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The Canadian Champion

AND COUNTY OF HALTON INTELLIGENCER.

VOLUME 26. MILTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1887. NO. 36.

Sittings of the Division Courts of the Co. of Halton:

For the Year 1887.

Place of Sittings and P. O. Address of Clerks.	Clerks.	Jan.	Mar.	May.	July.	Sep.	Nov.	Hour of Opening
1 Milton	Wm. Panton	28	25	27	15	30	25	10 a.m.
2 Oakville	B. Balmer	12	9	11	13	6	17	10 a.m.
3 Georgetown	L. Grant	18	15	10	12	7	2	10 a.m.
4 Acton	J. Matthews	20	17	12	14	15	8	9.30 a.m.
5 Campbellville	S. R. Lister	14	11	6	11	15	10	10 a.m.
6 Burlington	G. C. Bastedo	11	8	3	11	9	4	9 30 "
						5	1	11 "

General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings, 4th or without Jury, Tuesday 14th June, and 13th December, at 10 a.m.

County Court Sittings, without Jury, Tuesday, 4th April, and 3rd October, at 10 a.m.

County Court Sittings—Formerly Terms—Monday, 3rd January, 4th April, 4th July, and 3rd October at 10 a.m.

Judges Chambers.—Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week, except on Court days and during vacation, at 11 a.m.

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HER MARTYRDOM.

Angela and the captain both laughed at the idea of danger.

"I am taking pains to teach Angela how to manage a pair of sculls properly, so that there will be no danger in her taking the boat out alone," replied the captain.

Angela kissed her mother's pale face.

"If there was any risk I would not go, mamma, for I would not alarm you."

So morning after morning the captain went down to the lake and gave Angela lessons in rowing, Lady Laura occasionally accompanying them. Then the time came that the girl required no more lessons, but could row to any part of the lake without assistance.

Angela was fond of the water, and it soon became quite a habit of hers to go upon the lake every morning. She would row to one or other of the little islands and take her books with her. To her poetical dreamy nature solitude was full of charm.

April, with its violets and snowdrops, was come, and again something seemed to shroud the captain's life in gloom; again all his high spirits deserted him, again morose and sullen melancholy seemed to take possession of him.

"He is longing to see Gladys Rane," sorrowfully thought his unhappy wife, as she noticed the change that had come over him.

It was a brilliant morning; the sun shone brightly, the odour of violets filled the air, pale yellow primroses dotted the emerald surface of the little islands, all nature was looking its fairest. There were a few visitors at the abbey. Lady Bell was still there, and a friend of the captain's, Major Norton. On this morning Lady Bell remained in her room—she had a bad headache—and Major Norton had gone out with the intention of riding over to Hetfield. Lady Laura took her breakfast in her room. Angela had therefore to go through the ordeal she dreaded—taking breakfast alone with the captain. He read his newspapers the greater part of the time, but occasionally exchanged a few words with her. Suddenly he looked up at her.

"Angela," he said, "I had almost forgotten to tell you. The *Queen of Rood* has been done up, and it looks a thoroughly smart little craft. I prefer it to any of the other boats. You should try it this fine morning. I would accompany you, but I am going over to Caton Hall. Get Jones to help you with it, for an hour or two on the water will do you good."

The captain seemed very kind and solicitous about it. But Angela remembered afterwards that he never looked at her while speaking, and seemed nervous and hesitating in his manner. He appeared to be anxious for her to go, yet, while the servants were in the room, he gave her many warnings and directions. To them it seemed as though the captain was very solicitous about their young mistress, and as though she were on the point of doing something which he rather feared might be rash. That was the impression left by the captain on the minds of the servants, so artfully had he chosen his words in their presence.

He rode off to Caton Hall, and Angela went down to the boathouse, where Jones, who had charge of the boats, was in attendance.

"I will have the new boat this morning, Jones," she said—"*The Queen of Rood*."

