mother 'in reality.'

Elsie did not discuss the question. She only kissed her and said:

"You've been my best friend, at all events, dear mamma."

Spelling his Logic.

The following I find in my scrap-book, put there years ago. It is a ludicrous instance of spelling out in meeting, which transpired in a small parish in the south of Scotland:

The good old preacher—an earnest, simple-minded man, who regarded his flock as a gathering of children of larger growth—was holding forth upon the story of Jonah; and in approaching the climax, he indulged in a bit of rhetorical flourish, to the following effect:

"And what kind of a fish was it, my brethren, that God has appointed me to execute His holy will? Was it a shark, my brethren? No, it could not be a shark, for God would never have given the tender flesh of his beloved prophet to be torn by the horrible teeth of that voracious monster. What fish was it, then, my brethren? Was it a salmon, think you? Ah, no. That were not possible. There's no salmon in the deepest pool of the Tweed could swallow a man. Besides, you ken, it's main natural for a man to swallow salmon more than for salmon to swallow man. That, then, was it? Was it a salmon, or a sea-horse? Or was it a sea-dog, or a great rhinoceros? Ah, no. Those are not Scripture beasts, ava. Ye're as far off as ever. Which of the monsters o' the great deep was it, can ye tell me, that swallowed me?"

Miss Pettigrew shivered until the door rattled. The next instant the two ghosts ran into each other's arms. Another instant, and the door was opened with a bang, and Officer No. 12 followed Officer No. 14 into the garret, each armed with a club.

"Ghost or not I'm quite safe now," said Miss Pettigrew, and opened the garret door with her kerosene lamp in her hand, which signified that she was charmed to receive such boarders.

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