

The Ghost in the Argyle Rooms

By Jessie Adelaide Middleton

The old Argyle Rooms, at the north corner of little Argyle Street, Regent Street, were once a famous place of entertainment, where concerts, balls, masquerades and so on were given, much patronized by Society. In 1818 they were rebuilt by Nash, with a sumptuous suite of rooms, and in 1821 they were famed for high-class concerts.

In March of that year a ghost was seen by a young lady, during a concert at the rooms, and the fact is recorded by Mr. Thomas Raikes, who tells the story—for the truth of which he vouches—in his well-known *Journal*.

“Miss M—, a young Society girl, went to a concert, with a party of friends, at the Argyle Rooms. During the entertainment she appeared to be feeling very ill, but struggled bravely against her feelings. At last, however, she became so unwell that her carriage was sent for and she was conducted home by her friends.

“When questioned, she was most unwilling to say what ailed her, but ultimately, she confessed that, immediately on entering the concert room, she had been terrified by a most horrible sight. While she was listening to the music, she happened to look down at the floor, and there, at her feet, a naked corpse was lying. The features were partly covered with a cloth mantle, but enough was visible to convince her that the body was that of a friend, Sir J— Y—. No wonder she was overcome by the sight.

“Of course, every effort was made by her friends to convince her that she had been mistaken, and she was told that she must, on no account, give way to the folly of allowing such delusions to prey upon her spirits.

“She promised to do as they advised, and, after a while, retired to bed. Next day, however, the family received the news of the death of Sir J— Y—, who had been drowned, through his boat capsizing in Southampton Water.

“The body was afterwards found *entangled in a boat-cloak!*

“Here,” adds Mr. Raikes, who heard the story from a member of the family, “is an authentic case of second sight and of very recent date.”