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The Canadian Champion
AND COUNTY OF HALTON INTELLIGENCER.

VOLUME 26. MILTON THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 1887. NO. 45.

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	11	13	7	2	10 a.m.
3 Georgetown	L. Grant	18	15	10	12	15	8	9.30 a.m.
4 Acton	J. Matthews	20	17	12	"	15	10	10 a.m.
5 Campbellville	S. R. Lister	14	11	5	"	9	4	9.30 "
6 Burlington	G. C. Bastedo	11	8	3	"	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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DORA THORNE.
BY THE AUTHOR OF
"HER MOTHER'S SIN."

Dora was half puzzled. She had never thought much of her own appearance. Having lived always with sensible, simple people, the pernicious language of flattery was unknown to her. It was with a half-guilty thrill of delight that she for the first time realized the charm of her own sweet face.

The sunny hours flew by. Dora never noted them; she thought only of the morning past and the morning to come, while Ronald dreamed of her, almost unconsciously. She had been a bright feature in a bright day; his artistic taste had been gratified, his eyes had been charmed. The pretty picture haunted him, and he remembered with pleasure that on the morrow he should see the shy sweet face again. No thought of harm or wrong even entered his mind. He did not think he had been imprudent. He had recited a beautiful poem to a pretty coy girl, and in a grand lordly way he believed himself to have performed a kind action.

The morning came, and it brought bright, blushing Dora to her work; again the little white fingers glistened amidst the crimson berries. Then Dora heard him coming. She heard his footsteps, and her face grew ruby red. He made no pretence of finding her accidentally.

"Good morning, Dora," he said; "you look as bright as the sunshine, and as fair as the flowers. Put away the basket; I have brought a book of poems, and mean to read some to you. I will help you with your work afterward."

Dora, nothing loath, sat down, and straightway they were both in fairyland. He read industriously, stealing every now and then a glance at his pretty companion. She knew nothing of what he was reading, but his voice made sweeter music than she had ever heard before.

At last the book was closed, and Ronald wondered what thoughts were running through his companion's simple, artless mind. So he talked to her of her daily life, her work, her pleasures, her friends. As he talked he grew more and more charmed; she had no great amount of intellect, no wit or keen powers of repartee, but the girl's love of nature made her a poetess. She seemed to know all the secrets of the trees and the flowers; no beauty escaped her; the rustle of green leaves, the sighs of the western wind, the solemn hush of the deep green woods, the changing tints of the summer sky delighted her. Beautiful words, embodying beautiful thoughts, rippled over the fresh ripe lips. She knew nothing else. She had seen no pictures, read no books, knew nothing of the fine arts, was totally ignorant of all scholarly lore, but deep in her heart lay the passionate love for the fair face of nature.

It was new to Ronald. He had heard fashionable ladies speak of everything they delighted in. He had seen them before of "music in the fall of raindrops," or character in flowers.

Once Dora forgot her shyness; and when Ronald said something she laughed in reply. How sweet and pure that laughter was—like a soft peal of silver bells! When Ronald Earle went to sleep that night, the sound haunted his dreams.

CHAPTER IV.

Every morning brought the young heir of Earlescourt to the bright sunny gardens where Dora worked amongst the strawberries. As the days passed she began to lose something of her shy, startled manner, and laughed and talked to him as she would have done to her own brother. His vanity was gratified to the sweetest homage of all, the unconscious, unspoken love and admiration of the young girl. He liked to watch the blushes on her face, and the quivering of her lips when she caught the first sound of his coming footsteps. He liked to watch her dark eyes droop, and then to see them raised to his with beautiful startled light.

Insensibly his own heart became interested. At first he had never thought of passing a pleasant hour; he admitted Dora, and tried to believe that reading to her was an act of pure benevolence; but as the days passed on something stronger and sweeter asserted him. He began to love her—and she was his first love.

Wonderful to say, these long *tete-a-tetes* had not attracted observation. No rumour of them escaped, no thought of them appeared in the path of roses, which led to the brink of a precipice.

It wanted three days until the time settled for the return of Lord and Lady Earle. Sir Harry Laurence, of Holtham Hall, asked Ronald to spend a day with him; and, having no valid excuse, he consented.

