Acton Free Press.

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The Acton Free Press,

A FIRST-CLASS LOCAL AND GENERAL FAMILY JOURNAL, PUBLISHED ESPECIALLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CITIZENS OF HALTON COUNTY,

EVERY THURSDAY MORNING

At THE FREE PRESS Printing and Publishing House, next to the Methodist Church, Mill Street, Acton, Ont.

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Is ahead of all competitors for general purposes. Iron Beam, Steel Board and Share made of special hard iron. Cheap; $14 cash. New Fences, Stoves, Metal Letters, and Casting of all kinds.

JOHN CROWE.

$66 A WEEK in your own town, and no capital risked. You can give the business a trial without expense. The best opportunity ever offered for those willing to work. You should try nothing else until you see for yourself what you can do at the business we offer. No room to explain here. You can devote all your time or only your spare time to the business, and make gross pay for every hour that you work. Women make as much as men. Send for special private terms and particulars, which we mail free. $5 outfit free. Don't complain of hard times while you have such a chance. Address H. HALLETT & CO., Portland, Maine.

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Writes everything desirable in the way of Life and Accident Insurance.

Rates Low. Security Unquestioned.

Ample deposit made with the Dominion Government, for the security of Canadian Policy Holders.

Paid up Cash Capital,	$ 600,000.00
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BAKERY
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CONFECTIONERY.

MESSRS. B. & E. NICKLIN would intimate that they have opened up their

NEW BAKE SHOP
ON THE
Corner of MILL and MAIN Sts.
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And that they will always be supplied with A 1 Bread, besides Buns, Cakes, Pastry &c., &c., &c.

A LARGE STOCK OF CHOICE
Confectionery
will be found on hand, which is all new and fresh—

OATMEAL,
CORNMEAL,
BUCKWHEAT FLOUR,
CRACKED WHEAT, &c.,
always in stock.

This will be found to be the place where the best goods will be kept at the lowest prices.

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Any person in want of a good set of Harness, either

SINGLE OR DOUBLE;

Should call at

Creech's Saddlery,
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Where they can get better value for their money than any place in the County.

A good assortment of

TRUNKS AND VALISES

On hand, all of which will be sold cheap for cash.

Repairing promptly attended to.

R. CREECH.

Acton, Feb. 26, 1879.

MANHOOD.

WE have recently published a new edition of Dr. Culverwell's Celebrated Essay on the RADICAL AND PERMANENT CURE (without medicine) of Nervous Debility, Mental and Physical Incapacity, Impediments to Marriage, etc., resulting from excesses.

Price, in a sealed envelope, only six cents, or two postage stamps.

The celebrated author, in this admirable Essay, clearly demonstrates, from thirty years' successful practice, that alarming consequences may be radically cured without the dangerous use of internal medicine or the application of the knife; pointing out a mode of cure at once simple, certain and effectual, by means of which every sufferer, no matter what his condition may be, may cure himself cheaply, privately and radically.

This Lecture should be in the hands of every youth and every man in the land.

Address,
The Culverwell Medical Co.,
47 Ann St., New York.
Post Office Box 4586.

In a Time of Trouble.

As an eagle from the height,
Looking down upon the lands,
On forests black as night,
Pale fields and desert sands,

Sees the traveller below
Loiter hours, as league on league,
Lynx wilderness slow
No end to his fatigue.

So Faith, amid her stare,
Beholding far beneath
The bright or gloomy bare
In the web of life and death,

Sees weary hours that deem
The dark breadth is the whole;
Sees happy hours that dream
The bright rays all their goal.

Ah! let this faith be ours—
That even 'mid the pain,
Above the present towers,
And soon the coming gain:

While, breadth by breadth, appears,
As from the weaver's hand,
The pattern of the years
Which God himself has planned.

—*London Spectator.*

A Petition to Time.

BY ELLERY CORNWALL.

Touch us gently, Time!
Let us glide adown thy stream
Gently—as we sometimes glide
Through a quiet dream!
Humble voyagers are we,
Husband, wife and children three—
(One is lost—an angel, fled
To the secure overload!)