"All right, miss," returned the man, touching his cap. "It is not a new boat, but it is quite as good. It has been put into thorough repair and done up beautifully. You need have no fear, miss. I looked it well over yesterday when it came, and I had it on the river last night for an hour or two."

"I am not afraid," said Angela. "How prettily it is painted! And I like the name, *The Queen of Rood*."

A few minutes later the little boat was ready; and away went Angela over the shining water. How beautiful it was! The trees were budding on the little islands, the birds were singing, the water was so clear, that she could see the blue sky and the white fleecy clouds reflected in it. She rowed along swiftly, enjoying the freshness of the morning. The lake was an unusually large one and very deep—indeed it was the largest sheet of water in that part of the county. She had reached the centre when suddenly—and to the end of her life Angela never forgot the terrible pang of fear that came to her—she felt water rising round her feet; she built down, and found, to her utter dismay, that it was coming in rapidly from a hole in the bottom of the boat. At first she did not realise the full danger of the situation; the idea that ran through her mind was that one of the planks had in some way or other become loosened. She stooped down and placed her hand where the water seemed to spring up most quickly, and there, to her horror, she found that there was a large hole in the boat.

The little craft was right when she entered it, she knew, and had been right for some time afterwards. Now quite suddenly, without any apparent cause, it was filling with water. What should she do? She was naturally brave and courageous, but for a moment she lost her presence of mind. She looked towards the shore, but she was far from it, and Jones was out of sight. The nearest island was, at some distance, and, before she could reach either the banks or the island, the boat would sink through the weight of the water.

She gave a piercing cry for help; but there was no one in sight. Faster and faster the water rushed in, and she could feel the boat momentarily settling deeper and deeper. She saw that there was no hope of saving her life, for she could not bale out the water, neither could she row the boat to land. In a moment the full sense of her danger came to her, and she uttered another loud and piteous cry. It did not seem to reach human ears, for there was no response. The water had by this time half filled the boat, and it was gradually sinking.

"I have to die!" she moaned. "Oh heaven—oh, mother—I have to die!"

In another few minutes the boat must sink, and she should never see her mother's beloved face again.

Another long sharp cry floated over the water, and this time the cry of distress caught the ears of one who hastened in the direction from which it proceeded.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Major Norton had not gone to Hetfield, after all. When he had ridden two or three miles, he remembered suddenly that he had started without the very article that he had intended to take. There was nothing for it but to ride back to the abbey and get it. Vexed with himself for his own stupidity, he rode quickly. The shortest route to the house, but one seldom used, was through the grounds skirting the end of the lake, and it was whilst taking this short cut that he heard a sharp ringing cry, as of some one in terrible distress. He rode swiftly in the direction whence it proceeded, and, as soon as he came in full view of the lake, he perceived what had happened. He saw Angela in the boat, and he saw that the boat was rapidly sinking.

It was but the work of a minute to dismount, to jump into one of the little boats lying close at hand, to seize a pair of sculls, and to fly as it were over the water to her assistance. But, although the major made the utmost haste, he was only just in time. In another moment he would have been too late. As it was, he was barely able to catch the disappearing figure as the boat sank—sank to the bottom of the lake, endangering the safety of his own as it did so. During the trying ordeal Angela had borne herself bravely; but she trembled violently now, and clung nervously to her rescuer for some minutes.

"I thought my time was come to die," she said slowly.

"You could hardly be nearer death than you have been," returned the major, for he knew how narrow her escape had been. "How did it happen?" he asked, as he seated her in his boat.

"I do not know," she replied.

"We must make haste," said the major. "You are wet through, and the water is cold. Do not fear, you are all right and safe now. We shall soon be at the house. Thank heaven I did not go on to Hetfield! My dear Miss Rooden," he added solemnly, "if I had gone straight on my way, you would have been drowned."

