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Boots and Shoes, for Spring and Summer wear
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LICENSED AUCTIONEERS
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CHARGES MODERATE.
Satisfaction Guaranteed. All orders
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The Canadian Champion

AND COUNTY OF HALTON: IN THE HIGHER.

VOLUME 26. MILTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 1887. NO. 44

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	R. Balmer	12	9	4	13	7	2	10 a.m.
3 Georgetown	L. Grant	18	15	10	12	14	8	9.30 a.m.
4 Acton	J. Matthews	20	17	12	14	15	10	10 a.m.
5 Campbellville	S. R. Lister	14	11	16	8	9	4	9.30 "
6 Burlington	G. C. Bastedo	11	8	3	5	6	1	11 "

General Sessions of the Peace and County Court Sittings with 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.

Audit of Criminal Justice Accounts—Tuesday, 4th January, 5th April, 5th July & 4th October.

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J. BUTTERFIELD, AGENT.
Milton, Nov. 18, 1886.

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DORA THORNE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HER MOTHER'S SIN."

CHAPTER I.

"The consequences of folly seldom end with its originator," said Lord Earle to his son. "Rely upon it, Ronald, if you were to take this most foolish and unadvisable step, you would bring misery upon yourself and every one connected with you. Listen to reason."

"There is no reason in prejudice," replied the young man, haughtily. "You cannot bring forward one valid reason against my marriage."

Despite his annoyance, a smile broke over Lord Earle's grave face.

"I can bring a thousand reasons, if necessary," he replied. "I grant everything you say. Dora Thorne is very pretty; but, remember, she is quite a rustic and unformed beauty—and I almost doubt whether she can read or spell properly." She is modest and good, I grant, and I never heard one syllable against her; but, Ronald—let me appeal to your better judgment—are a moderate amount of rustic prettiness and shy modesty sufficient qualifications for your wife, who will have to take your mother's place?"

"They are quite sufficient to satisfy me," replied the young man.

"You have others to consider," said Lord Earle, quickly.

"I love her," interrupted his son; and again his father smiled.

"We know what it means," he said, "when boys of nineteen talk about love. Believe me, Ronald, if I were to consent to your request, you would be the first in after years to reproach me for weak compliance with your youthful folly."

"You would not call it folly," retorted Ronald, his face flushing hotly, "if Dora were an heiress, or the daughter of some—"

"Spare me a long discourse," again interrupted Lord Earle. "You are quite right; if the young girl in question belonged to your own station, or even if she were near it, that would be quite a different matter. I am not annoyed that you have, as you think, fallen in love, or that you wish to marry, although you are young. I am annoyed that you should dream of wishing to marry a simple rustic, the daughter of my lodge-keeper. It is so supremely ridiculous that I can hardly treat the matter seriously."

"It is serious enough for me," returned his son, with a long, deep sigh. "If I do not marry Dora Thorne, I shall never marry at all."

"Better that than a *mesalliance*," said Lord Earle, shortly.

"She is good," cried Ronald—"good and fair, modest and graceful. Her heart is pure as her face is fair. What *mesalliance* can there be father? I never have believed and never shall believe in the cruel laws of caste. In what is one man better than, or superior to, another, save that he is more intelligent or more virtuous?"

"I shall never interfere in your politics, Ronald," said Lord Earle, laughing quietly. "Before you are twenty-one you will have gone through many stages of that fever. Youth is almost invariably liberal, age conservative. Adopt what line of politics you will, but do not bring theory into practice in this instance."

"I should consider myself a hero," continued the young man, "if I could be the first to break through the trammels of custom and the absurd laws of caste."

"You would not be the first," said Lord Earle, quietly. "Many before you have made unequal marriages; many will do so after you; but in every case I believe regret and disappointment followed."

"They would not in my case," said Ronald, eagerly; "and, with Dora Thorne by my side, I could do anything; without her, I can do nothing."

Lord Earle looked grieved at the pertinacity of his son.

