

and began removing the village buildings, sometimes singly, at others in groups, according to the direction of the wind—as for instance when the stable of the Barley hotel caught fire and swept up, regardless of intervening obstacles, to the next inn on the corner, kept by one Tidy in a right tidy manner they say. Some still talk of a grand military ball which was held there more than half a century ago, and which apparently was a very tidy affair. How indeed could it help being so, with redcoats galore, and pretty girls from far and near, for in those days people came from Hamilton to Ancaster for their gaieties, as well as their clothes and groceries? We are quite sure that on this evening long ago the candles shone o'er fair women and brave men, while

Music arose with its voluptuous swell.  
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which  
spake again—  
And all went merry as a marriage bell.

All the "first families" were there,  
Crookes, Cooleys, Cheps and many  
more of the familiar names which

Have been carved  
For many a year  
On the tomb.

A dim echo from that far-off night repeats that the fairest debutante of the evening was a sister of Sheriff Murton, whose family then resided in the original Hermitage house. Our genial sheriff himself had to remain at home, and go early to bed, as he was not old enough to frivol, or no doubt he would have been there, too.

The officers, after the custom of those days, danced the first three dances in their swords and spurs, greatly to the detriment of their fair partner's gowns.

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Somewhere about the year of grace 1820, the "man-of-the-time" came and took up his abode in the village, where he henceforth lived, and where he died and is buried, after having contributed much to the advancement of Ancaster in many ways.

This enterprising pioneer was named Job Loder, and he was the builder and owner of all the mills and water privileges of the whole place for many years, running grist mills, saw mill, carding and woolen mills all along the stream on the site of the present ruins.

Mr. Loder also had a general store,

close to his house in the village, where he did a rushing business, giving constant employment to four clerks and a typewriter. No, not a typewriter; I forgot it was seventy years ago! Finally the old gentleman made so much money that he didn't know what to do with it, so he sold out his mills and water privileges to a person named Russell, who is still spoken of by the older people as a man of wealth, enterprise and many misfortunes—a man with many irons in the fire, one of whose schemes was that Ancaster should supply Hamilton with water, going so far as to have a survey made, but there, for some reason, want of water perhaps, the matter stuck. He then formed a company to open a carpet manufactory in Ancaster, but that also withered in the bud, and rag carpet weaving is as far as we have got yet. Mr. Russel's house is still with us, and must have been a very desirable residence, as he had a beautiful farm at the back, stretching all along the east side of the village, from the lover's lane to the lime kiln, watered by the crystal Yuba, and wooded beautifully in those days like an English park. He lived, 'tis said, in good style, giving employment to many, and judging from his bill of sale, date 1853, he had everything requisite to make home pleasant, from cut-glass decanters and "four post beds with crimson damask hangings," down to martingales and stable buckets.

A strange and sad misfortune befell this prosperous man as he was, on one occasion, hurrying through a winter journey to Lower Canada on some contract business, of which the point was that he had to get to Montreal ahead of some rival contractor. It was a practical illustration of the old saw, "Most haste, worse speed," for, on taking some adventurous short cut over the river near Prescott, the ice gave way, the horses were drowned, and Mr. Russel only was saved after hours of frightful suffering, half submerged, clinging to the ice, and finally the poor man proved to be so terribly frost-bitten that both his arms had to be amputated. This circumstance would have been enough trouble for one incarnation surely, but it was followed after a time by a ghastly sequel in the Ancaster woolen mill, when Mr. Russel's only daughter, a bright and handsome girl, accompanied by her lover from Toronto, and