"Drowned!" The word distressed her yet she knew what the major said was true; and, as in a dream, all the details of the accident at Hetfield Pool came back to her. It flashed across her mind that this was the second time that she had been dragged as it were from the jaws of death.

The major rowed with powerful strokes and the boat seemed to fly over the water.

"This is the second narrow escape I have had within the last few months," Angela told her rescuer. "I said nothing of the first, lest my mother should be alarmed. I do not think," she continued, with a shudder, "that I shall ever go on the water again."

"I cannot make out how it happened," the major said. "It was the boat which was brought home only yesterday *The Queen of Rood*, was it not?"

"Yes; it was the new boy," she answered slowly.

"But I saw Jones with it on the river last night," said the major; "it was all right then."

"It was all right with me at first," she remarked. "I was half across the lake before I knew there was anything wrong; then I felt the water rising round my feet."

"Thank heaven I did not go to Hetfield!" repeated the major.

"I can only imagine," said Angela, "that part of a plank had been repaired, and that the wool had not been properly secured."

"But it was right enough when Jones had it. If there had been anything seriously wrong, he would have found it out," declared the major.

"Perhaps he would if he had used the boat an hour longer," suggested Angela. She was sorely troubled and perplexed over this second accident, though she could hardly tell why.

It was impossible to prevent Lady Laura from hearing of this affair, although the other had been carefully concealed from her; but Angela would not allow her to, be told until she had changed her wet clothes, and then she went to her mother's room and related what had happened herself.

Her ladyship listened with tears.

"To have been sitting here reading, and you have been so near death!" she cried. "Oh, Angel, if I had known!"

Angela tried to speak lightly of it; but Lady Laura trembled as she thought of the narrow escape her daughter had had. She could not show the girl enough love. She held her in her arms as though she were a child again—she kissed her repeatedly. She made her tell over and over again how the major had reached her just in time and had rescued her from her peril. Then, as did every one else who heard the story, she asked—

"But how did it happen, Angela?"

"It was but the same strange answer to give.

"I don't understand it," said her ladyship. "If the boat was safe for Jones, why was it not safe for you? How vexed the captain will be!"

"Yes, the captain would be vexed, doubtedly, Angela reflected, since it was he himself who ordered the boat to be prepared for her, and who had that very morning persuaded her to go out upon the water.

As a matter of course, the subject was discussed at length in the servants' hall. To the occupants of that part of the establishment it appeared remarkable that two accidents upon the water should happen to their young mistress, both bringing her so near death. One imparted to another how anxious the captain had been during breakfast, and how many warnings and cautions he had given Miss Rooden before she went upon the lake. The general impression was—although not any of the servants wished in any way to breathe a word against their young mistress—that Miss Rooden was apt to be rather reckless on the water.

Jones's anger and annoyance knew no bounds. The boats were left in his charge, and he was responsible for them, nevertheless he was utterly at a loss to account for what had happened.

"That boat was right enough when I had it on the river last evening," he said, looking perplexed and bewildered. "The captain—he said to me, 'Jones, that boat is coming back to-day—the one that has been done up for Miss Rooden. Look it well over, and try it on the river the night before she uses it.' So I did; and I can swear there was nothing wrong. If there had been a hole in the bottom of it, it would have sunk then. I can't make it out."

Nor could any one else; for the more the matter was discussed the more difficult it became to assign any reason for the sudden failure of the boat.

While Lady Laura rejoiced over her child as one given back to her from the dead, while she poured out such lavish thanks to the major that he felt ashamed almost of his own brave deed, while Lady Bell talked of and wondered over Angela's latest escape, a man on horseback drew near the house, riding very slowly, a look of expectation on his face as he glanced around, as though every moment he expected some one to spring up and give him startling news. But no one appeared. He rode even more slowly up the great drive, still looking anxiously from one side to the other. As he came in sight of the grand old abbey, he cast a hurried glance up at the blinds. No; they were not drawn down in deathlike array. But perhaps—there could be no telling—the truth might not yet be known.