"Most fathers would refuse to hear all this nonsense, Ronald," he said gently. "I listen, and try to convince you by reasonable arguments that the step you seem bent upon taking will entail nothing but misery. I have said no angry word to you, nor shall I do so. I tell you simply it cannot be. Dora Thorne, my lodge-keeper's daughter is no fitting wife for my son, the heir of Earlescourt. Come with me, Ronald; I will show you further what I mean."

They went together, father and son, so like in face, yet so dissimilar in mind. They had been up and down the broad terrace, one of the chief beauties of Earlescourt. The park and pleasure-grounds, with flushed summer beauty, lay smiling around them. The song of hundreds of birds thrilled through the sweet summer air, the water of many fountains rippled musically, rare flowers charmed the eye, and sent forth sweet perfume; but neither song of birds nor fragrance of flowers—neither sunshine nor music—brought any brightness to the grave faces of father and son.

With slow steps they quitted the broad terrace, and entered the Hall. They passed through a long suite of magnificent apartments, up the broad marble staircase, through long corridors, until they reached the picture gallery, one of the finest in England. Nearly every great master was represented there. Murillo, Guido, Raphael, Claude Lorraine, Salvator Rosa, Correggio, and Tintoretto.—The Lords of Earlescourt had all loved pictures, and, each of these had added to the treasures of that wonderful gallery.

One portion of the gallery was set aside for the portraits of the family. Grim old warriors and fair ladies hung side by side; faces of marvellous beauty, bearing the signs of noble descent, shone out clearly from their gilded frames.

"Look, Ronald," Lord Earle said, laying one hand upon his shoulder; "you stand before your ancestors now. Yours is a grand old race. England knows and honours it. Look at these pictured faces of the wives our fathers chose. There is Lady Sybella Earle, when one of Cromwell's soldiers drew his dagger to slay her husband, the truest friend King Charles ever had, she flung herself before him, and received the blow in his stead. She died, and he lived—noble and beautiful is she not? Now look at the Lady Alicia—this fair patrician—she, at the risk of her life helped him to fly from prison, where he lay condemned to death for some great political wrong. She saved him, and for her sake he received pardon. Here is the Lady Helena—she is not beautiful, but look at the intellect, the queenly brow, the soul lit eyes! She, I need not tell you was a poetess. Wherever the English language was spoken, her verses were read—men were nobler and better for reading them. The ladies of our race were such that brave men may be proud of them. Is it not so, Ronald?"

"Yes," he replied, calmly, "they were noble women."

Lord Earle then led his son to a large painting, upon which the western sunbeams lingered, brightening the fair face they shone upon, until it seemed living and smiling. A deep and tender reverence stole into Lord Earle's voice as he spoke.

"No fairer or more noble lady ever ruled at Earlescourt than your mother, Ronald. She is the daughter of a hundred earls, high-bred, beautiful, and refined. Now, let me ask you, in the name of common sense, do you wish to place my lodge-keeper's daughter by your mother's side? Admit that she is pretty and good—is it in the fitting order of things that she should be here?"

For the first time, in the heedless fiery course of his love, Ronald Earle paused. He looked at the serene and noble face before him, the broad brow, the sweet arched lips, the refined patrician features, and there came to him the memory of another face, charming, shy, and blushing, with a rustic graceful beauty, different from the one before him as sunlight compared to moonlight. The words faltered upon his lips—instinctively he felt that pretty blushing Dora had no place there. Lord Earle looked relieved as he saw the doubt upon his son's face.

"You see it Ronald," he cried. "Your idea of the 'fusion' of races is well enough in theory, but it will not do brought into practice. I have been patient with you, I have tried you—not as a schoolboy whose head is half turned by his first love, but as a sensible man endowed with reason and thought. Now give me a reward. Promise me here that you will make a brave effort, give up all foolish thoughts of Dora Thorne, and not see her again. Go abroad for a year or two—you will soon forget this boyish folly, and bless the good sense that has saved you from it. Will you promise me, Ronald?"

