

# The Star



## AND Conception Bay Journal.

HEARTS RESOLVED AND HANDS PREPARED, THE BLESSINGS THEY ENJOY TO GUARD. SMOLLET.

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### The Record of a Night.

"Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer cloud,  
Without our special wonder?"

SHAKESPEARE.

All was gloomy magnificence in the chamber of death: the bed curtains of sable velvet were fastened back with cords and tassels of burnished silver; the sheet which covered the cold remains of mortality stretched beneath it, was of white cambric of the finest texture, richly embroidered, and the wax candles, which gleamed cold and ghastly on the uncovered face of the corpse, were shedding their faint light from candlesticks of ebony, tipped with pearls. Six maidens in robes of white satin, knelt before a temporary altar blazing with jewels at the further extremity of the apartment; while, nearer the bed of death the same number of youths clad in mourning habits, chanted the *De Profundis*, almost beneath their breath. But there was yet another in that place of sorrow; a young and lovely woman, with a blanched cheek and a dimmed eye, whose grief seemed deeper and less susceptible of consolation than that of the maiden train, whose glances travelled at intervals from the death couch to the jewelled altar, and thence to the band of mourning youths beside them. Her eye strayed not for a moment from the spot where, beside the dead, and at times the deep breathing of her anguish caused an undulation in the light cambric which covered the body. She was very beautiful and as she bent towards the cold clay of the departed, with her long hair scattered over her shoulders, and her large dark eyes raised in prayer, while her loose raiment floated round her like a cloud, she seemed some exquisite master-piece, marble-hewn, and noiseless. After a time the *De Profundis* died away on the lips of the mourners, and there was a stillness in the death-room: the curtains of heavy black velvet which fell over the wide casements of the chamber, the sepulchral flickerings of the wax lights, and the large, heavy bed, with its dark mockery of pomp, whereon might be easily traced the outline of the corpse, with its closed eyes and bloodless lips fully revealed; and that chilling and mysterious rigidity of feature and expression so peculiar to death, laid bare, as it were, to the most careless gaze, made every woman-heart, save one, quail and sink in that proud chamber: suddenly a low whispering reached the ear of the mourner beside the couch; she started, and looked around. A frown, half anger and half anguish, was upon her brow, as with a haughty gesture she waved her attendants from the room—as they rose to obey the signal, the turret clock sounded the eleventh hour, and are its iron tongue was mute, each had reverentially bent the head before the death couch, and departed. When the wide door slowly closed behind the train, the lady rose from her knees; she let fall a thick curtain before the altar, which totally obscured its brilliancy, and threw the upper part of the spacious chamber into deep shade; and after having traversed the floor once or twice with a step so noiseless that it was unechoed, she again threw herself beside the corpse and entwined her small pale fingers in the dark mass of curling hair which laid upon the forehead; she smiled as the raven locks clung round her hand, but the smile was one of fear, not happiness; then she cast her white arms across the body, and bent over it until her cheek rested upon that of the dead and ere long she pressed her lips upon the lips and forehead which met with the chill of marble. She spoke—words of terrible meaning—of unholy supplication—of frenzied passion; and ever and anon she wrung the head which she grasped in her emotion, and besought it to return her clasp—then she bade the eyes which had so often looked into her's, answer them now, as they were wont

to do—and the lips which she had pressed, to return her kiss, and to whisper love as they had ever done—"Am not I your wife!" she murmured in her passion; "am I less tender, less beloved, than when you won me to your halls? Did you not swear that while I lived, I should never ask in vain? Arise, then—awake—I sue to you—I, to whom you swore never to refuse the slightest boon—I care not for aught beyond this—only awake embrace clasp me! and call me yours, as ye have done—remain with me until my poor earthly age is past, and we can lie side by side where you are now stretched—her me—answer me—obey me!"—She spoke in her passion, and she was answered—midnight tolled from the turret clock, and at the last stroke of the hour, the hand of the lady was fast lock'd in that of the corpse. A cold shudder crept over her frame, but she did not speak, or stir; a clammy arm wound itself round her slender figure, and again a lip with the chillness of the grave upon it, rested on her eyes looked upon her too; large, and dark, and searching eyes, but there was no light in them: and, finally, the covering quivered above the limbs of him whom she had called from his rest, and he arose. Instinctively she disengaged herself from his clasp, and sprang from the floor; in a moment he stood beside her; his grave clothes clung about his limbs, which were wasted and feeble; his parted lips, wreathed into a ghastly smile, revealed the white and dazzling teeth beneath them, strangely and fearfully, and cold, blank, soulless eyes glared fully upon her with a look in which affection and insanity were supernaturally blended. A sudden thought flashed over the spirit of the lady, when she beheld the fearful accomplishment of her unholy abjurations. She sprang towards the curtain which concealed her to look round; her unearthly companion stood in the centre of the floor, quivering in every limb, and veiling his eyes with his bony and bloodless hands, lest the light of that jewelled shrine should flash upon them; and she knew that from his lips proceeded the wordless and thrilling sound. She withdrew her hand from the dark drapery; heavy sobs burst from her overcharged heart, but she could not weep; in her blindness she had not looked to find him thus. After a while she again approached the quailing form, and with words though they trembled on her lips, she besought a pardon and a blessing; there was no reply; and then she rallied her bewildered and failing energies, and with kinder and fonder tones, she laid her unwilling hand upon the arm of the fearful being, and he looked up; his first hurried and shivering glance was towards the veiled shrine, and then, when the cold eye had met no appalling and sacred glare, he turned it blank, and meaningless on his bride—long they stood thus looking upon each other, and at length the lady obeyed a silent signal, and a smile more fearful than an earthly frown, they sat down side by side upon the death couch; the cold stiffened arm around her—the clammy cheek resting on her bosom, and the hollow rattling breath waiving to and fro her dishevelled hair. One by one the wasted candles died away in their sockets and there were none to renew them; for who should dare intrude on that proud lady in her vigils with the dead? Darkness came at length; the last poor flame sank, quivered, and expired. No sound was audible in the vast apartment, save the hollow and unnatural breathing of the "dead alive," and the beating of the lady's heart; yet she fancied strange voices in the silence—whisperings, and laughings, and murmurings, not of this earth; flappings, of wings against the arras, and upon the casements, and above all other sounds, came the breathing, the low, and sepulchral maddening breathing of the fearful being who rested on her bosom; at

