The Free Press Short Story

A HALF GALLON OF OLIVE OIL

OW did Senator Howard stand in tell regard to the Mariitt case? That of me.' was the question everybody in the state was asking. The senator was the recognized leader of public opinion in the commonwealth he represented and the party organs the Herald leading. were naturally anxious to express views was a radical difficulty in ascertaining his views, however-the difficulty of finding the senator himself.

At his town house no information could be gathered, other than the fact that Benator Howard was away for a few days. He had not said when he would be back. The senator was a mai without close family ties, and therefore very independent in his movements.

The last thought in Curtis Dane's mind was that he was destined to solve the riddle now puzzling his olders. Ourtis intense ambition up to the present time, had not been recognized by prompt ad-Indeed he could not see how, even though he filled his assignments satisfactorily, he could demonstrate his capacity reporting lectures and club func-

A telegram from his uncle, unimthinking

olive oil, this the nephew knew. Mrs. realize his ambition. Hammond made a delicious salad dress-

--- the senator paid his old friend a visit. wards a man sat down beside him and replying, but his eyes were elequent as porter is his readiness to take a chance; | connection with the Herald, spared so readily. His next step was to the Herald office." purchase a half gallon can of genuine shocked him; then he took the train for office."

The day was warm and the can of olive

to be inviting to a strife-weary states- and started off at a rapid rate. The and the telephone, but the boy refused to fran. Near the house a man in faded stranger at once began talking and Curtis regard this obstacle as settling the ques- Acton. 6% per annum off for cash. overalls was hoeing corn. The boy went found his conversation interesting enough tion. He began by rolling off the bed. on to the back door, and entered. His to absorb his attention. When the cab Because of his trussed condition he foll uncle and aunt were both in the kitchen stopped, however, he came back to heavily, and the shock left him breathand the faces they turned upon him realities and said: always imagined himself a favorite in the he explained and placed it on the table. significantly toward the chauffeur.

His aunt and uncle exchanged glances. it quicker, that's all."

for a little vacation."

Ourtis, this isn't a very convenient time for you to come because we have com-

reproach to creep into his voice.. His aunt spoke up hastily. "Oh, James, his companion closed the door. Ourtla is a trustworthy boy. You'd better

tell him just how matters are." Mr. Hammond hesitated; then yielded. "I guess you're right, Mother. Well, this is in strictest confidence, my boy. Ben-

ator Howard is here." Dane chuckled. "That's what I sus-"Buspected!" Mr. Hammond spoke

testily. "How could you suspect such a

Mr. Hammond and his wife again exchanged glances and it was clear that my paper. What will you take for it?" their respect for their nephew's ability The stranger looked threatening. had greatly increased. Curtis took adwantage of this favorable impression to say "I really came to see Senator Howard. I want to find out how he stands on the

Marlitt case." "Curtis Danel" cried Mrs. Hammond. "If you've tracked that poor tired man down to begin pestering him about and mino." politics I'll never forgive you."

"You don't understand, Kill Mary. If but I'm going to have that interview." he's got an opinion, it dught to be known, and it wan't take much time for him to

Some time clapsed before Ourtls of view concerning an interview. were proud of the fact that the distinguished man had sought their home us refuge, and they were not willing that his visit should be a disappointment. length, however, Mr. Hammond agreed "If his arm selzed in a vise-like grip.- "I'll to place the case before his guest. he says he doesn't want to be bothered

though, that settles the whole business,' declared the old man staunchly. Dane drew a long breath, "All right, Uncle, but do your best for me." The Interview between Benator Howard

and Mr. Hammond was protracted. This vetoed the plan and when at last the latter reappeared, he brought good nows. He seemed to think the request reason- interview appears. If we don't get able enough, and all he asked was a into the morning paper, we'll have