"I cannot, father," he replied, "for I have promised Dora to make her my wife. I cannot break my word. Yourself could never counsel that."

"In this case I can," said Lord Earle eagerly. "That promise is not binding, even in honour; the girl herself, if she has any reason, cannot and does not expect it."

"She believed me, father," said Ronald simply. "Besides, I love her, father."

"Hush," replied Lord Earle angrily, "I will listen to no mere nonsense. There is a limit to my patience. Once and for all, Ronald, I decidedly forbid any mention of such a marriage; it is degrading and ridiculous. I forbid you to marry Dora Thorne; if you disobey me you must bear the penalty."

"And what would the penalty be?" asked the heir of Earlescourt, with a coolness and calmness that irritated his father.

"One that you would hardly wish to pay," replied the earl. "If, in spite of my prayers, entreaties and commands, you persist in marrying the girl, I will never look upon your face again. My home shall be no longer your home. You will lose my love, my esteem, and what perhaps those who have lured you to ruin may value still more, my wealth. I cannot disinherit you; you will some day be Lord Earle, of Earlescourt; but if you persist in this folly, I will not allow you one farthing. You shall be to me as one dead until I die myself."

"I have three hundred a year," answered Ronald calmly, "that my godfather left to me."

Lord Earle now grew white with anger.

"Yes," he replied, "you have that; it would not find you in gloves and cigars now. But, Ronald, you cannot be serious, my boy. I have loved you—I have been so proud of you—you cannot mean to defy me and wound me."

His voice faltered, and his son looked up quickly, touched to the heart by his father's emotion.

"Give me your consent, father," he cried passionately. "You know I love you, and I love Dora; I cannot give up Dora."

"Enough," said Lord Earle; "words seem useless. You hear my final resolve; I shall never change it—no after repentance, no entreaties, will move me. Choose between your parents, your home, your position, and the love of this fair, foolish girl, of whom, in a few months, you will be tired and weary. Choose between us. I ask for no promise; you have refused to give it. I appeal no more to your affection; I leave you to decide for yourself. I might coerce and force you, but I will not do so. Obey me, and I will make your happiness my study. Defy me, and marry the girl—then, in life, I will never look upon your face again. Henceforth I will have no son; you will not be worthy of the name. There is no appeal. I leave you now to make your choice; this is my final resolve."

With firm, proud step a Lord Earle quitted the gallery, leaving his son to reflect upon what he had said

CHAPTER II.

The Earles, of Earlescourt, were one of the oldest families in England. The "Barony of Eyrle" is mentioned in the early reigns of the Tudor kings. They never appeared to have taken any great part either in politics or warfare. The annals of the family told of simple, virtuous lives; they contained too some few romantic incidents. Some of the older barons had been brave soldiers; and there were stories of hairbreadth escapes and great exploits. Two or three had taken to politics, and had suffered through their eagerness and zeal; but, as a rule, the barons of Earle had been simple, kindly gentlemen, contented to live at home upon their own estate satisfied with the duties they found there; careful in the alliances they contracted, and equally careful in the bringing-up and establishment of their children. One and all they had been zealous cultivators of the fine arts. Earlescourt was almost overcrowded with pictures, statues, and works of art.

Son succeeded father, inheriting with title and estate the same kindly, simple disposition, and the same tastes, until Rupert Earle, nineteenth baron, with whom our story opens, became Lord Earle. Simplicity and kindness were not his characteristics. He was proud, ambitious and inflexible; he longed for the time when the Earles should become famous, when their name should be one of weight in council. In early life his ambitious desires seemed about to be realised. He was but twenty when he succeeded his father and was an only child; clever, keen, and ambitious. In his twenty-first year he married Lady Helena Brooklyn, the daughter of one of the proudest peers in Britain. There lay before him a fair and useful life. His wife was an elegant, accomplished woman, who knew the world and its ways—who had, from her earliest childhood, been accustomed to the highest and best society. Lord Earle often told her, laughingly, that she would have made an excellent embassadress—her manners were so bland and gracious; she had the rare gift of appearing interested in everyone and everything.

