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THE ACTON

FREE PRESS

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THE ROYAL EXCHANGE HOTEL, ACTON. This well-known house has recently undergone a thorough renovating and repairing, is now furnished with new and modern furniture of the best description, and is prepared to provide first-class accommodation to the public. The present proprietor has received a license, and he will keep the bar well supplied with the very best of liquors and cigars. The stabling is large and well-fitted up; also ample shed-room. The patronage of the public is respectfully solicited. JOHN MANEY. Acton, June 26, 1877.

ACTON BAKERY.

CARD OF THANKS

At this season I take much pleasure in thanking my numerous customers for the liberal patronage they have bestowed on me during the past year, and would respectfully solicit a continuance of the same.

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.

West End Bookstore. GUELPH, FOR BOOKS & STATIONERY

Seaside Libraries, Lakeside Libraries, Fireside Libraries, Boy's Libraries, N. Y. Libraries, And all the Latest Novels. Silent and True, Mildred. A Jewel of a Girl, Young Musgrave, &c.

Orders sent by Mail promptly attended to.

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THE ONTARIO SADDLERY, ACTON.

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

A splendid lot of NEW COLLARS on hand.

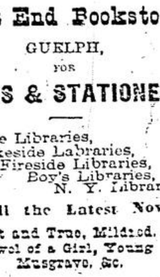
All parties intending to purchase Harness should do so at once before the rush commences in order to secure a good set.

R. CREECH. Acton, Jan. 7, 1878.

GEORGE LEVENS, Barber and Hairdresser, adjoining Second Bros.' Store, Mill Street, Acton. Hair switches and combings prepared to order.

OYSTERS received daily by express.

UNDERTAKING.



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 conduct funerals on the shortest notice and most moderate terms.

Coffins, Coffin, 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. 10, 1877.

I can buy first-class PIANOS and ORGANS cheaper of DANIEL F. BEATTY, Washington, New Jersey, than any other manufacturer in the United States. Why? Because he sells only for cash, takes no risks and has no book accounts. Every instrument is fully warranted for six years as strictly first class, and are sent on from 5 to 15 days' test trial, money refunded and freight paid both ways by him if they are unsatisfactory. Send for illustrated Annversary (Catalogue Edition) and read testimonials from his patrons, some of whom you may know. Address DANIEL F. BEATTY, Washington, New Jersey.

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

AT THE LAST.

THREE little words within my brain
Beat back and forth their one refrain,
Three little words, whose dull distress
Means everything and nothingness.
Unbidden move my lips instead
Of other utterance: She is dead.

Here, lingering, we talked of late
Beside the hedge-grown garden gate;
Till, smiling, ere the twilight fell
She bade me take a last farewell.
These were the final words she said—
But yesterday—and she is dead!

I see the very green she wore,
The color I had praised before;
The swaying length, where she would pass,
Made a light rustle in the grass:
There in the porch she turned her head
For one last smile—and she is dead!

Could I have known what was to come,
Those hours had not been blind and dumb!
I would have followed close with Death,
Have striven for every glance and breath!
But now—the final word is said,
The last look taken—she is dead.

We were not lovers—such as they
Who pledge a faith to last for aye;
Yet seems the Universe to me
A riddle now without a key:
What means the sunshine overhead,
The bloom below—now she is dead?

So new my grief, its sudden haze
Bewilders my accustomed ways;
And yet so old, it seems my heart
Was never from its pain apart:—
What was and is and shall be, wed
With that one sentence—She is dead.

OUT OF THE TOMB.

A Legend of Killarney.

By C. Porter Sumner.

CHAPTER I.

"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes deeds ill done! Hadst not thou been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Quoted and signed, to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind."
—*King John*: SHAKESPEARE.

The lake country of Ireland has so long been celebrated for its loveliness; so many poets and authors have exhausted every gradation of our language, from rhetoric to bombast, in its praise, that it is unnecessary to employ many words, at the present time, in describing the location of our story. When we say that the actors therein lived and moved and had their being on the shores of Killarney, we have said enough to prove that they existed in a scene the nearest approach to Eden that modern civilization has left upon the earth.

