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THE ACTON

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Customers can always rely on receiving the best quality of

BREAD, BUNS, BISCUITS

CAKES, CONFECTIONERY

&c., &c.

No credit given except to prompt paying monthly customers.

R. T. GALLOWAY.

Acton, Jan. 7, 1878.

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Splendid Nick-nacks, for old and young, at

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The best place to get your Xmas Presents. A splendid assortment of XMAS CARDS, BOOKMARKS &c

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Buy your Harness at the Ontario Saddlery, where you get the worth of your money.

A splendid lot of NEW COLLARS on hand.

☞ All parties intending to purchase Harness should do so at once before the rush commences in order to secure a good set.

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UNDERTAKING.

The undersigned begs leave to inform the people of Acton and surrounding neighborhood that he has procured a magnificent HEARSE. And is prepared to attend and conduct Funerals on the shortest notice and most moderate terms.

Caskets, Coffins, Burial Robes,

And all kinds of Funeral Furnishings kept in stock, and supplied on the shortest notice.

Hat Bands and Gloves supplied when required.

JOHN SPEIGHT.

Acton, Feb. 19, 1877.

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JOB PRINTING of all kinds neatly and promptly executed at the FREE PRESS OFFICE, Next the Post Office Mill Street.

MY BROTHER.

Who was it picked up all the chips,
And strewed the floor with strings and whips,
And in the washtub sailed his ships?
My Brother.

Who was it ate the currant jell,
And threw the kitten in the well,
And made me promise not to tell?
My Brother.

Who was it taught me how to skate,
And sat me on the ice to wait,
While he went home with Cousin Kate?
My Brother.

Who was it, when he older grew,
To tops and marbles bade adieu,
And tried, but could not learn, to chew?
My Brother.

Who does a tiny moustache wear,
And oils and colors it with care,
And in the middle parts his hair?
My Brother.

Who is it tumbles up my curls,
And buys me bracelets, rings and pearls,
And flirts with all the pretty girls?
My Brother.

And talks to me about his clothes,
And all my little secrets knows,
And teases me about my beaux?
My Brother.

Who is it that I love the best,
Of all the boys in east or west,
Although he is a perfect pest?
My Brother.

FOR LIFE OR DEATH.

Concluded from last week.

"I do not want your blood on my hands, and although our lives may be short for this world, you'll have no more rum to make you die like cowards. Behave like men, obey orders, and everything will be done to escape with our lives. But mark me, men; the first one of ye that attempts to break into the spirit room I'll brain with this axe; and you know I mean what I say."

The two parties stood glaring at each other, when the captain appeared on deck, alarmed by the fierce tones of the mate's voice. He was descending the ladder leading to the main deck, when the *Sunderland* gave a sudden lurch; the old man lost his foothold, grasped at the empty air, and fell heavily, his head coming in contact with an eye-bolt.

Ingram and Jones, raised him tenderly in their arms, and bore him to the cabin; but life had fled; the soul of the old sailor had found a haven of rest with God, that no storm or gale could disturd.

Much valuable time had been wasted, the movements of the ship were loggy, and it was evident that the *Sunderland* would soon sink.

She had two boats, which were in good condition, and a shout of joy burst from the lips of the men as they saw them safely launched alongside.

By Ingram's direction, Mr. Jones took charge of one boat, with his portion of the ship's company, while he directed the movements of the other. Miss Le Moyne, the owner's daughter, accompanied him, and with a wave of his hand the brave seaman directed the boat's crews to shove off.

Rising on the crest of a huge sea, the boats were rapidly swept to leeward, and the waterlogged ship, covered with spray, and plunging bows under, was soon lost to view.

As near as possible the two boats remained in company, and with anxious eyes, the seamen gazed about the horizon as the sun slowly disappeared from sight.

Ingram's heart ached as he gazed upon the slight form of the lady passenger, who had been reared in the lap of luxury, and a shade of sorrow darkened his countenance as he thought of the long days and nights that must intervene before land could be sighted.

Enveloped in a long coat, to shield her from the blinding spray, she crouched by his side, pale and silent. The boats rode the seas with the buoyancy of ducks, shipping but little water as they floated on.

But a limited supply of provisions and water had been laid in, for fear of overloading the boats, and all hands were at once placed upon short allowance. Mr. Ingram had taken the precautions to stow the supplies in the stern sheets, where he could keep an eye upon them; and for fear the pangs of hunger and thirst might assail the young lady, the brave fellow managed to reserve a portion of his share, unknown to anyone.