With such a wife at the head of his establishment, Lord Earle hoped for great things. He looked to a prosperous career as a statesman; no honours seemed to him too high, no ambition too great. But a hard fate lay before him. He made one brilliant and successful speech in Parliament—a speech never forgotten by those who heard it, for its astonishing eloquence, its keen wit, its bitter satire. Never again did his voice rouse alike friend and foe. He was seized with a sudden and dangerous illness which brought him to the brink of the grave. After a long and desperate struggle with the "grim enemy," he slowly recovered, but all hope of public life was over for him. The doctors said he might live to be a hale old man if he took proper precautions; he must live quietly, avoid all excitement, and never dream again of politics.

To Lord Earle this seemed life a sentence of exile or death. His wife tried her utmost to comfort and console him, but for some years he lived only to repine at his lot. Lady Helena devoted herself to him. Earlescourt became the centre and home of famous hospitality; men of letters, artists, and men of note, visited there, and in time Lord Earle became reconciled to his fate. All his hopes and ambition were now centred in his only son, Ronald, a fine, noble boy, like his father in every respect save one. He had the same clear-cut Saxon face, with clear, honest eyes and proud lips, the same fair hair and stately carriage; but in one respect they differed. Lord Earle was firm and inflexible; no one ever thought of appealing against his decision or trying to change his resolution. If "my lord" had spoken the matter was settled. Even Lady Helena knew that any attempt to influence him was vain. Ronald, on the contrary, could be stubborn, but not firm. He was more easily influenced; appeal to the better part of his nature, to his affection or sense of duty, was seldom made in vain.

No other children gladdened Lord Earle's heart, and all his hopes were centred in his son. For the second time in his life great hopes and ambition rose within him. What he had not achieved his son would do; the honour he could no longer seek might one day be his son's. There was something almost pitiful in the love of the stern, disappointed man for his child. He longed for the time when Ronald would be of age to commence his public career. He planned for him a brilliant future, and never planned for himself.

Time passed on, and the heir of Earlescourt went to Oxford, as his father had done before him. Then came the second bitter disappointment in Lord Earle's life. He himself was a Tory of the old school; Liberal principles were an abomination to him; he hated and detested everything connected with Liberalism. It was a great shock to him when Ronald returned from college a "full-fledged Liberal." With his usual keenness he saw that all discussion was useless.

"Let the Liberal fever wear itself out," said one of his friends; "you will find, Lord Earle, that all young men favour it. Conservatism is the result of age and experience. By the time your son takes a position in the world, he will have passed through many stages of Liberalism."

Lord Earle devoutly believed it. When the first shock of his disappointment was over, Ronald's political zeal began to amuse him. He liked to see the boy earnest in everything. He smiled when Ronald, in his clear young voice, read out the speeches of the chief of his party. He smiled when the young man, eager to bring theory into practice, fraternized with the tenant farmers, and visited families from whom his father shrank in aristocratic dread.

There was little doubt that in those days Ronald Earle believed himself called to a great mission. He dreamed of the time when the barriers of caste would be thrown down, when men would have equal rights and privileges; when the aristocracy of intellect and virtue would take precedence of noble birth, when wealth would be more equally distributed, and the days when one man perished of hunger while another revelled in luxury should cease to be. His dreams were neither exactly Liberal nor Radical; they were simply Utopian. Even then, when he was most zealous, had any one proposed to him that he should inaugurate the new state of things, and be the first to divide his fortune, the futility of his theories would have struck him more plainly. Mingling in good society, the influence of clever men and beautiful women would, Lord Earle believed, convert his son in time. He did not oppose him, knowing that all opposition would but increase his zeal. It was a bitter disappointment to him, but he bore it bravely, for he never ceased to hope.

