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MANUFACTURED BY S. OBERNDORFFER. KINGSTON, ONT.



TLLSFORD is a pretty little village on a river as pure as truth, in the heart of the north and south. At the time

I write of it had all the requisites of thriving town, including a population which dripped with self satisfaction. This very comfortable commodity was so dense and universal that it fairly covered the place like a fog.

Hillsford's most remarkable citizen was a hermit, an unkempt and eccentric individual, who lived in a cabin high up on the North mountain, and was known as "Old Weaver." In winter, when the foliage was less abundant, his small dwelling could be seen from the village. a little speck of crude architecture, the smoke from which curled sometimes into the very sky. It was pointed out to visitors, who were told, without loss of time, of the hermit, his civilization defying habits and unspeakable appearance.

But it was difficult to exhibit the man himself. He came down to the village at infrequent intervals and then tarried only long enough to procure some simple necessities and departed without holding speech with any one. The townspeople had tried to break into the privacy of his home without avail. They had been repulsed with looks and gestures which inspired fear and helped to confirm tho opinion that "Old Weaver was crazy and had better be let alone."

And surely no man in his right mind could live the life he lived. His hair and whiskers showed no respect for the prevailing fashion in hirsute trimming, and his clothes were a slap at all decent garments. He rarely spoke at all, but when he did his words were briefness itself.

In summer they who went near his cabin sometimes found him sitting outside reading the Bible, an occupation from which they could not easily divert

This caused some to decide that he was "a religious crank," and helped to dissipate the theory that he had committed some terrible crime. Hillsford was full of wonder about the hermit's past life and antecedents, but as there was absolutely no way of finding out it was obliged to remain in cruel ignorance. All it knew about him was that neveral years before the time I speak of he had arrived in the village, purchased a piece of land on the top of the mountain, reared a cabin and begun a life of solitude perfectly incomprehensible to the people of the valley.

At last they mostly settled down to the belief that "Old Weaver had been crossed in love." Everybody knew that love, if it did not run smoothly, could upset people completely. This gave him exceptional interest in the eyes of the young and sentimental, although the most imaginative among them could not picture him as having ever been a personage capable of inspiring the divine

Never were they fully sensible of his value as a romantic figure until after he had been "written up" for a New York journal. A newspaper correspondent, on his summer vacation, wandered into Hillsford, and, of course, soon heard about the hermit, since he was all there was outside of the usual and uninteresting in the place. He at once spun out a column and a half of solid nonpareil, mostly speculation, tinged with sentiment, about the curious recluse.

This had a good result. It dignified the old man in the minds of the Milfordians. It lifted him from the rank of a crazy old mountaineer to an eccentric hermit, with extraordinary sentimental possibilities behind him.

It was often said that Weaver would be found starved or frozen to death some time. So every winter there was talk of "looking after him," by those in authority, but it ended in talk, as he was not exactly the kind of man to dictate to. in the vernacular of Simpson's grocery,

he was "a hard one to tackle." In the beginning of the hermit's last winter on the mountain some hunters, driven by cold to his cabin, entered and found him moaning on his rude couch. They spread the news in Milford, and "the authorities" conferred together and decided that it was time to act. But what should they do with him? Nobody could go up to his lodge on the mountain to take care of him; his wretched dwell- | wild eyes were not on them they called ing contained no comforts. And nobody to him that he must consent to go with wanted to take him into his home. There was the county house, where all paupers were sent, but that was near

the county seat, seven miles away. They who were most outspoken in the attacking party fell back a few paces. matter of having him "looked after" and who owned the largest and most comfortable houses, "hemmed and hawed" when it came to a question of taking him in. Some one, in a moment of humane feeling, suggested that the seven miles' journey to the poorhouse might | neither criminal nor pauper. Had you prove dangerous to the sick man, and come here proffering private charity I

who became responsible for it. the poorhouse faction prevailed, and the at them in a way that was convincing. fiat went forth that Old Weaver must be taken charge of by the county, willing or

unwilling. headed and dictatorial personages, with ... He's as crazy as a kite," piped up two that degree of heartlessness peculiar to or three others, anxious to cover up their the class known as "prominent citizens." | chagrin. A heavy snow lay upon the ground, and. the mountain roads were unbroken. big sled, generously supplied with straw

and lunch baskets, was made ready. The departure of this hermit capturing expedition was an event. The postoffice frame of mind, all agreeing that the herloafers gazed upon the imposing spectamit might die a dozen times over before cle with envy in their hearts, though they cheered the noble philanthropists roundly. The people at the corner drug

first rap on the hermit's door had the sound of authority in it, delivered as it was by -the formidable fist of the town marshal, backed by the approbation of the other prominent citizens who accom-There was no response.

The expression of decision on the marshal's face deepened as he began to beat upon the door with both fists and kick it with the thick soles of his tremendous

While they were parleying about whether it was time to use the ax or not the closed shutter of the hermit's single window opened, revealing his haggard face, in which blazed a pair of eyes whose wrathful lightning fairly annihilated the prominent citizens.

"What do you want?" he asked, after a moment of discomfiting silence, as they stood, wordless, under the spell of his unspoken anger.
"We heard you were sick," said the marshal. "Well?"

"We knew you would need help," said the justice of the peace, "and so came to try to do something for you."

"You have put yourselves to unnecessary trouble. I want nothing." "But our duty as citizens will not allow us to let a fellow being suffer,"

said Deacon White. "Your first duty is to mind your own business," said the hermit.