Not because of the virtue and innocence of its inhabitants? No; wherever man has delved the serpent has also made its den. Sin has crept into the folds of the fairest flowers whenever man has tended them; the most lovely earthly paradise has been transformed into a pandemonium very soon after man's footsteps imprinted its smiling surface. Evil is the inheritance of the children of Adam, and after evil cometh death!

On an eminence, not far from the northern extremity of the lake, stands a noble mansion, half castle, half villa, surrounded by a splendid park, and almost hidden by the lofty tree which embower it. This house, and the ground around it, were known, in the olden times as "Hearnscliff" or "Heronscliff," taking the name from a stupendous precipice which formed the eastern boundary of the park and overhung the lake. It was the seat of Sir Frederick St. George, the representative of a noble line, older than the Conquest, and the possessor of wealth which many a monarch envied.

Young, noble, hearty, rich, what more could the heart of man deserve; what should he wish for that he had not got, or could not obtain? And yet on the day our story opens Frederick St. George sat in the ancient hall of his ancestors, the most miserable man in the barony that called him lord! Only two days before he had lost a treasure which he would have given the last penny of his enormous wealth to have saved; a priceless jewel which he would have sacrificed his family name and title, almost his honor, still to call his own!

In the silence and semi darkness of the grand old library he sat, with his noble head bowed between his palms, the scalding tears forcing themselves betwixt his tremulous fingers, and his whole frame shaken by the deep sobs which, from time to time, his agony wrested from him. A picture of sorrow that was fearful in its intensity!

At last the door was silently opened and a man entered as noiselessly, to whom, for a moment, we must direct our attention. Imagine a wolf transformed into a human being, yet still retaining the greater part of the nature and many of the outward attributes of the noxious beast, and you will have a faint idea of William Brant, the confidential valet of Sir Frederick St. George. Sly and plausible, with a smooth smile and manner that made him a general favorite, yet cruel, cunning, and remorseless—and, withal, an arrant coward—he was a man that few found out at all, and none did so, even, until he had them completely in his power.

With his usual stealthy tread and frowning manner this man advanced and stood beside his master.

"Sir Frederick," said he, in the softest of voices and with the most touching of melancholy smiles, "mademoiselle informs me that your directions have been complied with, and that all is ready."

St. George raised his head with a nervous start at the first sound of the other's voice—for he had not heard him until he spoke—and listened to what he had to say without appearing to comprehend it. He roused himself, however, when the man had finished, and silently motioned him to lead the way from the room. Still shaken by his grief, and paler than before, now that he was summoned to exertion, the knight followed slowly, and, passing through the long and sombre halls, stood at last near the door of a large chamber in the west wing. The door was opened by the valet, and they entered. Let us enter, also, and see if we can discover there what the treasure was that Sir George had lost!

A large and lofty chamber hung with solemn black, the dim shadow scarcely penetrated by the flickering light of a dozen tall wax-candles, that were ranged in a curious manner about a square mound of black velvet in the centre of the floor. There was no living occupant of the room save the two who now entered, but when they approached the singular mound, and the valet removed from it a fold of the velvet, it was seen that Death was a dweller there, and had reaped a terrible harvest.

In a rosewood coffin, under the black pall, rested the body of a lovely woman, who had only lived some twenty summers in this weary world, and who was now, apparently, sleeping calmly after a tedious journey. The lid of the shell was not yet placed upon it, and the outlines of the delicate form, swathed in their silken shroud, could be distinctly traced. The face was very lovely—calm and cold 'tis true, but still molded with an angel's smile, as if the dead had greeted her immortal sisters at the moment of leaving her mortal friends. This was the treasure that the knight had lost; his bride of one happy summer; a jewel he could not regain, though the wealth of the Indies had been his to pour at the feet of the conqueror!