A new trouble was dawning for Lord Earle, one far more serious than the Utopian dreams of his son; of all his sorrows it was the keenest and longest. He felt Ronald fell in love, and was bent on marrying a simple rustic beauty, the lodge-keeper's daughter.

Earlescourt was one of the fairest spots in fair and tranquil England. It stood in the deep green heart of the land, in the midst of one of the bonny fertile midland counties. The hall was surrounded by a large park, where the deer browsed under the stately spreading trees, where there were flowery dells and knolls that would charm an artist; a wide brook, almost broad and deep enough to be called a river, rippled through it. Earlescourt was noted for its trees; a grand old cedar stood in the middle of the park, the shivering aspen, the graceful elm, the majestic oak, the tall, flowering chesnut were all seen to greatest perfection there. Art had done much, Nature more, to beautify the home of the Earles. Charming pleasure gardens were laid out, with unrivalled skill; the broad deep lake was half hidden by the drooping willows bending over it, and the white water-lilies that lay on its tranquil breast.

The hall itself was a picturesque, gray old building, with turrets covered with ivy, and square towers of modern build; there were deep, oriel windows, stately old rooms, which told of the ancient race, and cheerful modern apartments replete with modern comfort. One of the great beauties of Earlescourt was the broad terrace that ran along one side of the house; the view from it was unequalled for quiet loveliness. The lake shone in the distance from between the trees; the perfume from the hawthorn hedges filled the air, the fountains rippled merrily in the sunshine, and the flowers bloomed in sweet summer beauty.

Lord Earle loved his beautiful home; he spared no expense in improvements, and the time came when Earlescourt was known as a model estate. One thing he did of which he repented until the hour of his death. On the western side of the park he built a new lodge, and installed there Stephen Thorne and his wife, little dreaming as he did so that that first link in what was to be a fatal tragedy was forged.

Ronald was nineteen, and Lord Earle thought, his son's college career ended, he should travel for two or three years. He could not go with him, but he hoped that *travelling* would not be needed, that the boy would be wise enough and manly enough to take his first steps in life alone. At college he won the highest honours; great things were prophesied for Ronald Earle. They might have been accomplished but for the unfortunate event that darkened Earlescourt with a cloud of shame and sorrow.

Lord and Lady Earle had gone to pay a visit to an old friend, Sir Hugh Chartoris, of Greencoe. Thinking Ronald would not reach home until the third week in June, they accepted Sir Hugh's invitation, and promised to spend the first two weeks in June with him. But Ronald altered his plans; the visit he was making did not prove to be a very pleasant one, and he returned to Earlescourt two days after Lord and Lady Earle had left it. His father wrote immediately, pressing him to join the party at Greenoke. He declined, saying that after the hard study of the last few months he longed for quiet rest.

Knowing that every attention would be paid to his son's comfort, Lord Earle thought but little of the matter. In after years he bitterly regretted that he had not insisted upon his son's going to Greenoke. So it happened that Ronald Earle, his college career ended, his future lying like a bright, unruffled dream before him, had two weeks to spend alone at Earlescourt.

The first day was pleasant enough. Ronald went to see the horses, inspected the kennels, gladdened the gamekeeper's heart by his keen appreciation of good sport, rowed on the lake, played a solitary game at billiards, dined in great state, read three chapters of "Mill on Liberalism," four of a sensational novel, and fell asleep satisfied with that day; but rather at a loss to know what he should do on the next.

It was a beautiful June day, no cloud was in the smiling heavens, the sun shone bright; and Nature looked so fair and tempting that it was impossible to remain in-doors. Out in the gardens the summer air seemed to thrill with the song of the birds. Butterflies spread their bright wings and coquetted with the fragrant blossoms; busy humming bees buried themselves in the white cups of the lily, and the crimson heart of the rose.