length over excited nature failed amid the struggle and she became unconscious—with one long wild laugh she sank from the clasp which encircled her, and insensibility rescued her from the horrors by which she was environed—

The morning light had gradually brightened into day, and yet no summons came from the death-chamber to the wondering and bewildered mourners.—At length a favorite maiden ventured to unlock the door, but the lady did not turn her head at the sound; she was kneeling beside the bed, with her cheek resting on that of the corpse, which lay stretched rigidly beneath its covering as they had last beheld it; its hand was in her's, and their hair was mingled on the pillow. After the pause of a few moments, they bent down and breathed her name. She rose slowly, and passed her hand over her eyes, like one who strives to awaken from a fearful dream, and then she cast a hurried and terrified look at the corpse. Those who stood round her were amazed, for her hair had become partially gray, and she was pale and wasted, far beyond what sorrow, even deep as her's, could have wasted her in one short night—for in their soft and tranquil rest they had found it but too short—yet they dared not question her; and when, in a deep, stern tone, she bade them bear their feet to the grave ere the sun set, they marvelled still more, for he was but newly dead; nevertheless, they knew that she brooked not argument, and they obeyed.

From that day she withered; and for the first time since the hasty funeral of her lord, was the door of the death chamber opened, on the evening when a priest left her bedside, and bade her maidens prepare her shroud, for that she would never more need garment in this world.—*Court Gazette.*

**Horse-radish.** One drachm of the fresh scraped root of this plant, infused with four ounces of water in a close vessel for two hours, and made into a syrup with double its weight in sugar, is an improved recipe for hoarseness. A tea-spoonful of this has often proved suddenly effectual.

**Immense Herd of Cattle.** Towards evening, on rising a hill, we were suddenly greeted by a sight which seemed to astonish even the oldest amongst us. The whole plain, as far as the eye could discern, was covered with one enormous mass of Buffaloes. One vision, at the very least computation, would certainly extend ten miles; and in the whole of this great space, including about eight miles in width from the bluffs to the river bank, there was apparently no vista in that incalculable multitude. It was truly a sight that would have excited even the dullest mind to enthusiasm. Our party rode up to within a few hundred yards of the edge of the herd before any alarm was communicated. Then the bulls, which are always stationed round as sentinels, began pawing the ground, and throwing the earth over their heads; in a few minutes they started in a slow clumsy canter; but, as we neared them, they quickened their

pace to an astonishingly rapid gallop, and, in a few minutes were entirely beyond the reach of our guns, but we were still so near that their enormous horns and long shaggy beards were very distinctly seen. Shortly after we encamped our hunters brought in the choice parts of five. *Townsend's Journey across the Rocky Mountains.*

**A Nightcap worth a Thousand Guineas.** An old gentleman of the name of Hyatt, who was a resident in the West Indies, when he arrived at the age of seventy, being afflicted with stone in the bladder, determined to come to England to undergo an operation for its removal. Sir Astley Cooper performed the operation with consummate skill. When the patient was well enough to leave his bed, he observed to Sir Astley, "That he had *fee'd* his physician, but he had not rewarded his surgeon." Upon asking Sir Astley what is *fee* was, he replied, "Two hundred guineas." "Pooh, pooh! exclaimed the old gentleman, "I shan't give you two hundred guineas, there, that is what I shall give you," tossing off his nightcap, and throwing it at Sir Astley. "Thank you, sir," said Sir A., "Anything from you is acceptable." And he put the cap into his pocket. Upon examination it was found to contain a cheque for one thousand guineas!—*Physic and Physicians.*

The *Nashville Banner* says:—"By an old law of this state, a premium of three dollars and a half is paid out of the State Treasury for every wolf scalp taken over a certain age, say six months. The *Hamilton Gazette* relates an anecdote of a man in the upper end of that county, who, wishing to do "the state some service," caught a couple of old Wolves, took them home, and in the course of a year, has reared a brood of law offenders, which he executes from time to time, as they reach the proper age, receiving for their scalps the premium in such cases made and provided.

**A Conspiracy.**—Captain Murray relates the following story:—"There were, and I believe still are, two lawyers in New York, with the peculiarly happy names of Catchem and Chetum. People laughed at seeing these two names in juxtaposition over the door, so the lawyers thought it advisable to separate them by the insertion of their Christian names—Mr. Catchem's name was Isaac, Mr. Chetum's, Uriah. A new board was ordered, but when sent to the painter, it was found to be too short to admit the Christian names at full length. The painter, therefore, put only the initials before the surnames, which made the matter still worse than before, for there now appeared—"I. Catchem and U. Chetum."