Grief is sacred, especially such grief as this, and we will not dwell upon it. But there are two singular things which we must note ere we leave the bereaved bridegroom to his last solemn vigil. One of these, that the dead is tricked out with jewels as though she were decked for a bridal instead of a tomb. Diamonds and pearls, costly rubies and emeralds, chains and bracelets, and even a coronet, are twined around her head, clasped about her arms and neck, load her transparent fingers and hide in the ghastly folds of the shroud! A king's ransom is laid beside her as she sleeps—the value of ten thousand sterling pounds in gems twinkle out of the coffin in mockery of worldly splendor!

And the other strange thing is, that, though the wolf seems to fear the corpse, and stands as far from it as he can, with decency, while waiting on his master, he cannot keep his wolfish eyes from gloating on these jewels. Every scintillation of each stone is caught by those glaring eyes, as he peeps over his sorrowing master's shoulder, and he gazes on the paltry baubles as though they were his own and he a miser—unheeding the other treasure which was his master's!

So, the one with his broken heart, and the other with his foul avarice, we leave them in the gloomy chamber keeping watch over the dead.

* * * *

The morning dawned sad and lowering over Heronscliffe—a weeping sky for the funeral of an angel. The house was filled at an early hour by the sorrowing friends and the politely mournful acquaintances of the family. On the green lawn were gathered hundreds of her *real* friends—the peasantry—and their sorrow was unfeigned. They had not known her long, but they knew her well for all that. She was their stewardess in sickness, their helper in misfortune, their friend always. They cared nothing for her name or station; they knew her only as an angel of charity, who had flown down from heaven to heal earth's woes, and, finding the task beyond her strength, had flown away again to petition the Creator to aid her in the work. No nobler epitaph was ever written on storied urn or historical shaft than that engraved to Lady Eva St. George on the hearts of those who had been the recipitents of her loving charity.

The funeral was grand and imposing, as became the memory of the daughter of the duke and the wife of a baron, but with the pomp and pageantry of mortality we have naught to do. One little incident alone—connected with it—we have to relate. Among those of the household who had shown the bitterest grief, none had been more vehement and conspicuous than Annette le Strange, the maid of the late Lady Eve. A thin, lithe, cat-like woman, with a supple form and a gleaming black eye. A Frenchwoman at every point—with a dangerous beauty that was not attractive but fascinating—the loveliness of a snake. A will of her own, too—a perilous will if any man should ever be rash enough to oppose his own to it.

Just as William Brant, the valet, was passing out of the great door of the hall, to take his place in the rear of the funeral train, he felt his arm pressed sharply, and turning, saw Annette. A dark frown gathered on his face, and he seemed inclined to vent some strongly repressed feeling in a curse—but he paused, nevertheless, and listened.

"Are they still in the coffin?" asked the woman.

"Every one," he answered in the same low tone, but impatiently.

"Ha, ha, ha!" she laughed, under her breath. "Vat a pitie! All ze pretty jewels to be buried in a tomb! Ha, ha!"

He shook her off with a shudder, and clinching his teeth as if to keep down a rage that was nearly bursting forth, passed on to his place.

Half an hour afterward the massive coffin, in its leaden case, was deposited in the mausoleum of the great dead which gave its name to the estate, and looking out over the placid waters of the lake, now wrinkled by the falling raindrops, as though it, too, was writhing in agony at the loss which earth had just sustained in her death. The house of the dead was built in the form of an Egyptian temple, of solid stone, save at the place of entrance, where an iron door first closed it, and the portal was then filled in with brick. This door was in two sections, the division being at about a third of its length from the top, so that, at stated intervals, the vault could be partially opened for ventilation. This opening would admit a small-sized man very readily, but it was so placed that no other animal could reach it. An explanation which will be found necessary hereafter.