As a matter of fact, it was nearly "You'll be sorry for this." supper time before Curtis saw him. Then he took down in shorthand the senator's idea that you'll have the law on me, but terse expression of his opinion, and re- if you accuse me of kidnapping you, and ceived from him a signed statement that tying up, I shall accuse you of being too to he had given Curtis Dane an interview drunk to know. I'll have half a dozen regarding the Marlitt affair. Then, as fellows who'll swear to it." "Bend me at once parcel post half there was no train till nine o'clock, the gallon of best olive oil hurry check boy ate an enormous supper. His uncle In an astonishingly short time Curtis lay follows. James Hammond," the mes- drove him to the station in time for the upon a bed in the back room, his feet train, and when Curtis stepped aboard, tied together, and his arms pinioned Ourtis' uncle and his wife never used he felt at last he was on a fair way to behind his back. A pillowcase torn in Auction on

after writing a few introductory sen- again, but you won't be allowed to stayve fresh; I Brindle Cow, I years, bred last James Hammond had been a boyhood tences, he gave up the effort and returned to death." friend of Benator Howard and very often his papers to his pocket. Elhortly after- The bandage prevented Curtis from The reading of the telegram made Ourtis began to talk Curtis was not as a rule he glared into the mocking face. Then wonder if by any chance the senator given to talking about himself, but to- testing the ropes by a pull that made had taken refuge in the farmhouse only night, probably because of his exuberance them cut deep into the wincing flesh, the a few miles from the state capital, but over his good fortune, he was unusually man turned and went downstairs. A seemingly a thousand miles removed talkative. If he had stopped to think, moment later the front door slammed from its turmoil. The boy had very little surprised he would have been to realize and the cab drove away. on which to base his conjecture, but part that he had told this stranger a good of the equipment of the successful re- deal about the history, including his this way and that in the effort to loosen

a day off. The permission was granted a few miles out of the city, Dane's seat- he detected that it had slipped a triffe.

The train was stopping and there was appeal had been heard. oil became uncomfortably heavy before no time for further consideration. Curtis the first mile was covered. At the end sprang to his feet and followed his travel- had loosened the bandage seemed useof the fifth mile, he had his coat over ling companion out upon the platform, less. There was just one ray of hope in his arm, and was beginning to wonder |"Just a minute," the stranger said, and the situation. Downstairs Curtis had why he had come on such a wild goose left him to himself for perhaps double noticed a telephone on a small stand. To the sixty seconds he had asked for. Then be sure there was the length of a hall The farmhouse looked peacoful enough the two climbed into a rather shabby taxi, and a flight of stairs between himself

> "Why, what are we stopping for?" The other turned toward him.

Curtis hesitated. He would have liked -Noither-his-aunt nor his-uncle-express- asked-to-defy-the-law-by-assisting-in-him-on-the-head-in-its-descent,ed pleasure in the prospect, and finally some bootlegging scheme. As his com- This unexpected thump, however, ald-

door, he was considering ways of escape, darkness. With the help of his teeth he "Do you mean there's not room for with light. The light had the illogical to hold the receiver to his our, and he me?" The nephew allowed a hint of effect of making Curtis ashamed of his had no way of knowing whether the late doubts. He followed hustily and operator heard him or not. He talked

it had been, "Sit down."

"why. I'm in a hurry." "That's all right. We'll do a little front page space for the biggest beat of talking first."

"I've no time to do any talking." "Then do some listening. You've had repeated that formula at least a thou-"Well, your telegraphing for olive oil day. You needn't deny it for I looked possibility that the telephone might have for one thing. There never has been over your shoulder when you were writing on the-train, and saw your start-off."

> Curtis said nothing. The other laughed. "You're crazy," he up the steps, and then there was a heavy

"How much will the Herald pay you? Your expenses, most likely. Yfave you any objection to salting down a few key was inserted in the lock, and the

hundred dollars for yourself?"

"Listen boy, I'm not going to hurt you, "Well, you can't get it."

and relieved him of his coat so neatly that he hardly realized what was happening. As Curtis saw his pockets rifled. the defense of his property, using his fists | with Benator Howard." freely. The man did not strike back, but all at once he caught him by the "Don't make a nulsance of yourself," he said

Curtis hit the opposite wall with con derable force. Then he climbed to his cet, feeling sick and shaken. The man had come across the senator's signed statement and with a little grunt of satisfaction, he appropriated it. The notes pleased him less, however. "What sort of shorthand is that?" he demanded.

"My own." "Wo'll read it all right." The man had taken what he wanted

to the kitchen," the man said politely. In one of the cupboards, in the back room, he found a rope that suggested clothesline, and secured, it still holding Curtis in the steel-like clutch. When the

have to trouble you to accompany me

has come out, I'll call for you."