Ronald wandered through the gardens, the delicate golden labernum blossoms fell at his feet, and he sat down beneath a large acacia. The sun was warm, and Ronald thought a dish of strawberries would be very acceptable. He debated with himself for some time whether he should return to the house and order them, or walk down to the fruit garden and gather them for himself. What impulse was it that sent him on that fair June morning, when all Nature was full of love and happiness, to the spot where he met his fate?

CHAPTER III.

The strawberry gardens at Earlescourt were very extensive. Far down amongst the green beds Ronald Earle saw a young girl kneeling, gathering the ripe fruit, which she placed in a large basket lined with leaves, and he went down to her.

"I should like a few of those strawberries," he said, gently, and she raised to his a face he never forgot. Involuntarily he raised his hat, in homage to her youth and her shy sweet beauty. "For whom are you gathering these?" he asked, wondering who she was and whence she came.

In a moment the young girl stood up and made the prettiest and most graceful of courtesies.

"They are for the housekeeper, sir," she replied; and her voice was musical and clear as a silver bell.

"Then may I ask who you are?" continued Ronald.

"I am Dora Thorne," she replied, "the lodge-keeper's daughter."

"How is it I have never seen you before?" he asked.

"Because I have lived always with my aunt, at Dale," she replied. "I only came home last year."

"I see," said Ronald. "Will you give me some of those strawberries?" he asked. "They look so ripe and tempting."

He sat down on one of the garden chairs and watched her. The pretty white fingers looked so fair, contrasted with the crimson fruit and green leaves. Deftly and quickly she contrived a small basket of leaves, and filled it with fruit. She brought it to him, and then for the first time Ronald saw her clearly, and that one glance was fatal to him.

She was no calm, grand beauty. She had a shy, sweet, blushing face, resembling nothing so much as a rosebud, with fresh, ripe lips; pretty little teeth, which gleamed like white jewels; large dark eyes, bright as stars, and veiled by long lashes; dark hair, soft and shining. She was indeed so fair, so modest and graceful, that Ronald Earle was charmed.

"It must be because you gathered them that they are so nice," he said, taking the little basket from her hands. "Rest a while, Dora—you must be tired with this hot sun shining full upon you. Sit here under the shade of this apple-tree."

He watched the crimson blushes that dyed her fair young face. She never once raised her dark eyes to his. He had seen beautiful and stately ladies, but none so coy or bewitching as this pretty maiden. The more he looked at her, the more he admired her. She had no delicate traces of high birth, no refined grace; but, for glowing, shy fresh beauty, who could equal her?

So the young heir of Earlescourt sat, pretending to enjoy the strawberries, but in reality engrossed by the charming figure before him. The motion of the stirred not a bough of the apple-tree, with the sunbeams falling upon her, she made a fair picture, and his eyes were riveted upon it.

It was all very delightful, and very wrong. Ronald should not have talked to the lodge-keeper's daughter, and sweet, rustic Dora Thorne should have known better. But they were young, and such days come but seldom, and pass all too quickly.

"Dora Thorne," said Ronald musingly. "What a pretty name! How well it suits you! It is quite a little song in itself."

She smiled with delight at his words; then her shy dark eyes were raised for a moment, and he dropped again.

"Have you read Tennyson?" he asked.

"No," she replied, "I have little time for reading."

"I will tell you my story," he said, patronizingly. "Never mind, I will have had a real Dora, and your Melissa may wait."

She had not the least idea what he meant; but when he recited the musical words, her fancy and imagination were stirred; she saw the wheat-field, the golden corn, the little child, and the anxious mother. When Ronald ceased speaking, he saw her hands were clasped and her lips quivering.

"Did you like that?" he asked, with unconscious patronage.

"So much!" she replied. "Ah, he must be a great man who wrote those words; and you remember them all!"

Her simple admiration flattered and charmed him. He recited other verses for her, and the girl listened in a trance of delight. The sunshine and western wind brought no warning to the heir of Earlescourt that he was forging the first link of a dreadful tragedy; he thought only of the shy bl