Touch us gently, Time!
We're not proud nor soaring sloop;
Our ambition, our content,
Lies in simple things.
Humble voyagers are we,
O'er life's dim, unsounded sea,
Seeking only some calm clime:—
Touch us gently, gentle Time!

UNDER AN EVIL STAR.

BEING THE NARRATIVE OF RUTH RAVENCROFT, EDITED BY MERVYN MERRITON.

PART II. (CONTINUED).

With this they parted for the night. The next morning, Mr. Ashton mentioned the proposal of his new acquaintance to my uncle, who freely confessed that he himself was not favourably impressed by that personage, and recommended great caution in any dealings with him. He added that my advice on the matter would be of great value. But my arrival at the "Blue Lion" was vainly looked for on that day, Adam Bowles having earnestly entreated me not to leave Evelyn for a single hour alone, and, before all things, to keep her away from the "Blue Lion," or any other place of public resort.

"I see you have adopted this morning precautions against indiscretion similar to mine of last night."

Thus it was that Mr. Ashton's guest for the time being addressed his host, as, entering the room for breakfast, he pointed to the place where the easel had stood, now vacant.

"I rarely leave my easel, still more rarely any work I have in hand, about," Mr. Ashton replied.

"It was fortunate for me that you departed from custom last night—perhaps also, Mr. Walter, for yourself."

"You speak enigmatically, sir. You were pleased to express satisfaction at my little work; but, for myself, I freely admit that I would rather it had not been subjected to your criticism, however flattering."

"We are at best short-sighted beings, Mr. Walter, and cannot always divine what is best for us. It may be that one of these days you'll admit the advantage to yourself of my having caught by chance a sight of your picture. Anyway, I trust I am to be gratified with a second view this morning."

"I cannot refuse your request. After breakfast I'll bring it out."

During breakfast the stranger made no allusion to the conversation held on the previous evening. In truth he seemed to occupy himself after a fashion more immediately conducive to certain ends of his own by cunningly drawing out Mr. Ashton on the subject of his habits, associates, and objects in life; while he was careful to go as little as possible into any particulars concerning himself. It was only when he had apparently learned all he desired to know that he entered upon the subject which beyond all doubt was then uppermost in his mind, with—

"I need hardly ask you whether you have decided to accept my offer that you shall accompany me to the Manor House?"

"If I hesitate," Mr. Ashton replied, "it is because I do not think myself entitled to trespass on your kindness, seeing how short is our acquaintance."

"That regards me, Mr. Walter. The question for you is whether you feel convinced that you will not be unduly trespassing on the leisure of Sir Poyns. On what grounds, then, am I to present you? Can you think of nothing? Is there no common acquaintance whose name might serve as an introduction? That is more than likely in the case of a young man who, like you, must be known in good society. You seem surprised; but it is not possible that one knowing the world and its ways as I do should be a single hour in your company without pronouncing you a gentleman bred and born! Ah, Mr. Walter, Mr. Walter—if that be indeed your name, which I take leave to doubt—but that's your business, not mine—the mental vision must be dim indeed on which you could impose yourself as a professional painter!"

"Indeed, sir, I pursue art seriously—very seriously."

"Ha, ha, ha! But I dare be sworn there's something else you follow yet more seriously. Pardon my light words, I ought to speak with more reserve on—on what is the secret of secrets locked in a man's heart."

"Really, sir, you are presuming upon a wild notion that seems to have taken possession of your brain to make observations bordering upon familiarity."

"Nay, sir, if 'tis thus you meet the good-will I am prepared to entertain for you, there's an end of the matter. Be a painter and nothing else—be Mr. Walter—and let all that has passed between us be regarded as unsaid. Only bear in mind that chilled friendship often turns to burning enmity!"

With this, Mr. Haggerstone moved towards the door, though slowly, as he had not the least intention of going out. As he expected, Mr. Ashton replied to him in a less offended tone—

"It is difficult to imagine, sir, that I have inspired the good-will you speak of in so short an acquaintance as ours; but pray overlook my hasty expressions."