"Oh, indeed! I suppose you have an

The stranger did a businesslike job, tions from strips was wound tightly over his mouth The accommodation was not crowded and knotted. "Mouth-breaking is uning, half whipped cream and the other and Dane had a seat to himself. He healthy," jeered the big fellow, looking half eggs and vinegar with the proper began to work on the story of his inter- down on his prisoner. "You'll probably years; I Filly, 3 years, roadster, sired by seasoning. The request for olive oil view, but the roadbed was rough and be hungry and thirsty before I see you.

the bandage. He kept this up steadily so he went to his superior and wsked for As they approached the junction only for what seemed an endless time before without objection. There were few of mate remarked, "I'm going to take a cab This was so encouraging that he rethe Herald's employees who could be here. If you like, I'll put you down at newed his efforts, and after another half hour, one fold of the bandage alipped The boy hesitated, "Why, the down- down over his chin. It was the work olive oil, paying for it a price which town station is only six blocks from my of seconds to free himself of the re-"Just as you like, but I think you'll to call lustily for help. In the hush that The farm was five miles from the little save time by going with me. You know followed each paroxysm of shouting, howrailway station, but Curtis chose to walk. there's often quite a delay at the tunnel." ever, he could see no indication that his

To attempt to loosen the ropes us he

less. He lay very still for a time after house, but now he began to wonder if want you to help me carry something the hall. He made slow progress till he he were wasting his time after all. "I out," he whispered. "It's all ready, but reached the head of the stairs where thought I'd bring you the oil, Uncle," I don't like to trust him." He nodded he twisted around, so he could go feet first; and then started on his descent.

He fully intended to go very slowly, "You oughtn't to have done that, Curtis," to know more about the matter in which but unluckily on the way he lost control replied Mrs. Hammond. "We thought if he was asked to aid, but to insist on of himself, and tobogganed to the bottom you looked after the order, we might get enlightenment seemed ungracious, con- with uncomfortable speed. He allowed sidering the courtesy he had accepted himself a minute or two for growning, tions from "It's quite a distance to come just to He alighted and followed the stranger up and then he squirmed over to where he go right back," observed Mr. Hammond. the steps of an unlighted house, which thought he had noticed the telephone Curtis guessed he was after informa- seemed to be surrounded by trees, a stand. When he had found it, he flung tion and gave it. "Oh, I'm not going singularly solltary location considering its himself against the stand. It fell over right back,. This seems a first rate time nearness to the city. A sudden appre- as he had intended, but he had not hension seized Dane that he would be planned that the telephone should strike

Mr. Hammond spoke. "To tell the truth, panion produced a key and unlocked the ed him in locating the telephone in the The door opened and the man on set it upright and put his line to the shead, pressed a button, flooding the room mouthplece. It was impossible of course into the mouthpiece with the carnestness Then the reporter found that his com- of desperation. "Hello, Operator, I'm panion was pointing to a chair, and shut into an empty house and tled. saying in a voice not quite as smooth as don't know where it is, but you can tell from the telephone. Call up the Herald "Sit down!" Dane repeated indignantly, office and ask for Mr. Meade and enit's Curtis Dane. Tell him to save some

Curtis was always certain that he sand times. He realized dismally the broken as it fell, in which case all his offorts would be wasted. After so long a wait that he went through the words "Listen! I want that interview for mechanically, with hardly a realization of their meaning, there was the sound of a car outside. Feet came tramping

knocking at the door. The prisoner lost his self-possession and began to scream. When a muster door swung open. Half a dozen men "I tell you you're wasting time-yours entered, carrying flash lights and guns. Then some one turned on the electric lights and disclosed Curtis, bound hand and foot with his face close to the tele-

mouth when he was selzed and spun the Herald force. "It's young Dane, all around like a top. He shouted for help right enough," he exclaimed after one as the big fellow caught him by the arm, sharp look. Cut those ropes before you

Curtis did not wait for questions, "Mr. Meade," he oried, "I have the biggest rage mastered prudence. He leaped to bent of the year. I've had an interview

> Even then the vioten's struggles were not quite over. A little time clapsed before he could convince Mr. Moade that to was not delirious, because of the rough handling he had received. The interview with the sengtor appeared in the torning edition, however, and over since, as the young reporter hoped, that day's work has helped him in the realization

As no other paper contained the interview. Curtis considered it probable that the deciphering of his shorthand had proved too much for the thief. It is certain that the Herald's interview had put him on his ghard, for he never came back to look after his captive, nor did Curtis over see him again. The owners of the house, who were away for a nonth said on their return that they had formerly rented a room to a young reporter who had left without returning his key and from their description this was the man who had come so near stealing the fruits of Dane's enterprise. The discovery that success may clude one when it seems certain has taught Curtis a lesson in discretion which in the long run will probably be worth as much to him as the beat which the Herald featured in bly headlines with the name of the interviewer Curtis Dane.