He rode leisurely into the courtyard, but there again he failed to notice any confusion or excitement. Nothing was wrong; no unusual sight or sound broke the quiet of the place.

His face darkened as he contemplated the likelihood of the miscarriage of his last scheme.

"Can I have failed again?" he said to himself. "It is impossible!"

A groom, crossing the yard to go to the saddle-room, seeing the captain still mounted, went up to him.

"Shall I take your horse, sir?" he asked.

The gleaming eyes fixed themselves on the man's face. Had there been an accident, surely he would speak!

The captain declined his aid sullenly, and the man passed on. Then the captain saw Jones coming quickly towards him, and by the old man's manner he guessed that he had something to tell him.

Captain Wynyard's face flushed fiery red, then as suddenly grew deadly pale; his hands shook so that he nearly dropped the bridle, his whole frame trembled; great drops gathered on his brow.

"What is it?" he asked, as Jones came up to him and stood cap in hand.

"There has been a terrible accident, captain," he replied quickly.

An accident! Had his scheme succeeded then after all? Great heaven, had it succeeded? His voice was hoarse and thick as he cried out—

"What do you mean?"

"An accident with the boat, captain—the very boat that I rowed on the river yesterday, and which was safe and sound as any boat could be."

Then the old man told of Angela's mishap and her rescue. The flush in the captain's face died away; but the great drops gathered more thickly and fell from his forehead.

"Then Miss Rooden is all right?" he asked huskily.

"Yes, captain, but she might have been drowned."

"And, if she had been, you would have been responsible for it. The accident must have been caused by your carelessness. I told you to see that the boat was safe."

"So I did. No boat was ever more safe and sound, captain."

"Then what had happened to it?" he cried, angrily.

"That is what no man can tell, captain. If you have it raised out of the lake, you will learn. I cannot understand it."

"So it was Major Norton who saved her life?" he said, with an evil look.

"Yes, captain. But for the major the young lady would have been drowned, certainly."

"I am grieved to hear of your accident, Angel," said the captain, when he met her an hour afterwards.

She raised her eyes wistfully to his.

"It is strange," she remarked gently. "That is the second narrow escape I have had from death."

But the strangest circumstance was that the captain would not allow the boat to be raised from the depths of the lake.

"It was so very nearly being a coffin," he said, "that I should never like to see it used again."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Three days after the boat accident Angela stood alone in her room. She had not yet ceased to wonder at the strangeness of her misadventure, but no solution of the mystery came to her. The captain refused to have the boat raised, although Major Norton and every one else who spoke to him about it strongly advised him to have it done.

"You ought to know what was wrong," the major said; "Life is far too precious to be sacrificed in such a way. If the fault lies with those who repaired the boat, they ought to be reprimanded for it; if with Jones, he ought to be dismissed. You take it far more coolly than I should."

The captain seemed very impatient during his friends harangue.

"It would be a waste of time and labour to have the thing raised," the captain replied, "for I should never allow it to be used again. I hate the very thought of it."

It might have been the major's fancy, but it certainly seemed to him that, instead of being grateful to him for the service he had rendered, the captain grew cooler to him from that time forth.

Angela was as much perplexed as ever regarding the cause of the accident. But she had not seen a silent figure creeping down the stairs at night, groping in the darkness, unfastening doors with a stealthy hand, passing out of the house and through the grounds, down to the boat house. She had not seen the boat house door carefully closed, and a lantern produced and lighted; she had not heard the muffled sounds that might have proclaimed the treacherous deed.

The captain had calculated to a nicety how long the nails would hold, how long the loosened plank would be before it gave way before it allowed the water to rush in and overwhelm the frail craft.

Up to this time Angela had not the faintest suspicion of the truth. She was restless and uneasy concerning the mishaps which had so nearly terminated her existence. "Danger and death seem to pursue me," she said to herself. "Why should it be?"