"Consider them overlooked, Mr. Walter"—and he returned to the table at which they had been sitting, although they had finished their breakfast. "And in your own interest—I will put into few and plain words what I was coming to when you interrupted me. I am well aware, without aid from you, of the grounds which you consider entitle you to break in on the seclusion of Sir Poyns Welmore. You regard yourself as his social equal. You love his daughter—you hope your love is returned—you intend to present yourself as a suitor for the hand of the heiress of Rollston! Now why have I told all this which is so well known to yourself? Not for the poor satisfaction of passing for a more than commonly shrewd observer—believe me there—but because unknown to you there is a strange and mysterious link between us—because fate has brought us together in a manner which seems to make it imperative that I should speak to you as I do. May I ask you to bring out your picture?"

The picture having been placed upon the easel, Haggerstone produced a small leather case from his pocket.

"I am now," he resumed, "about to give you a proof of the intimate character of my relations with the Welmore family. See this case! Hold it beside your portrait of Miss Welmore, then open it. Good. What do you see?"

Doing as he was directed, Mr. Ashton's astonishment may be imagined when he found that he held an exquisitely finished miniature of Evelyn Welmore. Painted apparently a year or two before, the features and expression bore the impress of earlier girlhood; but there was no mistaking the likeness. Controlling his emotion, Mr. Ashton said briefly—

"Methinks I have heard of this miniature. It was painted, I believe, by an artist sent to Miss Welmore's convent from Antwerp. I imagined a Flemish painter; but—— Surely you, sir, are not the gifted painter?"

"No, no! Ha, ha, ha! I am but the fortunate possessor. You, Mr. Walter, would rather be the latter than the former, for all your love of art. Come, let us compare the paintings. I dare warrant, if there be more finish in the Flemish work, there is more soul in the English. Say I not well? Oh, yes, you have thrown your very being into this picture! You have wrought at it like one inspired. Honestly, yours, albeit the free gift of an amateur, suffers little in comparison with its fellow done by the Antwerp painter for fifty guineas. It would not surprise me now that you were sufficiently unreasonable to desire possession of both pictures, were I to——"

"To what, sir?"

"Give way to a passing fancy. I will. Mark me! The miniature shall be yours."

"Mine?"—"Ay—but on one condition."

"What is the condition?"

"Only this—that, should you, in the course of events, recognize any other person as having a stronger claim to it than yourself, you will unhesitatingly hand it over to that person. Mean while keep you the treasure. Its possession will afford you some joyful hours, come what may in the future."

"The future?"

"Ay, the future—an indefinite term, you know; it may mean years, as it may hours, minutes even, hence."

Here Mr. Wilkes, entering, announced that the postman was at the door. He had brought no letters for the "Blue Lion," but, as he was, he said, going up to the great house with a letter, it had occurred to Mr. Wilkes that the gentleman—meaning Mr. Haggerstone—might desire to send up some message. This latter, saying he would speak with the postman, went out. Finding Robin Trotter at the door, he asked

"Have you a letter for Sir Poyns Welmore?"

"That have, I, an's please you, sir."

"Show it to me."

"More than I dare do, sir."

"Is it more than you dare do to put this in your pocket?"

Robin eyed the coin held out, and drew forth the letter in question. The stranger took it, at the same time giving Robin the coin—a shilling. Having cast his eye over the superscription, he deliberately proceeded to open the letter.

"Zounds! You've broken the seal!" cried Robin in terror. "I'm responsible to the office! Sir, that letter is for Sir Poyns Welmore, Baronet."

"Blockhead! There are two persons who have a right to open every letter. The person to whom, and the person by whom it is addressed. I myself wrote this letter from London to Sir Poyns Welmore at Rollington, believing it would reach him yesterday. It was to announce my arrival here to-day. You are satisfied, are you? Good. Go up to the Manor House. Tell Adam Bowles—I suppose he is still there?"

"Oh, yes, sir—Mr. Bowles is still there!"