The solemn services were over, the mourners had dispersed, and the grief-stricken bridegroom had gone back to his desolate mansion to seek in solitude and prayer the solace which earth denied him. Lady Eva slept with her fathers, and the busy workman were engaged in building up the bricks over the door, so that she might never more see the light of day. Only one man, of all who had walked with the body to the tomb, remained there, and he seemed very much absorbed in what the laborers were doing. It was William Brant, the valet. Let us leave him, watching every brick as it goes into its place, and turn to other matter which it is necessary to relate.

To be Continued.

A Mid-night Murder.

'Twas night! the stars were shrouded in a veil of mist; a clouded canopy o'erhung the world; the vivid lightnings flashed and shook their fiery darts upon the earth; the deep-toned thunder rolled along the vaulted sky; the elements were in wild commotion; the storm-spirit howled in the air; the wind whistled; the hail-stones fell like leaden balls; the huge undulations of the ocean dashed upon the rock-bound shores; and torrents leaped from mountain tops; when the murderer sprang from his sleepless couch with vengeance on his brow—murder in his heart—and the fell instrument of destruction in his hand.

The storm increased; the lightnings flashed with brilliant glare; the thunder growled with deeper energy; the winds whistled with a wilder fury; the confusion of the hour was congenial to his soul, and the stormy passions which raged in his bosom. He clenched his weapon with a sterner grasp. A demoniac smile gathered on his lip; he grated his teeth; raised his arm, sprang with a yell of triumph upon his victim; and relentlessly killed—a MUSQUITO.

Reciprocity.

A NEW APPLICATION OF DEAD-HEAD ADVERTISING.

He was the manager of a church fair, and one morning he walked into the newspaper office and said:

'Want an item this morning?'

'Of course,' replied the editor. Whereupon the visitor laid the following note upon the table:

'The ladies of the —— street church will give a fair at their vestry hall next Friday evening. Literary—and musical entertainments will be provided and a supper will be served to all who desire. The ladies in charge of the affair have much experience in such matters, and are sure to provide a good time. The admission will be only fifteen cents, and it is certain that no one can spend that amount to a better advantage. Be sure to go and take your friends.'

When the editor read it he said:

'Oh, I see; an advertisement.'

'No; not an advertisement. We prefer to have it go in the local column,' replied the manager.

And seeing that the editor looked sceptical, he continued—

'It will interest a great many of your readers, and help a good cause; besides, we have spent so much getting up our entertainment that we can't afford to advertise it without increasing the price of our tickets. In such a matter as this we ought to be willing to help each other.'

'Well,' said the editor, 'if it goes into the locals, I suppose you would reciprocate by reading a little notice in your church next Sunday.'

The visiting brother asked what notice, and the editor wrote and handed him the following:

'The *Weekly Chronicle*, for the coming year, will be the best and cheapest family paper in Maine. Its proprietor has had much experience, and has all the helps which a large outlay of money can procure. His paper has a larger circulation than any other published in the country, and is to be furnished at only $2. It is certain that no one can spend that amount to better advantage. Be sure to take the *Chronicle*, and subscribe for your friends.'

The manager hemmed and hesitated, and then said, solemnly, that he doubted whether it would be judicious to read such a notice, but suggested that if it was printed, copies of it might be distributed at the door of the vestry on the evening of the entertainment.

'Yes,' said the editor, 'but it would attract more attention in the middle of the sermon. It will interest a large number of your congregation, and help a good cause; and, besides, so much money is spent upon the *Chronicle* that I don't see how the owner can afford to print handbills to advertise it without increasing the subscription price. In such a matter as this we ought to be willing to help each other.'

Then the gentleman saw the situation.—*Fairfield Chronicle.*

It Wasn't the Toothache.

In the ladies' waiting-room at the Central depot the other day were a newly-married couple from Grass Lake. They had been visiting in the city two or three days, and were then ready to go home. They set side by side, of course his arm around her waist and she leaning on his shoulder. A long-waisted stranger from the East, having sore eyes and a big heart, walked in, saw them thus seated, and in about a minute asked of the husband:

'Has that woman there got the toothache?'