The night passed slowly by, and with the first gray streaks of dawn the men were gazing eagerly about them, and searching the horizon for some signs of a sail. Soon it became apparent to them that during the night they had parted company with the other boat, which was nowhere to be seen.

The sun rose in unclouded splendor, the waters but slowly agitated from the late agle, shone and sparkled in the brilliant rays, reflecting back all the colors of the rainbow, as some mimic spray flew over the low gunwale of the boat.

The small portion of bread, the mere thimbleful of water, were served out with an impartial hand by the mate, and, weary with watching, the men sought to forget their troubles by indulging in slumber.

Three days and nights wore steadily by, bringing with them no relief from the dangers that again enveloped the shipwrecked crew. No sail appeared on the horizon to cheer their aching eyes, no welcome appearance of land to revive their courage.

At noon of the third day Mr. Ingram served out the last morsel of bread and the remaining supply of water, which was eagerly seized upon by the suffering and half famished seamen.

The mate, with a courage and firmness almost superhuman, smothered the fearful pangs gnawing at his vitals, and resolutely put away a portion with the amount already saved.

Miss Le Moyne suffered less than the rest of the boat's crew, owing probably to the fact of her remaining perfectly still. Her color had fled, her cheeks were wan and her eyes sunken, but her little lithe frame contained a considerable amount of vitality.

The mate watched over her with jealous care, and during the night found an opportunity to moisten her lips with water. She at first refused to accept the precious liquid, but the mate insisted, and finally prevailed upon her to eat a bit of cracker.

On the fourth morning the sun rose upon a cloudless sky. Not a breath of air ruffled the glassy surface of the bay, and the bright blue waters sparkled and shone before the tantalizing eyes of the seamen. They could no longer forget their misery in sleep. Their tongues were swollen and parched, they could not swallow, and if they closed their eyes, they were haunted by visions of fountains, and clear, running streams of pure crystal water.

The day wore on, the sun beat down upon them with remorseless fury, increasing their agony and suffering. One poor fellow, his brain tortured by fantastic delusion, jumped overboard in a frenzy, and slowly sank to the depths below.

In the sunken eyes of the men a wolfish glare was perceptible as they gazed at one another. Everything that could be chewed had been disposed of, even to the leather composing their boots.

The mate, with a grasp of iron, clutched the tiller, but the boat was drifting at will. Grim and silent he sat, like a guardian angel watching o'er the welfare of Blanche Le Moyne.

"How is this to end?" muttered one of the men. "My brain is on fire—a raging furnace is within me. Some must suffer that others may live. Shipmates shall we draw lots."

"Not yet, not yet," replied one; "there is one here who must soon die, who is weaker than us, and it will be no sin to anticipate death for a few hours. Besides, we have exhausted our strength for the common good. *She* has done nothing, her life is useless, she is a dead weight upon our hands. Let the women die first, I say."

"Let the woman die!" echoed the crew, as they started simultaneously to their feet, at the same time drawing their sheath-knives.

The mate, exhausted by long watching, anxiety, and weak from hunger, had sunk into an uneasy doze, from which he was aroused by the rocking of the boat, as the men struggled to their feet.

Looking up, he found himself confronted by the half-frantic sailors. Their eyes glowed with the light of insanity, their tongues protruded from their shrunken lips, which were drawn tightly over their gleaming teeth. Each sheath-knife was raised aloft with a threatening air, but Ingram shrank not, although taken by surprise.

"What would you do men? In God's name, what do you mean?" gasped the mate.

"The woman is dying, and we would drink her blood," was the reply.

"Drink her blood, you cowardly dogs! Would you attack a defenseless woman? Stand back, or I'll brain the first one of you that offers to advance a step!" and unshipping the heavy oaken tiller, he stood on the defensive.

The men hesitated, wavered, and fell back. A low, hollow murmur was heard for a moment, then one of the sailors turned toward the mate.

"You refuse to allow the woman to be sacrificed. So be it; but death stares us in the face; we must do something; or all will perish. We have resolved to draw lots for life or death, and the woman must take her chance with the rest."

"Are ye cannibals, men, that ye would prey one upon another?"

"No; but we are desperate—we are dying!"

There were nine persons in the boat, and eight white buttons and *one black* were deposited under a hat and thoroughly mixed. Each man was to draw, and whoever became the possessor of the black button was to be the victim for the remainder to prey upon.

"I'll take a chance with you, men; but understand, I'll have nothing to do with the feast if I run free;" and the mate, for the hundredth time, cast his eyes around the horizon with the same old result.

One by one the men drew forth the buttons, until but two were left, one of which was the fatal black ballot. The chances of life and death lay between Blanche Le Moyne and her protector.