"Tell him you had a letter—a London letter—for Sir Poyns, which was taken from you here by the writer, who will himself arrive with it in a couple of hours or so."

"Depend on't, sir, I'll do your bidding," quoth Robin Trotter. "But, sir, there's the postage—eighpence. I pray you leave not that burden on my shoulders. I'm unbearable. His Majesty looks to me for that eighpence."

"Enough. He's too wordy, this postman of yours, Mr. Wilkes." And, flinging Robin another shilling, without waiting for the change he returned in search of Mr. Walter, who had not quitted the house on the announcement of the postman's arrival.

Pausing at the door, Haggerstone was seen by my uncle to open it and peer in. There stood Mr. Ashton, by the picture, the miniature still in his hand, looking from one to the other. His countenance was radiant with smiles. My uncle, noting the while the looks with which the watcher at the door eyed him, was absolutely startled by the glare of hatred which seemed to animate them. He understood later the meaning of those looks. Affecting to have come up at that moment, he loudly asked the stranger some trivial question by way of making Mr. Ashton aware of that person's presence.

Mr. Ashton, hurriedly returning to the subject uppermost in his mind, and asking eagerly at what hour they should set forth on their proposed visit to the Manor House, his new acquaintance, with the ugly laugh peculiar to him, answered—

"I cannot wonder at your anxiety to be stirring, but I have letters to write, and cannot leave for a couple of hours at the least."

Then, perceiving that Mr. Ashton was carefully placing the miniature in his breast coat-pocket, he added, with a glance which at the moment seemed to the younger gentleman slightly contemptuous, and which he afterwards remembered as nothing short of malignant—

"Ay, hold fast to your treasure while it is yours! I need not repeat to you the condition on which you have received it."

My uncle was then left alone with Mr. Ashton, who related to him all that had passed between the stranger and himself.

"I trust it may all end well, sir," quoth Mr. Wilkes.

"You say doubtfully," observed Mr. Ashton.

"I have my doubts about this gentleman. By-the-by, has he told you his name—he who is on such intimate terms with the Welmores family?"

"No. Do not you know it, Mr. Wilkes?"

"He has never breathed it to me."

"I am not disposed to quarrel with that. When a man renders you a service, you must take him on his own conditions."

"I pray he may indeed be rendering you a service, Mr. Walter."

PART III.

Evelyn—unknown to her father, who was, said Adam, more than commonly nervous and oppressed that day—devoted her morning to a little festivity in connection with the annual May-day procession of the villagers. This concluded, she proposed to me, as I had anticipated she would, that we shou'd walk down to Rollston village. Mindful of old Adam's advice, I was fully determined not to comply with her wish. I was relieved from the necessity of inventing a pretext by the opportune arrival of the old servant himself. He said Sir Poyns desired Miss Welmore's presence in his private room.

"Do you know for what my father wants me, Adam?" she asked.

Without either admitting that he did or stating that he did not, Bowles replied that she would doubtless soon learn from Sir Poyns.

Accustomed as I was to take careful note of the old man's peculiarities, I read in this abstention, coupled as it was with the unusually mournful expression of his countenance, augury of coming evil. I kept my thoughts, however, to myself, and accompanied Evelyn to the door of Sir Poyns's room.

Left alone, and seeing some of the village girls yet lingering in the garden, I now joined them. This part of the garden was separated by a shrubbery from the front approach to the house. Hearing footsteps on the gravel road, I looked through the shrubbery and saw two gentlemen coming up to the house door. Presently the bell was rung. Could I believe my eyesight? Yes; one of the two was Mr. Ashton! The other was a stranger to me. I watched them enter the house, and then, going in myself by another door which opened to the garden, waited in Adam's pantry till he should return from having admitted them.

"You here, Ruth!" he exclaimed.

I told him what I had seen, adding—

"Is not one of the two Mr. Walter?" Then, seeing him all of a tremble, and almost deprived of the power of speech, I answered my own question with "I know it is so."

"Yes—the painter. But don't trouble yourself with the painter. There's the other—the other, Ruth! Alas, the heavy day!" And he fell back in a chair, covering his eyes, which I could see were filled with tears.