There was a faint knock at the door, and Jane Felspar, her faithful old nurse, came in.

"Are you alone, my dear?" she asked.

"I want to talk to you."

"Come in, nurse. I am glad to see you," said Angela; for, although a fashionable lady's-maid had in some measure taken old Jane's place, no one to Angela was like this faithful woman. She had nursed her fair young mistress through her infancy and childhood, and she worshipped her now as one of the most lovely and perfect of women. She had been in great trouble and distress about her young mistress, and, with the sure instinct of love, she felt there was danger near her.

"May I stay and talk to you, Miss Angela?" she asked. "I am not happy about you, my dear. I do not like to be always hearing that you have been in this accident and the other."

"I must be more careful, dear nurse," said the girl.

"You are careful," returned the old woman; "it is not your fault. I have my thoughts and my fears, but I hesitate to tell them to you."

"You may tell me anything, nurse," she said, gently.

"Perhaps it is cruel of me," Mrs. Felspar went on, "and perhaps it is unjust. Still I cannot help it. Something bids me speak, and I must speak. My dear," she continued, bending forward and whispering into Angela's ears—"my dear, do you think the captain has any motive for wishing you dead?"

"The captain!" cried Angela, in astonishment. "No, certainly not. My death would make no difference to him."

"You are quite sure, dear?" persisted the nurse.

"I am quite sure of it," she answered. "My death would not affect him in the least. He would neither lose nor gain by it."

"Does he like you?"

"I should think not," was the grave reply. "I have never liked him. I can truly say there is no love lost between us."

"I thought not, dear. I have never liked him. I saw how the dark shadows fell round the old house on the night he came home with my lady. People call him handsome; but I know he is cruel. I have never said one word about it, but I have seen my lady's heart breaking slowly, day by day. It was an evil hour that brought him here. He means mischief; I am sure; I have seen his face looking wicked and cruel—ay, and troubled too. Do not be angry, Miss Angela, if I say out what I think."

"Say what you will," said Angela.

"I am sure, my dear, that the captain means some harm to you; he intends to do you some deadly mischief. I have seen it in his eyes and his face when he has been looking at you. Love is quick to read signs of love or hate."

"You must be mistaken, nurse," said Angela gravely. "I have never liked the captain, and he has never liked me; but he would not do me any harm, I am sure. Why should he?"

"That is the very thing I should like to know," replied Mrs. Felspar. "I cannot help feeling that he seeks your death, though why he should seek it I cannot tell. Are you sure that he would not gain by it?" asked the nurse earnestly. "Do you understand? This is a great and rich property, Miss Angela, and some say it is to be yours, all yours, some time, when my lady dies. Heaven send that that may be long yet! But you know that it will be yours, Miss Angela. I remember all that was said about it when Sir Charles died."

"I know I will be mine, nurse, if I survive my mother," said Angela; "but there is no way by which the captain could be benefited by it."

"That is what I wanted to know," returned the old nurse. "I am sure there is something at work; I cannot tell what. Miss Angela, will you forgive me if I ask you what will become of the property should you die? I hate to say the word, my dear; but I want to understand. What will become of it in that case?"

"I do not know," replied Angela wonderingly. "I have never thought about it. I do not remember that the idea has ever occurred to me."

"You will marry some day, Miss Angela, and perhaps have children of your own to inherit it; but, if you do not, then what will become of it?"

"I do not know. I should think my father's will has made arrangements for that," she replied.

"I should make some inquiries about it, Miss Angela. Ask your mamma."

"I hardly like to do so," she objected. "I have never talked to mamma about money-matters, and I am afraid it would seem as though I were distrustful or selfish—and no one in the world cares less for money than I do."

"My lady would never think anything of that kind of you, Miss Angela. How could she? You take my advice; ask her what will become of all this property at your death. I cannot help thinking that the captain will have some hold on it."