"I shall not see you to-morrow, Dora," he said. "I am going away for the day."

She looked up at him with a startled face. One whole day without him! Then, with a sudden deadly pain, came the thought that these golden days must end; the time must come when she should see him no more. The pretty dimpled face grew pale, and a dark shadow came into the clear eyes.

"Dora," cried Ronald, "why do you look so frightened? What is it?"

She gave him no answer; but turned away. He caught her hands in his own.

"Are you grieved that I am going away for one whole day?" he asked. But she looked so piteous and so startled that he waited for no reply. "I shall continue to see you," he resumed; "I could not let any day pass without that."

"And afterward," she said, simply, raising her eyes to his full of tears.

Then Ronald paused abruptly—he had never given one thought to the "afterward." Why, of course strawberries would not grow for ever—it would not always be summer. Lord Earle would soon be back again, and then he must go abroad. Where would Dora be then? He did not like the thought—it perplexed him. Short as was the time he had known her, Dora had, in some mysterious way, grown to be part of himself. He could not think of a day wherein he should not see her blushing, pretty face, and hear the music of her words. He was startled, and clasped her little hands more tightly in his own.

"You would not like to lose me, Dora?" he said pleadingly.

"No," she replied, and then tears fell from her dark eyes.

Poor Ronald, had he been wise, would have flown then, but he took his head over her and kissed the tears away. The pretty rounded cheek, so soft and child-like, he kissed again, and then clasped the slight, girlish figure in his arms. Her head drooped on his shoulder.

"Do not shed another tear, Dora," he whispered; "we will not lose each other. I love you, and you shall be my wife."

One minute before he spoke, the idea had not even crossed his mind; it seemed to him afterward that another language of flattery was unknown to her. It was with a half-guilty thrill of delight that she for the first time realized the charm of her own sweet face.

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"Your wife!" she cried, looking at him in some alarm. "Ah, no. You are very kind and good, but that could never be."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because you are so far above me," replied the girl. "I and mine are servants and dependents of yours. We are not equal. I must learn to forget you," sobbed Dora, "and break my own heart."

She could not have touched Roland more deeply; in a moment he had poured forth a torrent of words that amazed her. Fraternity and equality, caste and folly, his mission and belief, his love and devotion, were all mingled in one torrent of eloquence that simply alarmed her.

"Never say that again, Dora," he continued, his fair, boyish face flushing. "You are the equal of a queen upon her throne; you are fair and true, sweet and good. What is a queen more than that?"

"A queen knows more," sighed Dora. "I know nothing in all the wide world."

"Then I will teach you," he said. "Ah, Dora, you know enough. You have beautiful thoughts, and you clothe them in beautiful words. Do not turn from me; say you love me and will be my wife. I love you, Dora—do not make me unhappy."

"I would not make you unhappy," she said, "for the whole world, if you wish me to love you—oh, you know I love you! If you wished me to go away and never see you, I will do my best."

But the very thought of it brought tears again. She looked so pretty, so bewildered, between sorrow and joy, so dazzled by happiness, and yet so piteously uncertain, that Ronald was more charmed than ever.

"My darling Dora," he said, "you do love me. Your eyes speak, if your lips do not tell me. Will you be my wife? I cannot live without you."

It was the prettiest picture in the world to see the colour return to the sweet face. Ronald bent his head, and heard the gentle whisper.

"You shall never rue your trust, Dora," he said proudly; but she interrupted him.

"What will Lord Earle say?" she asked; and again Roland was startled by the question.

"My father can say nothing," he replied. "I am old enough to please myself, and this is a free country. I shall introduce you to him, Dora, and tell him you have promised to be my wife. No more tears, love. There is nothing but happiness before us."

And so he believed. He could think of nothing, care for nothing but Dora—her pretty face, her artless, simple ways, her undisguised love for him. There was but one excuse. He was young, and it was his first love; yet despite his happiness, his pride, his independence, he did often wonder in what words he should tell his father that he had promised to marry the lodge-keeper's daughter. There were even times when he shivered, as one seized with sudden cold, at the thought.

The four days passed like a long, bright dream. It was a pretty romance, but sadly misplaced—a pretty summer idyl. They were but boy and girl. Dora met Ronald in the park, by the brook-side, and in the green meadows where the white hawthorn grew. They talked but of one thing, their love. Ronald never tired of watching Dora's fair face and pretty ways; she never wearied of telling him over and over again, in a hundred different ways, how noble and how kind he was, and how dearly she loved him.