Accustomed as I was to his strange exhibitions of emotion, this burst of grief, taken in connection with the communication he had recently made to Evelyn from Sir Poyns, alarmed me exceedingly. When he grew a little calmer, I asked him where the two gentlemen then were.

"Mr. Walter is in the picture-gallery," he answered, "Haggerstone in the drawing-room."

"Haggerstone! Who is Haggerstone?" I asked.

"Ah, well may you say who is he!"

"Do you know him, Adam?"

"Don't ask me!"

"I see you do know him. Is he a friend of Sir Poyns?"

"He's such a friend as Satan is to you and me and all of us. But why he should come with that young painter I know no more than you do."

"Shall I go to Mr. Walter?"

"Yes, an' you will. But what have the two in common? Oh, Haggerstone's coming bodes us no good!"—this last to himself, as, with his usual shake of the head, he shuffled off.

I found Walter Ashton in the picture-gallery. On my expressing my astonishment to see him at the Manor House, his answer was that I could not be more surprised than he was to find himself there. I asked him who this Mr. Haggerstone was.

"Haggerstone?" he repeated enquiringly.

"He who came with you, I mean."

"Say rather with whom I came. His name positively was unknown to me."

And he explained briefly what I have already set down, showing me the miniature.

After remaining half an hour or more in the picture-gallery, I went in search of Evelyn. A servant informed me that she had gone to change her walking-dress for another, in which to receive the gentleman who was then awaiting her and Sir Poyns in the drawing-room. I followed her to her room, and asked her whether she knew who was downstairs. Yes, she said, she did—a certain Mr. Haggerstone, of whom her father had been speaking to her as a gentleman long known to him, and who was destined to have an important influence on her future life. I repeated the singular phrase—"Influence on her future life?"—expressing myself completely mystified, and adding that the strangest part of the whole business was the fact of Mr. Haggerstone having brought with him Walter Ashton, towards whom it appeared he expressed the utmost good-will. She started, reflected a moment, and then, with almost a shriek of joy, exclaimed—

"Now, Ruth, I see it all! Friendly with my father, well disposed, as you say, to Walter—he must surely have come to plead our cause!"

"What do you mean by our cause?" I asked.

"Mine and Walter's. Quick! Kiss me, Ruth, and help to array me for conquest. I must make this new-found friend still friendlier!"

So possessed was she with the idea of Mr. Haggerstone's arrival being an event favourable to her that I had not the heart to repeat the language in which Adam Bowles had spoken to me of that personage.

I had seen Evelyn into the drawing-room, and was about to revisit Walter Ashton in the picture-gallery, when Adam, who must have watched for me from some concealment, stopped me, and whispered excitedly—

"Sad work in there!"—pointing to the drawing-room. "I would gladly know what passes. I'm useless for hearing; and then my old brain's all in a whirl. I'm going to let you into the drawing-room by the little passage door. You know. You can stand behind the great screen and hear everything. Be sure you let not a word escape. Now! Quick!"

Too much alarmed to ask questions, I followed Adam in silence, and was admitted through the small door in question, before which a lofty folding screen was drawn against the draughts of air that came from without. This screen ran from a window completely across the door, so that, by holding back a portion of the damask window-curtain, I could both hear what was said and see what passed in the room. At this moment Mr. Haggerstone appeared to have quitted Evelyn and her father, and was standing at some distance. Evelyn and Sir Poyns had apparently been carrying on a private conversation; but, shortly after I entered, Sir Poyns rose from the sofa on which they were seated, and said in subdued, yet audible tones, pointing at the same time to Mr. Haggerstone—

"Then you understand, my child, that from this day the fate of another becomes linked with yours!"

Evelyn afterwards told me that, knowing Walter Ashton to be at the time in the house, she at once, in her excited state of mind, jumped to the conclusion that the expression "another" could apply to him alone. This belief gave an entirely false colouring to what was to come. Leading her towards the door, Sir Poyns thus continued—

"This day, my Evelyn, brings you to years of womanhood, and on this day your hand is sought in marriage by"—I fancied that here his eye with a sort of imploring gaze sought that of Mr. Haggerstone—"one who will love you—care for your happiness before all else."