With a firm hand, the mate drew forth a button—it was white.

"That is for you, Miss Le Moyne; and men, I have drawn the black button!"

The crew gazed at each other for a moment, uncertain how to proceed. They did not care to turn their knives upon a man whom they admired in spite of themselves.

"Listen to me, men! My life is forfeited, if you require it, and my life-blood shall flow for the good of all; but life is sweet, and all I ask is a chance for my life. It is nearly sundown; if nothing turns the scales in our favor by sunrise, you can do with me as you will."

The reprieve was granted, and once more a dead silence reigned over the boat. Miss Le Moyne had sunk into a species of swoon, and was scarcely conscious.

The sun sat in a low bank of clouds, upon which the mate had fastened his eyes with a deep longing gaze. His dark orbs lit up with a wistful light as the cloud increased, spreading rapidly over the heavens. Darker and darker grew the night; the rumble of thunder struck upon the mate's ear with a sweet cadence, and soon the patter of rain aroused the seamen.

Down rushed the rain, and, with terrible eagerness, the sailors drank in copious draughts of the precious liquid. They were refreshed; a large portion of their pains and agony was forgotten, and once more they were themselves.

All through the night the rain fell, and with it came a moderate breeze. The boat drifted before it, rising and falling gently on the ocean swell; but everything was unheeded; the men slept, and even Blanche and the mate were buried in slumber. They were aroused by the dancing rays of the sun streaming into their eyes, and a loud, cheery hail.

There, but a short distance to windward, was a large passenger steamer, lowering a boat. The rail was lined with passengers, gazing down upon the poor unfortunates.

They were saved; the mate's life was truly reprieved, and tears stood in his dark eyes as they lifted him over the gunway.

The steamer reached Liverpool, when the safety of the second mate's boat was ascertained.

Blanche reached her Southern home in safety, when she related the story of her sufferings to the wondering and sympathizing ears of her parents and friends. The old gentleman wiped the tears from his eyes as he listened to his only daughter's account of Ingram's bravery, to whom she owed her life.

Soon after, the mate received a letter in his humble home by the seashore, containing a draft for ten thousand dollars, and offering a master's interest in the finest ship owned by Le Moyne & Co., of New Orleans.

Too Much Trust.

It is only a Sunday or two ago, at a country church in———Valley, not a hundred miles from here that it happened. The congregation that morning was unusually large. Deacon Spiffins and his four daughters were in the front pew, and old Mrs. Mumblechin, who has just got back from a trip to Europe, was there, too; singing away, and sighing during the prayers as if her heart would break. The minister chose "Faith" as the subject of his discourse, and in the course of his remarks dwelt with fervour upon the beauty and power of that trait, as exemplified in the faithful flock gathered before him. "I would, my dear brethren," he said, "that all congregations everywhere could take example of that sweet spirit of trust which pervades so universally among us."

At this remark the village grocer, with whom nearly every family in church had an account that couldn't be collected, rose up, evidently in high dudgeon, seized his hat, and indignantly left the sanctuary.

How Her Mind Began to Wander.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Murphy lived on a farm. They were shrewd and thrifty, and had the reputation of being "close." Finally, Mrs. Murphy sickened, and was about to die. Finding herself nearing the end, she expressed a desire to put things in order before she expired, and Tom prepared to listen.

"Tom," said Mrs. Murphy, "there's Mrs. Smith up at the cross-roads, she owes me $1.75 for butter; see ye get it."

"Then, there's Mrs. Jones down at the creek. She owes me $1.50 for chickens."

"Ah, look at that, now, for a moind!" said Tom, admiringly. "She forgets nothing."

"And Mrs. Brown in the village," continued Mrs. Murphy. "She owes me $2.50 for milk."

"D'ye hear that? Sinsible to the last, sinsible to the last!" said Tom.

"Go on, my dear."

"And—and—"

"Yis."

"And Mrs. Roberts, at the grocery. I owe her—"

"Ah, poor dear! poor dear!" broke in Tom hastily. "How her moind does be wandering! Shure we've allowed her to talk too much entirely, so we have."

Patrick's Poor Painting.

"Ha!" cried the court as Patrick Murphy's head showed itself outside the corridor door.

"That's me—I'm here!" answered Patrick.

"Mr. Murphy, there's a complaint here against you."

"Isn't it against me brother John?"

"No, sir; it reads Patrick Murphy, with a big P on the Patrick. You are the man, and now what do you say to the charge of drunkenness?"

"I say that drukenness is a bad thing, sir."

