

THE GAVEL;

A MONTHLY MASONIC JOURNAL.

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR:—BRO.: ROBERT RAMSAY.

ADDRESS:—Box 247 Toronto, or Orillia.

Published on the first of
each month. }

“*Let there be Light.*”

{ Price \$1.50 per Annum.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1870.

No. 3.

OUT IN THE DARK.

Before a cheerful fire, in the best kitchen of a snug west-country cottage, sat two persons, a man and a woman, both advanced in years. All around wore an air of homely comfort. Of mere ornament there was little; but the furniture, though plain as could be, and bearing the marks of long service, was good and solid; and its trim arrangement and spotless cleanliness spoke highly for the good housekeeping of its owners. Two or three old line engravings, mostly of scriptural subjects; decorated the walls, and the lattice window was half hidden by a crimson curtain. The whole aspect of the cottage betokened competence and modern independence.

Nor were the inmates belied by appearances, for few among the inhabitants of the village were more universally respected than David and Mary Holt. In the same cottage they had lived for thirty years, paying their way, and asking no favor of any man; and for five-and-twenty of those years David had been parish clerk and schoolmaster, and in the estimation of the younger parishioners, little, if at all, inferior in dignity to the parson himself. His wife, with no less respect, won more affection; for David Holt was a stern and hard man, always just, but seldom generous; while Mary was forever tender-hearted, with a kind word and smile for everybody.

Such were the couple who sat, not very long ago, by the cosy cottage fire-side. A long clay pipe, just put aside, lay upon the snow white deal table, and David Holt was reading aloud from a ponderous family Bible, while his good wife, her hands crossed upon her knees, sat reverently listening. As befitted their solemn occupation, the faces of both were grave and quiet, but that quiet gravity seemed only to throw into stronger relief the characteristic expressions of each; David, square headed and square chested, with massive jaw and chin, heavy, overhanging eyebrows, and deep-set, keen, gray eyes, hard, proud and unforgiving, the embodiment of stern self-will and rugged pride; the old woman, gentle and quiet, with downcast eyes, soft, gray hair, and pleasant, smiling lips, that told of nothing but love and charity.

Slowly and steadily, never raising his eyes from the sacred pages, David Holt read on; but even above his loud, harsh tones could be heard the unmistakable sounds of a storm raging without. The wind howled and moaned over the wild, west-country moor, straining against the cottage eaves, wrestling with