"You were telling me just now," Evelyn said, "that a curse would rest upon the union which had not a parent's sanction."

As Sir Poyns signed assent, I saw Mr. Haggerstone quietly approach him. Evelyn not aware of his movements, continued—

"Will this be blessed by you, dear father?"

Here Mr. Haggerstone, without allowing Sir Poyns time to reply, said, with an exaggerated suavity—

"Oh, be sure it will, Miss Welmore!"

"You answer for my father, sir?" Evelyn said with some surprise.

"Evelyn, you may take Mr. Haggerstone's answer as mine. I will leave you with him. There are certain matters common to us both that he is about to explain. He will do it more clearly, because more calmly, than I can."

"You have presented Mr. Haggerstone as your friend; he will surely be mine?"

"Our friendship is of fifteen years' standing. Say I not well, Sir Poyns?"

"It is so, Haggerstone"—this with an audible sigh. "Evelyn, he will now, with my full approval, lift the veil of mystery which has so long hung over my existence. Give him your patient attention, and receive his words as if they were spoken by me. Heaven be merciful to you, my girl!"

Then straining her in what seemed to me a wild embrace, Sir Poyns rapidly quitted the room. Evelyn looked anxiously after him, and had already made a movement to follow him, when Mr. Haggerstone stepped between her and the door, saying—

"You need not go, Miss Welmore. Your father has requested you to hear me."

"But see you not that he is ill?"

"Not ill—over-excited, say rather. You know he is little accustomed to receive visitors. He lives too much alone."

"I have done all in my power, Mr. Haggerstone, to draw him from his habits of seclusion, but in vain."

"Oh, we must have all that changed!" Evelyn's looks expressed her surprise at the speaker's familiar address. "But to the matter in hand. Sir Poyns desired you to give me a patient hearing; this you cannot do if, in order to follow him, you leave me. Your father, Miss Welmore, alluded to a question of high importance, on which he has permitted me to speak to you; then, from certain words of his to you which I overheard, I conclude you have already formed an idea of the subject which interests us in common?"

"Us, Mr. Haggerstone?"

"Yourself and me. But I pray your pardon—I keep you standing. Will you allow me the privilege of sitting beside you on this sofa? Thank you."

Note that he had taken her somewhat surprised silence for her consent.

When they were seated, Evelyn said—

"I believe I in part understand your meaning; yet it is a mystery to me that you, hitherto a stranger to me, should thus suddenly interest yourself in my behalf."

"That will presently be explained to you, fair and gentle Evelyn!"

I shuddered as I marked the look accompanying this audacious phrase. I believe Evelyn saw it not, though the phrase itself greatly astonished her.

"In order that you may the more fully comprehend it, I will now ask your fullest attention. Miss Welmore, you are descended from a long line of ancestry; but there is a portion of its annals yet untold, and which, as you shall decide, is to be either blazoned abroad or to remain for ever locked in your own breast, your father's, and mine. Be calm, I beseech you! All your self-possession will be needed."

He paused, and, as he sat facing me, I could detect on his countenance a strange blending of triumphant malignity with an ardent admiration of the angelic being whom I was already prepared to find had been driven by adverse fate into some toil over which he held the mastery. He quickly resumed.

"Between fifteen and sixteen years ago I became acquainted with your father, then Mr. Welmore, at the gaming-table. He was an eager—a rash player, of course therefore an unsuccessful one. A short time sufficed for the loss of all his disposable fortune. He sought, as many do, to redeem a portion of it by staking that which he had not. He became heavily indebted, and, among others, to me. Rendered desperate by continued ill-luck, in a fatal hour, forgetting what was due to his position, he suffered himself to be persuaded by a wretched trickster that, by some sleight-of-hand process, certain success would attend their joint efforts."