"So it is, and you may find it out. What is your plea?"

"The same a lawyer would answer, sir."

"You plead not guilty, and now we'll have the proofs pro and con. Have you any witnesses?"

"Yes, sir. I wish to have myself sworn."

"You can make your statement if you desire. Begin at the beginning and tell a straight story."

"Well, sir," began Patrick as he drew in a deep breath. "I was born in 1832 on a side hill about fourteen miles from—"

"What has that to do with how you got drunk in 1878?" interrupted the court.

"It's the beginning, your Honor."

"Well, begin with yesterday morning, then — with your first glass."

"My first glass was a cup of coffee, sir."

"And your second?"

"Was a glass of camphor to ease my aching tooth."

"Patrick, I can't waste time over your case. Let me tell you a little story with a paint brush in it."

"Don't give me any dime novel yarns, Judge."

"One fine day in the month of January, 1878," began the court, "a gentleman named Patrick Murphy thought to add to the elegance of his home by painting the parlor a sky-blue, the kitchen a sky-red, and the two bed-rooms pea-green shaded down with yellow and picked in with lead color and putty. He bought a quart of kerosene oil, some dry paints, borrowed a white-wash brush, and after he had put in half a day's work he hardly knew his own house, nor his wife, nor his babies, nor his cat, nor his poor old mother. There was paint till they couldn't rest. Some had one blue eye and one red one; others wore ultramarine noses and chromo-yellow eye-brows, and the babies' hair exhibited seven different and beautiful shades of color. Patrick felt like an old master, his wife felt like the old boy, and the house smelled like a Chinese pigpen. Well——"

"And do you blame me for getting drunk?" called out the prisoner.

"Patrick, the smell of that paint drove the family out of the house, killed the cat, upset the cook stove and stopped the clock. It has got to be scraped off."

"And if you send me up, my poor wife'll have to do it?"

"The same, Patrick. That's the reason you can go. Go home and scrape acquaintance with doors and base-boards, and the next time you want to paint don't use kerosene."

"What then?"

"Sweet oil, of course."

"I'll do it, sir—good by."

Why is Queen Victoria's health like an intemperate man? Because it is o'ten drunk.

A Success and a Failure.

A capital story is told of the famous Scotch preacher, Dr. Guthrie, which shows that the same expedient may sometimes carry a popular audience by storm, and at other times excite shouts of derisive laughter. Dr. Guthrie was once replying to Dr. Ritchie, an eloquent speaker, who in a public meeting had attacked the ministers of the Established Church, as idle and luxurious men, clothing themselves in soft raiment, and faring sumptuously every day.

Guthrie saw his opportunity, and made the most of it. He had walked into town in heavy boots, over a muddy road, and boots and trousers were spattered with mud. Advancing to the front of the platform, he held up one foot, and said with a comical tone,—

"Dr. Ritchie calls us a set of dandies. Is that the foot of a dandy?" The effect was irresistable.

The audience were in convulsions of laughter, and he had gained them before beginning his speech. Dr. Ritchie marked the effect, and attempted a similar stroke on another occasion. His party had been charged with showing "the cloven foot." Extending a foot, dressed in the height of the fashion, with silk stocking and dress shoe, he asked, triumphantly, "Do you call that a cloven foot?"

A shrewd mechanic in the gallery called out, "Tak' aff the shoe, sir, and we'll see." The shout of laughter that followed spoiled his speech.

Bad on the Judge.

An individual, possessing unmistakable evidence of African extraction, was arraigned for larcency. The Judge, as of right, was dignified, but said, with severe presence, 'are you guilty or not!'

'Sar?'

'Did you steal these clothes?' he repeated.

'Golly, boss, 'clare never done it.'

'This man says you did.'

'He ain't nothin' but white trash.'

'And what are you?'

'Me! Why don't you know me? I rid with you in the percession. I helped to lead you home when you got tired that night. Don't yer 'member me now?'

There was the 'suddenest' *nol pros.* in that darkey's case that judicial annals afford an example of. So much for the advantages of good society.

A Match Broken Off by an Accident.

The Jersey City *Journal* says a comical affair occurred in Newark, Thursday night, which promises to have a serious result. Mr. Heisfelder, who is, or was, engaged to Miss Schellbroener, both Germans, was escorting the young lady who was so act as a bridesmaid on the occasion, to a wedding. They were late, and took a short cut to the church along the canal towpath.

