# THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

[ILLUSTRATED]

BY

## OSCAR WILDE

**ILLUSTRATED BY**
**WALLACE GOLDSMITH**

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# THE CANTERVİLLE GHOST

## AN AMUSİNG CHRONİCLE OF THE TRİBULATİONS OF THE GHOST OF CANTERVİLLE CHASE

WHEN HİS ANCESTRAL HALLS BECAME THE HOME OF THE AMERİCAN MİNİSTER TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES

BY

O. WILDE

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# List of Illustrations

Miss Virginia E. Otis

"Had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony"

"Blood has been spilled on that spot"

"I really must insist on your oiling those chains"

"The twins ... at once discharged two pellets on him"

"Its head was bald and burnished"

"He met with a severe fall"

"A heavy jug of water fell right down on him"

"Making satirical remarks on the photographs"

"Suddenly there leaped out two figures"

"'Poor, poor ghost,' she murmured; 'have you no place where you can sleep?'"

"The ghost glided on more swiftly"

"He heard somebody galloping after him"

"Out on the landing stepped Virginia"

"Chained to it was a gaunt skeleton"

"By the side of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches"

"The moon came out from behind a cloud"

# I

When Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Canterville, "since my grandaunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library."

"My Lord," answered the Minister, "I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I have come

from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, "and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you."