Hardened as was this man in vice, and nerved up as he was to carry through a desperate scheme, a feeling akin to pity, as he looked on Evelyn's blanched cheek and wild, frightened eyes, caused him once more to pause a while. But, Evelyn speedily signing him to proceed, he did so.

"The attempt was made upon me—me, in whose hands I may, without boasting, say he was a mere child. I detected him, but at the moment taxed him not with the cheat. The same night I accompanied him and his new and most unworthy associate, one Charles Forster, to a place of entertainment. They both drank deeply, and Forster, whose brain was the weaker of the two, let fall words in allusion to the unsuccessful attempt they had jointly made to rob me. Your father was roused to madness at this damning confession in my presence, and hurried beyond self-control, and, seizing a knife from the table, he rushed blindly upon his accuser, who in the next instant fell, stabbed to the heart, at his feet."

"Dead!" demanded the terrified Evelyn.

"Yes."

"And no witness present but you?"

"None."

"Then the—the crime was kept secret?"

"His execution for murder would not have benefitted me."

"Benefitted! Then you—you had a motive!"

"I had—I meant that my silence should be richly repaid."

"Repaid! What mean you?"

"Why, this. Your father had lost everything he could then dispose of, but he was heir to his uncle's title and large estates."

"Ah, you looked for repayment when he should inherit these!"

"Pshaw! His entire interest in them, when he should inherit them, would have been but a small boon to me, who am only a few years younger than himself. But he was a widower, with no only child—then three years old."

"Myself. Well—well?"

TO BE CONTINUED.

SOME interesting marriage statistics are given by the Galveston *News*. The *News* says that Shakespeare was married when he was 18, Dante at 23, and Brigham Young when he was 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and so on.

An African Potentate.

King John of Abyssinia—A Troubled Reign—Resistance to Egyptian Aggression—How Affairs Stand Now.

If the Cairo despatches are correct in asserting that Gordon Pasha has been successful in his mission to the King of Abyssinia, and that the latter renounces his claims on Massowah, accepting instead a more southerly outlet to the sea, a dispute has been settled which threatened a war between Egypt and Abyssinia like the one of three years ago.

Ever since his accession to the throne, the successor of the hapless King Theodore has been involved in trouble with the late Khedive of Egypt, in consequence of the latter's ambition to add to his domains on the south and southwest, and to extend his sway over as much as possible of Central Africa.

CROWNED UNDER ENGLISH AUSPICES

as John of Ethiopia, he soon found Ismail Pasha employing the reorganized Egyptian army, with its English and American commanders and staff officers, to penetrate and annex equatorial Africa, and to strengthen control over the Soudan. The earlier plans followed were those of Sir Samuel Baker; after whom came Col. Gordon, who had achieved celebrity in the service of China by putting down a formidable rebellion. Gen. Stone, Col. Long, and other American officers were of great service in the explorations and expeditions. Not satisfied with these acquisitions, Munzinger Pasha, a German, who had been made Governor of Massowah, took possession of the country of the Bogos, which King John claimed as a part of Abyssinia. The result of this and other movements was that King John

ACCEPTED THE GAGE OF BATTLE

and when the Egyptian army, relying on its new organization on modern principles, its modern tactics, and its modern arms and munitions, took the field, King John overwhelmed and almost destroyed the parts of it with which he came in contact.

THE FIRST EXPLOIT OF KING JOHN

was to fall upon the invading command of Munzinger, said to have been about 2,000 strong. This he crushed, Munzinger being among the slain. A part of the Bogos country, which is a desirable district on the northwest frontier of Abyssinia, was occupied. To avenge this disaster, a force between 1,500 and 2,000 strong, supplied with artillery, was sent against Abyssinia early in 1875, under command of Col. Arrendrup, an accomplished officer, of much bravery, yet little versed in campaigning in that region. At first Arrendrup seemed to be favoured by fortune. He found that King John, owing to dissensions, had been unable to bring out the full strength of his army. He pushed on from Massowah to Guinda, but at Gundet, in Abyssinia, forty or fifty miles northwest of Adowa, encountering the king's forces, he was utterly defeated, he himself being among the killed. Early in December, 1875, the main expedition left Cairo, taking the same route by way of Massowah, and determined to punish the Abyssinians for Arrendrup's disaster. It was in all about 20,000 strong, under Ratib Pasha, who, fortunately, had a staff of European and American officers, including Gen. Loring as second in command. At Massowah