"That is impossible," declared Angela. "My father made the will which settled all about the money, and he knew nothing of the captain. It is therefore impossible that the captain should have any interest in it anyway."

But the old nurse was not to be convinced without having some stronger proof than her young mistress could give.

"I cannot see, and you cannot nor see," she continued, "but something tells me that the captain would gain by your death. Lose no time, Miss Angela, but ask my lady."

"Even if it should be so," said Angela, "you cannot really think that the captain would wish for my death?"

"I should go farther than that," the old nurse answered significantly.

Angela held up her hand with a warning cry.

"I will not listen!" she cried, her face pale with emotion. "He could not be so wicked! Oh, nurse, your love for me makes you too suspicious! It could not possibly be!"

"I hope not, my dear. But talk to my lady, and find out all about it. I have my own thoughts about the captain. I do not want to make you uneasy, Miss Angela; but, I am sorely afraid for you. You have been very near death twice; the third time might prove fatal."

"Hush—you must not say such things!" cried Angela, white with horror. "You surely do not mean to say that you think the captain had anything to do with those accidents?"

"I should not be surprised to learn that he had planned them," replied Mrs. Felspar gravely.

"I will not listen; I will not think of it, Jane. You must not speak to me of such a thing again."

"Miss Angela," cried the nurse, "forgive me if I have offended you. I speak to my lady. If you find that the captain has no interest in your death, has nothing to gain by it, I will own that I am too suspicious, and misjudge him; but, if you find that it is as I suspect—that he will gain by your death—then I say to you, Miss Angela, beware!"

"You frighten me, nurse!" said the girl. "I could not think so badly of the captain. He may have married my mother for her money; but it does not follow that he could be guilty of so black a crime as you impute to him."

"Speak to my lady, Miss Angela," repeated the nurse. "Ask her boldly what will become of the property at your death. I cannot help thinking her answer will solve the mystery."

But Angela would not be convinced—would not admit the horrible suspicion even to herself. She thought of it for some time, and tried to banish it; but the earnest tone and manner of the old nurse haunted her, and she could not overcome a slight fear which also troubled her.

A time came when Angela found her mother alone, and she determined to ask her the question that Jane Felspar had suggested.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Lady Laura Wynyard walked one morning into the grounds in search of primroses, she being very fond of the pretty simple flower; and Angela, thinking it a good opportunity to clear up the old nurse's suspicions, followed her.

"I will go with you, mamma," she said. "I have a quick eye for primroses; I can always find them, no matter where they hide themselves. Do you think you could walk as far as the woods? There they are a picture to see—primroses everywhere!"

So, chatting pleasantly on the beauty of the spring morning, the fresh tints of the fair spring-flowers, the merry song of the birds, the tender green of the young grass and the opening buds, mother and daughter wandered on together.

"Mamma," said Angela, "do you remember those beautiful lines of Browning's, called 'Home-Thoughts from Abroad'? I will repeat them to you;" and in her clear sweet voice Angela began—

"Oh to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees some morning unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf;
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now.
And after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows—
Hark where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge
Leans to the field, and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dew drops at the bent sprays edge!
That's the wise thrush. He sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture.
And, though the dingle look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew—
The buttercups, the little chi dren's dower
Far brighter than this gandy pelion-flower."

Is not that beautiful, mamma?" asked Angela. "If I had been given my choice of all the great gifts bestowed by heaven upon mortal, I should have chosen to be a poet."

"You have a poet's soul, Angela?" said her mother.

"I can appreciate, but I cannot originate," remarked Angela. "That has pleased you, mamma," she added abruptly; "your eyes look brighter."

And for the time being the girl forgot the horrible death and fear that haunted her—forgot why she had sought her mother, forgot everything except the sweet fair beauty of the April day.

"I met with a charming little poem the other day," she continued. "You shall hear that, too, mamma. It is by Leigh Hunt, one of your favourite writers, and nothing more sweet or simple was ever written. Listen! It is called 'Lilies.