THE WORLD. WANT DIRECTORY PAGES 29 TO 34.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1894.

NELLIE BLY AND THE GHOST.

Armed with Two Pistols, She Passes a Night in That Haunted House at Woodport, N. J.

THE SPOOK NOT AT HOME.

Waiting for the Appearance of the Minton Spectre and That Diaphanous Hand.

ONE MILE FROM ANY HABITATION.

Strange Antics of a Frolicsome Door Laid Bare During the Vigil While the Wind Was Howling.

A HUNT IN THE GLOOMY ATTIC.

A Rather Courageous Venture by Miss Bly That Many Men Would Shrink from Undertaking.

Afraid of ghosts? Oh, no! Not I! Why, I was wildly eager to see one, and ran for living in a haunted house, I just hankered for a chance.

I pooh-poohed the idea of ghosts I laughed at those that believed in them and sneered at those that feared them. I did not hide my courageous disrespect for ghosts under a bushel. I couldn't. It was too large for a bushel, and as for what I would do in regard to ghost-searching, if opportunity offered, I had stated it all with a fearless frankness that charmed even myself.

Oh, I was brave, dreadfully brave; but that was before I spent a night alone in the haunted Minton house in New Jersey.

I remember that when the subject of spending a night alone in a ghost-ridden place was first broached to me I smiled. "I have never been afraid of anything," I said. And I thoroughly believed what I said at the time. And as for passing the night there, out in the bleak hills of New Jersey—why, I accepted the proposition joyously.

I would go out there. I would stay there alone from midnight to cock-crow—when ghosts walk—and I would demonstrate what utter nonsense all this talk of haunted houses was, and what sheer stupidity it was for women—yes, and men, too—to be scared out of their senses by a lot of rubbishy gossip over a "spook."

All that happened in a warm, highly lighted room, with a lot of people around.

Later, when I was by myself, I got to thinking very seriously over what I was about to do. I got frightened. But I hadn't the courage to say so. Anyway, it was too late to retreat, for I had made my boast and given my promise.

Now, just consider the proposition.

I was to go to Dover, N. J., and drive from there some sixteen miles, out into a wild, unsettled part of the country to a vacant house that has been much written about as haunted. This house—very old and dilapidated—stands alone, surrounded by hills and wild woods. The nearest habitation is a mile distant across fields that none but a spirit could cross, and heaven knows how far it is off by road.

Now, in this house I was to stay all night alone and watch for the spirit of a young and beautiful girl that, so legend says, was murdered there and buried in the cellar.

People who have lived in the house solemnly swear to having heard all kinds of strange and terrifying noises, and to having seen, in the darkness, a little waxen hand that beckoned them. None of them ever dared to follow.

THE GHOST'S HABITAT.

This hand would apparently open and close the cellar door, for often, when people were sitting in the kitchen with bright lights, the latch would lift and that door would open and shut, and evidently an invisible form would pass through.

This was more than human nerves could stand, and tenant after tenant, who had been attracted by the cheap rent, had to give up and move away.

Lately the house has been given up entirely to the ghost. No one would live in it, and the story of the uncanny visitations has spread over the entire county, making the place one of horror to everybody about there.

It would be impossible to convince those who have lived in the house, and still live in the county, that they had not seen and heard the ghost. One family declares that the spirit of the dead girl was seen in the barn milking a spook cow with one horn.

Now, it was to this desolate, wild place that I had promised to go and spend a night alone—to watch for the ghost, to investigate every strange noise I heard, and, if I saw anything, fondled or real, to speak to it.

Had I the courage to do it?

I was sincere at first, when I said I had. But the more I thought about the matter the more I dwelt on my lonely, unprotected position, and the more I realized

"I ROSE TO MY FEET AND, TAKING A REVOLVER IN MY HAND, WALKED SIDEWAYS AND CAUTIOUSLY TO THE WINDOW."

afraid of meeting tramps, or counterfeiters, or moonshiners.

Not one in a thousand, and I knew it.

I pictured the possibilities in all horrible aspects. I could see myself sitting in that empty house, knowing that screams would have to be louder than a fog-horn to reach the nearest neighbor, and then suddenly finding myself surrounded by a half dozen burly men with shaggy beards and rough clothes.

Where would be my courage then? What could I say or do to help myself? Nothing!

Was it worth it—to prove that there were no ghosts?

Then, of course, there was a chance that I would not encounter living beings and would have nothing to do but wait for the ghost.

I was not afraid of ghosts, at least I thought so. I did not believe in them, I say again, but I did fear my imagination, my nerves. I feared myself.

Supposing in the dead of the night I heard cries of some unearthly sort, would they not, in spite of my disbelief, frighten me?

Suppose I should look into the dark hall and see something white and transparent moving towards me?

I could speak to it; I could shoot. But supposing nothing stopped it and it came on and on, nearer and nearer, in spite of my disbelief. Would not my nerves give way and would I not go mad with terror?

My very fancies of what might happen made me tremble like an ague patient. I went back to the office to hedge.

I wasn't very honest about it. I was ashamed to confess my fears, but oh! I ran long for sympathy or a change of opinion.

I was told frankly if I feared to do the thing merely to refuse.

But naturally I protested that I wasn't afraid—of course not.

I suggested tramps. I asked if it wouldn't be advisable to take a revolver along. I was told that there would be no harm in that if I knew how to use one.

HER COURAGE OOZES.

They were all there who heard my first boast that I wasn't afraid. Each one of them looked as if they wanted to say "Methinks the lady doth protest too much." Once again I said with all the courage I could muster: "I will go." There was nothing else to do.

So I went home and waited for a message from the reporter who had been sent in advance to get the key to the haunted house and have a fire built in it.

The message came. I read it as I would read a death sentence.

"Leave New York at 7.30 to-morrow—Wednesday—evening, by either Christopher or Barclay street ferry. Better bring plenty of wraps and luncheon. Telegraph me to Dover before you start. Will meet you at train."

I sorrowfully packed a bag. I put in it some luncheon I never expected to eat, two revolvers, a knife, dark lantern to show me ghosts, a copy of Lytton's "A Strange Story," to freeze my blood if I didn't scare, and a copy of Life's Monthly Calendar to cheer me up if I did. I took a travelling rug and a flannel robe, and last but not least, Paddy.

"Are you cold, my friend?" I asked, "and homeless?" Well then, come in. You can get warm and may be something to eat, and when it pleases you to go, you are free."

He sat up and held out his paw to thank me; and so Paddy became No. 5 of my dog family.

When I decided to go ghost-hunting I thought I would take one of my dogs, for it is claimed by ghost experts that dogs can see ghosts when mortals cannot, and that the hair on a dog's back will indicate the presence of a spirit as quickly as a thermometer will indicate a change in the temperature. I decided to take Paddy.

We reached Dover all too soon.

On the front seat was the driver, Ben, who has been eye-witness to the strange things that happen in the haunted house. He was one of the men who formed the party with The World reporter that remained in the house one night a week or so ago, and he will never recover from the horror of that experience.

Mr. M., who sat beside Ben, was also one of that party organized by the reporter, who was now my guide.

UTTER DESOLATION.

The moment I was seated we started [illegible] further we went the more [illegible] and more [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]