Lord Earle wrote to say that he should be home on the Thursday evening, and that they were bringing back a party of guests with them.

"There will be no time to tell my father just at present," said Ronald; "so, for Dora, we must keep our secret. It will not do to tell your father before I tell mine."

They arranged to keep the secret until Lord Earle should be alone again. They were to meet twice every day—in the early morning, while the dew lay on the grass; and in the evening, when the hall would be full of bustle and gayety.

Ronald felt guilty—he hardly knew how or why—when his father commiserated him for the two lonely weeks he had spent. Lonely! He had not felt them so; they had passed all too quickly for him. How many destinies were settled in that time!

There was little time for telling his secret to Lord Earle. The few guests who had returned to Earlescourt were men of note, and their host devoted himself to their entertainment.

Lady Earle saw some great change in her son. She fancied that he spent a great deal of time out-of-doors. She asked him about it, wondering if he had taken to study botany, for late and early he never tired of rambling in the park. She wondered again at the flush that crimsoned his face; but the time was coming when she would understand it all.

It is probable that, if Ronald at that time had had as much of Dora's society as he liked, he would soon have discovered his mistake, and no great harm would have been done; but the foolish romance of the stolen meetings had a charm for him. In those hurried interviews he had only time to think of Dora's love—he never noted her deficiencies; he was charmed with her tenderness and grace; her artless affection was so pretty the difference between her and those with whom he was accustomed to talk was so great; her very ignorance had a piquant charm for him. So they went on to their fate.

One by one Lord Earle's guests departed, yet Ronald had not told his secret. A new element crept into his love, and urged him on. Walking one day through the park with his father, they overtook Dora's father. A young man was with him, and the two were talking earnestly together, so earnestly that they never heard the two gentlemen; and, in passing by Ronald distinguished the words, "You give me your daughter, Mr. Thorne, and trust me to make her happy."

Ronald Earle turned quickly to look at the speaker. He saw before him a young man evidently a well-to-do farmer from his appearance, with a calm, kind face and clear honest eyes; and he was asking for Dora—Dora, who was to be his wife, and live at Earlescourt. He could hardly control his impatience; it seemed to him that evening would never come.

Dinner was over at last. Lord Earle sat with Sir Harry Laurence over a bottle of claret, and Lady Earle was in the drawing-room and had taken up her book. Ronald hastened to the favourite trysting-place, the brook-side; Dora was there already, and he saw that her face was still wet with tears. She refused at first to tell him her sorrow. Then she whispered a pitiful little story, that made her lover resolve upon some rash deeds.

Ralph Holt had been speaking to her father, and had asked her to marry him. She had said "No;" but her mother had wept, and her father had grown angry, and had said she should obey him.

"He has a large farm," said Dora, with a bitter sigh. "He says I should live like a great lady, and have nothing to do. He would be kind to my father and mother: but I do not love him," she added.

Clasping her tender little hands round Ronald's arm, "I do not love him," she sobbed; "and, Ronald, I do love you."

He bent down and kissed her pretty tear-bedewed face, all the chivalry of his nature aroused by her words.

"You shall be my wife, Dora," he said, proudly, "and not his. This very evening I will tell my father, and ask his consent to our marriage. My mother is sure to love you—she is so kind and gracious to every one. Do not tremble, my darling; neither Ralph Holt nor any one else shall take you from me."

She was soon comforted; there was no bound or limit to her faith in Ronald Earle.

"Go home now," he said, "and to-morrow my father himself shall see you. I will teach that young farmer his place. No more tears, Dora—our troubles will end to-night."

He went with her down the broad walk, and then returned to the hall. He walked very proudly, with his gallant head erect, saying to himself that this was a free country, and he could do what he liked; but for all that his heart beat loudly when he entered the drawing-room and found Lord and Lady Earle. They looked up smilingly at him, all unconscious that their beloved son, the heir of Earlescourt, was there to ask permission to marry the lodge-keeper's daughter.

CHAPTER V.