"Here is Dr. Horsefly, who will help you right off, if you will let us in," said Mr. Smollett, also a prominent citizen.

"When I am weary of life I shall send for Dr. Horsefly. Until then he must excuse me," returned the hermit, with something like merriment dancing in his

authority was the tacitly understood signal for a concerted rally of the rescuers. Instinctively they drew nearer together, and one said:



MOANING ON HIS RUDE COUCH.

"Come, come, Weaver, this is no way to do. We are here in the friendliest spirit, and are sincerely anxious to have you taken care of. You are a sick man. You ought not to be alone as you are." "Well, what do you propose to do with

"Why, why-take you where you will properly cared for, of course," answered Justice McCracken.

"Now, that is kind, I admit," said the hermit, and he looked at them with a strange, amused expression in his eyes. Believing that they were gaining ground, they grew bolder.

"Yes, we wish to be kind. We can't let you perish up here, you know." "Well, where do you propose to take

"Hem, h'm: why, you see, Weaveryou see Hillsford has no hospital-"But you have fixed upon some place

for me, I presume?" questioned the hermit, in the tone of one about to surrender. "Y-c-s," spoke up another. "We thought we would take you to Johns-

"Ah, that's the county seat, isn't it?" "And the county house is near there,

"Yes." "Well, that's a good enough place for

any one who wants to go there. I don't. Now it is time for you to leave," and he shut the window. The besiegers conferred together and

again began to beat upon the door. Feeling more courageous when Weaver's them, or they would take him by force. The window opened once more and revealed the gaunt form of the hermit

grasping a shotgun. Instinctively the

The hermit spoke: "I will blow the head off any man who again lays a hand upon my door. I am in my own house, on my own ground, and there is not law enough in the republic to permit you to enter and lay a hand on a man who is might even throw serious blame on those | should have resented it, but I should have respected you. As it is I will kill However, after much thought and you like dogs if you trouble me a momore talk had been put upon the subject, | ment more." And he pointed the gun

Grumblingly they moved away. "He's right," said the justice, who had a mortal fear of firearms; "he's not a pauper. The expedition set forth the next | He owns this ground and he owns the morning. It was principally composed | house. If he won't come with us wilof "the authorities," otherwise hard lingly we shall have to let him alone."

> *He ought to be confined as a dangerous lunatic," said the doctor, in whose bosom still rankled Weaver's poisoned arrow. They reached Hillsford in a crestfallen

> they would "put themselves out" to do anything for him again, (Continued on page three.)

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The doctor stood silent, medicine case in hand, the rigidity of the regular's code proventing his doing any trumpeting on TEMPLE OF MUSIC

W. J. MERRIMAN HAS OPENED The doctor colored under this deadly insult, feeling it the more because the earth was yet fresh over his two last.

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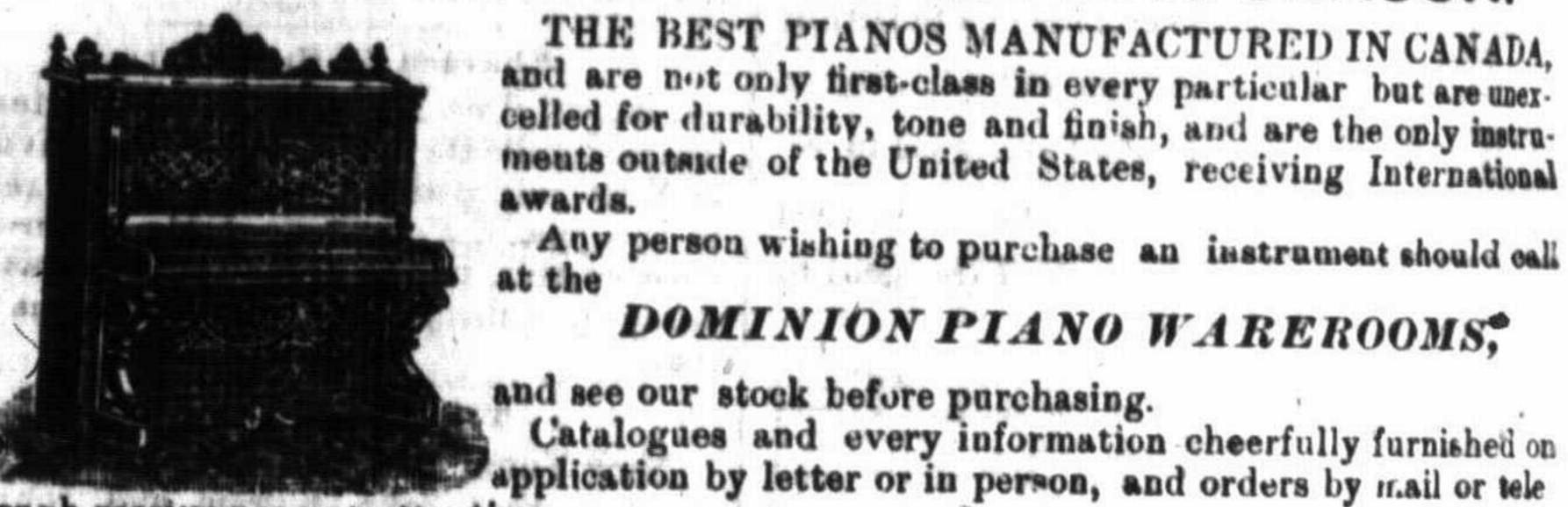
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