GEN. KIRKHAM,

an English officer, who, with Gordon, had gained renown in suppressing the Chinese rebellion of 1863, but who had taken service on the Abyssinian side several years before, sent word to Ratib Pasha that he had been ordered by King John to restore some prisoners of Arrendrup's force. This amicable overture did not prevent Kirkham, on arriving himself at the camp near Massowah, shortly after, from being held as prisoner until he died in the following autumn. King John has since claimed, in a letter sent to London, that Kirkham was poisoned at Massowah (or Musowha, as his letter has it), while carrying despatches from the former to Queen Victoria, complaining of the conduct of Egypt; but while it is known that Kirkham feared poisoning, the evidence is not conclusive that he died an unnatural death. In March, 1876, King John encountered Ratib Pasha's army at a place called Gura, and completely defeated it. The advance, about five hundred strong, was annihilated, and the result was the abandonment of the campaign, and the occupation of the province of Hamasoen by King John's forces. Then, however, began a new source of trouble for King John in the revolt of two powerful chiefs, the one in the north and the other in the south of Abyssinia. The Egyptians seized the opportunity to make themselves secure again in the Bogos country, while King John occupied himself in putting down these revolts, which he at last accomplished by making friends with their leaders. With the personal disasters that fell on the late Khedive, the accession of a new ruler in Egypt and the reduction of the Egyptian army at the imperative demand of European nations for economy in Egyptian finances, King John has been

ENCOURAGED TO RENEW HIS DEMANDS

regarding his old source of grievance, namely, that the holding by Egypt of Massowah shuts off his desired outlet to the Red Sea. Egypt wisely made haste to offer him, through Gordon Pasha, the ports of Aith, Duroro and Tschilloky, on the Red Sea, provided he would for ever give up all claims on Massowah, and conclude a peace. Whether he has accepted these ports, or whether, as is also possible, he has secured the more valuable port of Zulah, remains to be seen. There is another port, called Arkiko, which is spoken of as one of those that Egypt would be likely to offer, and King John to want. It is said that he will, on receiving it, authorize the building of a railroad thence to Adona. A colour of probability is lent to the report of a peaceful result of Gordon's mission by the fact that, before the interview, King John withdrew from the Egyptian frontier the army of observation with which he was menacing it.

Cupid at his Pranks Again

A lovely girl—all young girls are lovely, but this one had more than the mere beauty of youth—living in New Orleans, and possessed of excellent social position, friends, family, and, better than all, fortune, stood on her balcony early one morning not so very long ago, with a blushing, fragrant rose dropping its crimson petals against her bosom. Just then the milkman came along. He was busy with his shining cans, and it must be he caught the reflection of the blushing rose and its lovely wearer in his tin milk cups; at any rate he fell in love, and the next morning wore a fit mate for the splendid flower fastened in his blouse. The roses made eyes at each other for some days, and the end is at hand, for next week there is to be a wedding. Is it not pretty?

IN building conundrums, Puck says, the answer is the simplest part of the structure. For instance, here is a capital answer: "One is fall shopping, and the other is shop falling;" but we haven't time to look round for a conundrum to fit it. And again: "One is Hamlet alone, and the other is ham let alone." The conundrum necessarily contains something about the melancholy Dane and diseased pork. Here is one complete: "What is the difference between a church fair and an infant's over-stocking?" Answer—"The difference between ladies begging and a baby's legging."

THE Boston Police Commissioners, in whom is vested the power of licensing shows in that city, have decided to permit no performances by children. The case at issue was that of a juvenile "Uncle Tom's Cabin" company. A Massachusetts statute authorizes such a prohibition.

"SAY here, Jones, why don't you fence in your premises?" "Oh, there's no need of it, so long as my wife's always a-railing round the house, is there?"