Ronald Earle had plenty of courage—no young hero ever led a forlorn hope with more bravery than he displayed in the interview with his parents, which might have daunted a bolder man. As he approached, Lady Earle raised her eyes with a languid smile.

"Out again, Ronald!" she said. "Sir Harry Laurance left his adieus for you. I think the park possesses some peculiar fascination. Have you been walking quickly? Your face is flushed."

He made no reply, but drew near to his mother; he bent over her and raised her hand to his lips.

"I am come to tell you something," he said. "Father, will you listen to me? I ask your permission to marry Dora Thorne, one of the fairest, sweetest girls in England."

His voice never faltered, and the brave young face never quailed. Lord Earle looked at him in utter amazement.

"To marry Dora Thorne!" he said. "And who, in the name of reason, is Dora Thorne?"

"The lodge-keeper's daughter," replied Ronald, stoutly. "I love her, father, and she loves me."

He was somewhat disconcerted when Lord Earle, for all reply, broke into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. He had expected a storm—expostulations, perhaps, and reproaches—anything but this.

"You cannot be serious, Ronald," said his mother, smiling.

"I am so much in earnest," he replied, that I would give up all I have in the world—my life itself, for Dora."

Then Lord Earle ceased laughing, and looked at the handsome, flushed face.

"No," said he, "you cannot be serious. You dare not ask your mother to receive a servant's daughter as her own child. Your jest is bad taste, Ronald."

"It is no jest," he replied. "We Earles are always terribly in earnest. I have promised to marry Dora Thorne, and, with your permission I intend to keep my word."

An angry flush rose to Lord Earle's face, but he controlled his impatience. "In any case," he replied quietly, "you are too young to think of marriage yet. If you had chosen the daughter of a duke, I should, for the present, refuse."

"I shall be twenty in a few months," said Ronald, "and I am willing to wait until then."

Lady Earle laid her white jewelled hand on her son's shoulder, and said gently, "My dear Ronald, have you lost your senses? "Tell me, who is Dora Thorne?" She saw tears shining in his eyes; his brave young face touched her heart. "Tell me," she continued, "who is she? Where have you seen her? What is she like?"

"She is so beautiful, mother," he said, "that I am sure you would love her; she is fair and sweet as she is modest and true. I met her in the gardens some weeks ago, and have met her every day since."

Lord and Lady Earle exchanged a glance of dismay, which did not escape Ronald.

"Why have you not told us of this before?" asked his father, angrily.

"I asked her to be my wife while you were from home," replied Ronald. "She promised, and I have only been waiting until our guests left us and you had more time."

"Is it to see Dora Thorne that you have been out so constantly?" asked Lady Earle.

"Yes, I could not let a day pass without seeing her," he replied; it would be like a day without sunshine."

"Does any one else know of this folly?" asked Lord Earle, angrily.

"No; you may be quite sure, father, I should tell you before I told any one else," replied Ronald.

They looked at him in silent dismay, vexed and amazed at what he had done—irritated at his utter folly, yet forced to admire his honour, his courage, and his truth. Both felt that some sacrifice would have carefully concealed such a love affair from them. They were proud of his candor and integrity, although deploring his folly.

"Tell us all about it, Ronald," said Lady Earle.

"Without the least hesitation, Ronald told them every word; and despite their vexation neither could help smiling—it was such a pretty love story—a little romance, all sunshine, smiles, tears and flowers. Lord Earle's face cleared as he listened; and he laid his hand on his boy's shoulder.

"Ronald," said he, "we shall disagree about your love; but, remember, I do full justice to your truth. After all the fault is my own. I might have known that a young fellow of your age, left all alone, was sure to get into mischief; you have done so. Say no more now: I clearly and distinctly refuse my consent. I appeal to your honour that you meet this young girl no more. We will talk of it another time."

When the door closed behind him, Lord and Lady Earle looked at each other. The lady's face was pale and agitated.

"Oh, Rupert," she said, "how brave and noble he is! Poor foolish boy, how proud he looked of his absurd mistake! We shall have trouble with him, I fear, I do not think so," replied her husband. "Valentine Charteris will be here soon, and when Ronald sees her he will forget this rustic beauty."

"It will be better not to thwart him," interrupted Lady Earle. "Let me manage the matter, Rupert. I will go down to the lodge to-morrow and persuade them to send the girl away; then we will take Ronald abroad, and he will forget all about it in a few months."