On the way they had a lovers' quarrel, and the damsel says Heisfelder insulted her. She sheered over from his side, but sheered too far, and tumbled head-over-heels into the canal. The young man went immediately after her, and with much difficulty hauled her one hundred and eight-five pounds of avoirdupois and her wet bridesmaid's clothes to dry land. But her wrath was not cooled, though her body was, and she went home alone, and now says that she will not marry Emil at all. This may be entitled a comedy of errors on the tow path.

Shaky business—Playing with dice.

A happy set of men—Soldiers in transport.

When is an egg not oval? When you turn it round.

Strange behavior—A vessel "hugging" the coast.

Why is every honeymoon like the other moon? Because it has a man in it.

Nothing is so fatal to the romance of a kiss as to have your girl sneeze at the very climax of osculation.

"If it wasn't for hope the heart would break," the old lady said when she buried her seventh husband.

A newspaper, detailing a demonstration, stated that, "The procession was very fine, being nearly two miles long, as was also the prayer of the Rev. Mr. Parry."

When David called upon the "trees of the field to clap their hands," he must have had reference to palm trees.

A hotel keeper described a mosquito as "a customer who tries to get inside the bar and take a nip without paying for it."

Philadelphia dentist's sign.—"You never miss the toothache till the root comes out."

A Boston murderer, in consequence of his poor health, wants his execution delayed.

Why is the cabbage the most prosperous of vegetables? It always gets a head in the world.

"Drop the line if you wish to see me," as the fish said to the angler.

Gen. Sherman gets $18,000 a year, besides the blessed privilege of kissing the girls. It is very sweet to be a warrior.

A writer in the *British Quarterly* says there are at present only 17,000 Quakers in England and Wales, while in 1700 they numbered 60,000.

The Philadelphia baby show broke up in a hand-to-hand fight by the mothers over the prizes. The police cleared the hall of exhibits and spectators.

The United States wheat crop of this year exceeds that of any previous year by about 50,000,000 bushels. The corn, oats, and potato crops are also unusually large.

A very ignorant person being complimented on his good sense in presence of a clever lady—"I don't wonder," said she, "at his possessing a large stock of good sense—he never spends any."

There is a proverb if you look any wild animal steadily in the eye it will make it quail. Sportsmen in search of birds of that kind should cut this out and paste it in their hats.

He was carving at dinner, and thought he must talk to the æsthetical looking angel on his right, "How do you like Beethoven?" said he at a venture. "Well cooked," said she, interested in the work in hand.

The famous Greek scholar, Porson, wrote the following epitaph on a Fellow of his own College:

Here lies a Doctor of Divinity,
Who was a Fellow, too, of Trinity.
He knew as mich about Divinity
As other Fellows do of Trinity.

Darwin says that animals have no religious sense; but he probably never observed the calm, reflective manner in which a chicken will stand on one leg and look up to heaven after squeezing through a hole in the fence into a strawberry bed next door.

"The sentence of the Court is," said Judge Porter, a popular Irish magistrate, to a notorious drunkard, "that you be confined in jail for the longest period the law allows; and I hope you will spend the time in cursing whiskey." "I will, sir, and Porter, too."

Judge (to prisoner, who has just escaped conviction by the skin of his teeth)—"You may go, sir. But though justice absolves you, morality condemns you." Prisoner—"Thank you. I always had a better opinion of justice than of morality."

"What is your chief consolation in life?" asked a pastor of a young lady in his Bible class. The young lady blushed and hesitated, but, on the question being repeated, the ingenious maiden said: "I don't like to tell you his name, but I have no objection to tell you where he lives."

A Quaker having married for his wife a member of the Church of England, was asked, after the ceremony, by the clergyman, for his fee, which he said was a crown. The Quaker, astonished at the demand, said if he could be shown any text in the Scripture which proved the fee was a crown, he would give it, upon which the clergyman turned to the twelfth chapter of Proverbs, verse fourth, where it said, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." "Thou art right," replied the Quaker, "in the assertion; Solomon was a wise man. Here is thy money, which thou hast well and truly earned."

LONDON SHORT-HAND WRITERS.—The Gurney family have in their service about a dozen short-hand reporters, and employ beginners or assistants to copy their short-hand notes into long-hand. They are engaged during the sessions of Parliament in taking down notes of testimony and pleas before the various parliamentary committees. The Gurneys regularly receive from the Government pay in proportion to the work done, their gross receipts being from $500,000 to $700,000 per annum. Of this, from $50,000 to $100,000 is net profit. If to this we add the cost of reporting the debates, borne by the London newspapers, and of reporting cases in the Courts of Law, &c., we can hardly estimate the total annual earnings of short-hand writers in London at less than $3,000,000.