The husband looked up in surprise, but made no answer. After two or three minutes, the long-waisted man again remarked:

'If that woman has got the toothache I've got a bottle of peppermint in my satchel here.'

The bride rolled her big eyes around and the husband looked somewhat embarrassed. The man from down East unlocked his satchel, fumbled among shirts and collars, and brought up four ounces of peppermint essence. He uncorked it, touched the contents of the bottle against his big, red tongue, and, handing it over to the husband, feelingly said:

'Just have her sop some on a rag and rub her gooms with it. We've used it in our family for—'

The bride's eyes threw out sparks as she lifted her head from its loving position, and striking at the bottle she snarled out:

'Tuthache, you fule! If you don't know the difference 'tween true love and the tuthache you'd better pick grass with the geese!'

'My Lord!' gasped the man, and he hurried out with his satchel in one hand and the bottle in the other.—*Detroit Free Press.*

An Incredulous Indian.

There is a good story floating in army circles, which illustrates the Indians' inability to take in the common marvels of civilization.

Twenty years ago, when few Indians had travelled in the States, Lieutenant (now General) P. was sent to treat with a troublesome tribe. He took with him as interpreter, Black Beaver, a Delaware chief of renown, who had been to Washington. Beaver was semi-civilized, owned a farm, and was much respected by Indians and white men.

The Indians having adjusted their difficulties in council with the officer, he was anxious to make them understand the power of whites, and the consequent folly of the Indians in making war upon them.

"Beaver," he said, to the Delaware chief, "you have travelled; tell them about steamboats."

Beaver had seen steamboats, and gave them a glowing description. As he concluded, a murmur ran through the Council.

"What do they say, Beaver?" asked the officer.

"He say he don't b'lieve that lie," replied the interpreter.

"Tell them about railroads, then."

Beaver had travelled on railroads, and, therefore, graphically described the "smoke-wagons." Again a murmur greeted the orator.

"What do they say now, Beaver?"

"He say he don't believe that lie neither."

The officer being complexed to find something that the Indians would believe, at last said, "tell them about the telegraph."

"I don't know what that is, answered Beaver.

The officer explained that by means of a small wire he could stand in the council lodge and talk to the Great Father in Washington.

Beaver listened attentively with a grave face, but made no attempt to translate.

"Why don't you tell them?" said the officer.

"Cause," said Beaver, nodding his head with emphatic slowness, "cause I don't b'lieve that big lie myself."

Ask the Old Woman.

A gentleman, travelling out west, relates the following:

'Riding horseback, just at night, through the woods in Signor Co., Mich., I came into the clearing, in the middle of which stood a log house, its owner sitting in the open door, smoking his pipe. Stopping my horse before him, the following conversation ensued:

'Good evening, sir,' said I.

'Good evening.'

'Can I get a glass of milk of you to drink?'

'Well, I don't know. Ask the old woman.'

By this time his wife was standing by his side.

'Oh, yes,' said she, 'of course you can.'

While drinking it I asked:

'Do you think we are going to have a storm?'

'Well, I really don't know. Ask the old woman—she can tell.'

'I guess we shall get one right away,' said the wife.

Again I asked:

'How much land have you got cleared here?'

'Well, I really don't know. Ask the old woman—she knows.'

'About nineteen acres,' she replied.

Just then a troop of children came running and shouting around the corner of the shanty.

'All these your children?' said I.

'Don't know. Ask the old woman—she knows.'

I did not wait to hear her reply, but drew up the reins and started.

Preserve the Eyesight.

The eyesight may be injured by various causes—insufficient sleep, severe study, writing and reading by gas-light, reading in bed, paintings the eyelids, ill-health. We see the fires of alcohol in the eyes as well as on the nose of the drunkard. All kinds of excesses are sure to be reflected in that delicate and sensitive organ, the eye. No person can violate the physical laws and escape the penalty. Nature is thoroughly democratic, and serves all people alike. If the king gets drunk, he will have redness of eyes, notwithstanding the royal blood in his veins. If the beggar keeps good hours and obeys the physical laws she will have clear and handsome eyes, brighter than the diamonds flashing in the queen's coronet. It is a physiological fact that plain food, abundant rest, and a cheerful temper, are the principal aids in the staff of health, and that good health insures good eyesight, except in the cases of some hereditary defect.