All night long the gentle Lady of Earlescourt was troubled with strange dreams—by vague, dark fears that haunted her and would not be laid to rest. "Evil will come of it," she said to herself—"evil and sorrow. The distant shadow saddens me now."

The next day she went to the lodge and asked for Dora. She half pardoned her son's folly when she saw the pretty dimpled face, the rings of dark hair lying on the white neck. The girl was indeed charming and modest, but unfitted—oh, how unfitted!—ever to be Lady Earle. She was graceful as a wild flower is graceful; but she had no manner, no dignity, no cultivation. She stood blushing, confused, and speechless, before the "great lady."

"You know what I want you for, Dora," said Lady Earle, kindly. "My son has told us of the acquaintance between you. I am come to say that it must cease. I do not wish to hurt or wound you. Your own sense must tell you that you can never be received either by Lord Earle or myself as our daughter. We will not speak of your inferiority in birth and position. You are not my son's equal in refinement or education; he would soon discover that, and tire of you."

Dora spoke no word, the tears falling from her bright eyes; this time there was no young lover to kiss them away. She made no reply, and when Lady Earle sent for her father, Dora ran away; she would hear no more.

"I know nothing of it, my lady," said the worthy lodge-keeper, who was even more surprised than his master had been. "Young Ralph Holt wants to marry my daughter, and I have said that she shall be his wife. I never dreamed that she knew the young master; she has not mentioned his name." Lady Earle's diplomacy succeeded beyond her most sanguine expectations. Stephen Thorne and his wife, although dazzled by the fact that their daughter had captivated the future Lord of Earlescourt, let common sense and reason prevail, and saw the disparity and misery such a marriage would cause. They promised to be gentle and kind to Dora, not to scold or reproach her, and allow some little time to elapse before urging Ralph Holt's claims.

When Lady Earle rose, she placed a twenty-pound bank-note in the hands of Stephen Thorne, saying, you are sending Dora to Eastham; that will cover the expenses."

"I could not do that, my lady," said Stephen, refusing at first to take the money. "I cannot sell poor Dora's love."

Then Lady Earle held out her delicate white hand, and the man bowed low over it. Before the sun set that evening, Stephen Thorne had taken Dora to Eastham, where she was to remain until Ronald had gone abroad.

For a few days it seemed as though the storm had blown over. There was one angry interview between father and son, when Ronald declared that sending Dora away was a breach of faith, and that he would find her out, and marry her how and when he could. Lord Earle thought his words were but the wild folly of a boy deprived of a much-desired toy. He did not give them serious heed.

The story of Earlescourt might have been different had not Ronald, while still amazed and irritated by his father's cool contempt, encountered Ralph Holt. They met at the gate leading from the fields to the high road; it was closed between them, and neither would make way.

"I have a little account to settle with you, my young lordling," said Ralph, angrily. "Doves never mate with eagles; if you want to marry, choose one of your own class, and leave Dora Thorne to me."

"Dora Thorne is mine," said Ronald, haughtily.

"She never will be," was the quick reply. "See, young master, I have loved Dora since she was a pretty, bright-eyed child. Her father lived near my father's farm then. I have cared for her all my life—I do not know that I have ever looked twice at another woman's face. Do not step in between me and my love. The world is wide, and you can choose where you will—do not rob me of Dora Thorne."

There was a mournful dignity in the man's face that touched Ronald.

"I am sorry for you," he said, "if you love Dora; for she will be my wife."

"Never!" cried Ralph. "Since you will not listen to fair words, I defy you. I will go to Eastham, and never leave Dora again until she is my own."

High angry words passed between them; but Ralph in his passion had told the secret Ronald longed to know—Dora was at Eastham.

It was a sad story, and yet no rare one. Love and jealousy robbed the boy of his better sense; duty and honour were forgotten. Under pretence of visiting one of his college friends, Ronald went to Eastham. Lord and Lady Earle saw him depart without any apprehension; they never suspected that he knew where Dora was.

TO BE CONTINUED.

A hotel at Amsterdam crowded with people who had gathered to join in the festivities in honor of the King's birthday was burned on Thursday night. Four of the inmates were killed.

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