CLEARING AUCTION SALE

IN ERIN TOWNSHIP

CHOICE CATTLE, HORSES AND

Lot 3, Pirst Line, Erln, 1 mile north of just off No. 7 Highway, to sell by Publi

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1030

at one o'clock tharp, the following: HORSES-1 Choice Filly, heavy, 73 COWS-1 Part Jersey Cow, il years of August: 1 Grey Cow, 5 years, milking,

YOUNG CATTLE-1 Pure Bred Shorthorn Bull, 2 years, bred by D. Waldie; 2

Curtis began at once to turn his head Red Steers, 1,000 lbs.; 2 Red Steers, 700

Don't Fail to Attend This Sale if You

Held Under Cover. Remember the Date, Time and Place, Tuesday, December 16, at One O'clock. TERMS-\$10.00 and under cash; over that amount 10 months' credit will be acceptable at the Bank of Montreal,

Want Good Stock, and it will Positive-

ly be Sold Without Reserve. If the

Weather is Stormy the Sale can be

R. J. KERR, Auctioneer,

CLEARING AUCTION SALE

IN ERIN TOWNSHIP CHOICE DATRY HERD OF JERSEY AND HOLSTEIN COWS, HORSES. HOGS, YOUNG CATTLE

The Understaned has received instruc-PETER HILTZ

Lot 3, Third Line, Erin, 3 miles North

of Acton, just off No. 7 Highway, to well by Public Auction on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1030 ut 1.30 o'clock sharp, the following: HORSES-1 Bay Marc. 6 years: 1.300 ba.; I Bay Mare, 6 years, 1,300 lbs

Canot, a real one; 1 Percheron Colt. COWS-Pawn Jorsey, 6 years, milking well, and bred in June: Black Jersey, years, milking, bred May 20; Fawn stein. 5 years, milking, due January 20;

osed to be in calf; I Red Helfer, supposed to be in calf: I White Helfer, sup-YOUNG CATTLE-3 Black Steers. cara old; 2 Red Helfers, 2 years old; 2 Durham Helfers, 1 year old: 5 Durham Calves, 6 months old.

HOGS-10 Hogs, around 100 lbs.; How, with ten plus at foot; B Plus, about Don't Fail to Attend This Sale if You Need a Choice Dairy Cow. They are Right Every Way. . Remember the

ber 12. Positively No Heserve as the Proprietor by Short of Help. TERMS-\$10.00 and under, cash; over hat amount 10 months' oredit will be given on furnishing approved joint notes. acceptable by the Acton Banks, 6% por unnum off for cash.

Date, Time and Place, Friday, Decem-

R. J. KEILR, Auctioneer, Phone 36, Acton. The words were hardly out of Dane's | One of the six men was Mr. Meade of C. O. PLANK, Clerk.

New Subscribers

Another Step in a Greater Service by The Free Press

THE FREE PRESS Drive for new subscribers and extension of its service was completed last Saturday. It was but another step in the plan to give Acton and the district a newspaper service of the best possible kind. We felt we owed it to our advertisers to have THE FREE PRESS read in every home in the district and the necessary effort was put forth to make the accomplishment.

Have You a Message?

Mr. Advertiser, have you a message to give each week to these host of readers? Is there any reason why these readers should be your customers? Are you enthusiastic about the service your business place is able to render these customers? Have you a message that these readers will appreciate hearing about?

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THE FREE PRESS, Acton's home and community newspaper, is the best means of getting that message to the readers you want to interest. We lay no claim to being the best or greatest, but we willingly invite comparisons. The improvements and growth have been steady accomplishments with the one thought of -service-to-the-community-in-mind.-

We Have the Facilities May We Serve You?

Reader Interest

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Make Your Comparisons as You Will-We'll be Content with Your Decision

The Acton Free Press

Constantly Striving to Maintain Leadership for Acton with a Representative Newspaper!