A Novelist in a Queer Fix.

The following storey is related respecting Mr. William Black, the novelist. He was staying, last summer. One morning, inclined for a swim, he selected a quietest nook he could find on the coast, and, having laid his clothes carefully under a rock, proceeded to enjoy his sea bath. But luck would have it, a young lady with one of his own novels in her came along that way, and set herself down by the very side of his garments. Poor Mr. Wm. Black didn't know what to do. He made a noise with the water, bobbed up and down, and tried by every modest means in his power to indicate that he was in the vicinity and not in full dress. He was ashamed to stand up and shout, and hardly ventured indeed to show more than the top of his head. So absorbing was his own story that he could not attract attention. He had never before wished that his literary power was less, but at that moment it was his fondest hope that he had written at least one dull chapter in this volume. That wish became an inspiration, an ambition a desire begot in agony, when presently there came along that way a short-sighted sportsman carrying a gun, when seeing something acting strangely in the water, near at hand, thought it must game of some kind or other and presented his gun. Mr. Black could not stand this. Forgetting the lady with one of his own novels in hand, he startled both her and the sportsman as, flinging himself bolt upright, he lifted his arms above his head and cried with pathetic rapidity, "Pray don't shoot; please don't shoot! I'm a man! I'm a man!! I'm a man!!!" The lady by the seashore took the hint and disappeared.

Mr. Duffy Swears Off.

Nine o'clock A.M.—"I lay my hand on my heart and forever forswear the use of intoxicating beverages."

10 A.M.—"No thank you. I lay my hand on my heart and forever forswear the use of intoxicating beverages."

11 A.M.—"Nuck, don' drink. Laid my han' on m' heart's morning, an' forever forsword th' use of intoxicating beverages."

High noon.—"Norrabit. Laid my han' on my heart 'sh morning and frever forswore th' use of intoxicating beverages."

2 P.M.—"'Firsh time doshn't count. But 'sh morning laid 'm—hic—and ommy heart, and forever forshwore use of intoxicating bevalges."

4 P.M.—"S-teampagain! Thish lasht time. Laymy han' nommy—hic—heart, and fullever foshwear uge of intoxicating bevalages."

10 P.M.—"Lamrod, fill th' fuf—fu!—hic!—fuf—flowing bo—hic!—owl! He'sh jolly goo' fuf—fellow!—Lese fellever fshwear uge of tockshicadel bevageis."

11:30 P.M.—"Whoop pee! I'm al' ri! Smatter'th you? Nev' mind booish; allus shleep 'th 'em on. Lesh fever fshwear—hic—fockss—fshwear—tockshy—tockshcadle—"

(The bell strikes twelve. Mr. Duffy takes no note of time."

Companions in arms—Twins.

Bridle chambers—harness rooms.

"Disappearicist" is the latest.

Behind time—The back of a clock.

A coffin is wanted for a dying echo.

Relative beauty—A pretty cousin.

Never look a gift mule in the kind foot.

The trump question—How far is it to the next village?

Bay windows are safe harbours at night for little smacks.

Grant smokes so much that he can't dispense with his stovepipe.

When a man has a house lot on which he cannot pay the taxes, he has a site too much.

What is the difference between a tenant and the son of a widow? The one has to pay rents, the other has not two parents.

In Germany the potato bug is called a Pfiscotendiriweect tenlawbedenachtoschoopterschamehteiterteufel!

A while ago, a party of lynchers, down South, postponed the hanging five minutes to allow the victim time to finish smoking a cigar. This proves that the use of tobacco prolongs life.

Beecher's idea that there is no hell is bad for newspaper publishers, as so many subscribers may now utterly refuse to pay up, if they have the most remote suspicion that Beecher know what he is talking about.