F LETTERS,
Post Office, Saint Andrews,
PTEMBER, 1841.

Kiagon Ireland
Kellum Mary 2
Kerr John
Kyle Christopher
L
Little William
Lowden John
Lawrence Luther
Lowry John
M
McShane Barnard
McLoid Hugh
McDonald Hugh
McMaster Alexander
McClusky Patrick 2
McGee Charles
McLaughlin James
McDonald Miss E
McBride Peter
McDonnell William
McAleenan Hugh
McKenzie Robert
McMaster Captain A D
Murphy Julia
Mulholland Hugh
Murphy Daniel 2
Magee William
Murphy Mary
Morrison William
Milligan William
Murphy Timothy
Malone James
N
Nugent Jonn 2
O
O'Hara Hugh
P
Payne Mary
Paine John
Paine Thomas
Pettygrove Samuel
Q
Quait Andrew
R
Raymond Wellsley 2
Raistes Samuel
Rideout Benjamin
Rideout Oliver
Regan Stephen
Roix Mrs E
Robinson Scott
Robinson George
Riddle William
Richards John
S
Sunson Mrs
Sharar Martha
Staples John
Soley Robert H
Stine Peter, junior
T
Turry William
W
Watson George
Wayecott John
Wren John
Williams John 2
Y
Young George
Young Isaac, junior.

Saint Patrick
McJarvy Thomas
McAlennon Hugh 3
McWilliam John 2
McConnell Hugh
McWilliam Henry
Moor James
Redington Patrick
Story Stephen
Wise John
Wallace William

GEO. F. CAMPBELL,
Postmaster
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Saint George, by Coach
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Saint George, by Coach—
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y Coach—Mondays, Wed
days at 10 a. m

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Volume VIII

The Standard,

OR FRONTIER GAZETTE.

No. XL.

Price 15s.] SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 8, 1841. [17s. 6d. by Mail

THE HEROINE.

OR THE BLACK BROTHERHOOD OF WENTENSFIELD.

* * * It was evening in the month of June, 1790. Michael was from home; Krettel and Madame Vanderstitchel busied in removing the remains of a supper they had just served to some travellers, and inhabitants of the environs. At the close of the repast, at the moment when the conversation had become more general, and the pipes of all were lighted, the men amused themselves by relating stories of supernatural apparitions seen at 'Het Kyruyz'; they talked a great deal also of the numerous thefts which were each night committed in the neighbourhood, and the assassinations which often took place, as they said, near the cross roads of the ruins of Wertensfield. All were agreed in attributing such crimes to a mysterious association of malefactors, a band of robbers, to which had been given the name of 'the Black Brotherhood of Wertensfield,' and, as it was asserted, collected together in the woods of Holsters, under the order of one named, Jaen, long celebrated throughout Brabant for his cruelty as well as address. And, as ever happens on such occasions, each in his turn improved on what he heard. These fearful stories were listened to by some with a blind confidence in their truth, and by others with undisguised contempt. At this moment might be remarked a stranger, whose costume announced an opulent farmer, and who having entered the cabaret at the end of the meal had asked for a pot of beer, placed himself at the end of the table, and seemed to listen with attention to what was told about Het Kruis.

'The other night,' said one of the peasants, 'Mays Von Coos passed along by the ruins on returning from Tilburg, and was attacked by four men in masks, who threw him down and took from him all the silver on his person.'

'Mays Von Coos is a coward; who the devil can believe him?'

The night before last, about midnight, farmer Peters Waersages was on horseback, and near the old chateau, when he saw issuing from the chapel a kind of shadow, which perseveringly hung on his heels, and despite his utmost efforts, he could never get rid of it.—Do he press his horse to a quicker pace, he did saw the shadow remaining noiselessly behind him on the edge of the road. Did he slacken his course, the shade instantly stopped, ever preserving sufficient distance so as to prevent him making out what it was. A cold sweat bedewed all his limbs trickled from his brow! but matters were much worse when he reached 'Het Kruys,' for he suddenly heard himself called on to stop by a man whom he instantly recognised for Jaen of Holsters, and who cried out to him in a terrible voice——'

'Well Miss Idleback, what are you doing there motionless, and your mouth wide open?' broke in at this moment the Widow Vanderstitchel, rudely pushing Krettel away, who for some time had been listening with rapt attention to the story of farmer Waersagers. Startled by so unexpected an apostrophe, she let fall the plate she had in her hand, and it broke into a thousand fragments. A burst of laughter from all followed the crash of the crockery. The anger of Madame Vanderstitchel may easily be imagined.

'Fool! stupid idiot! you are always doing some mischief or other. Very fine, indeed, for you stand with your arms dangling idly like the busybody you are, and give away to silly fears, to affected delicacies, like a young girl that has never left a town. I know not what prevents me from turning you out of doors this very instant, good for nothing.'

It was the first time Madame Vanderstitchel had openly spoke of sending her away.—Therefore did such a threat cause the young girl's heart to feel a bitter pang. In the mean time the peasants had already resumed the interrupted story.

'Well, as I was just now telling you, it was Jaen himself in flesh and blood who thus stopped the unhappy Waersagers. 'I expected thee', he said, at the same time clapping the muzzle of a pistol to his head: 'instantly get off thy horse, for I and thee have an old account to settle.' In a moment the farmer saw himself surrounded on all sides by the black brotherhood of Wentensfield, who stripped him of every valuable in the twinkling of an eye. And very lucky it was for him, for under pretext of that theft so marvellously approves. Peters Waersagers refused to pay him a sou he was much pressed to do, and obtained fresh time from his compassionate creditors. The accident was, in fact, a fortunate occurrence for him. I fancy there's about as much truth in it as the other strange stories so glibly told of the black brotherhood of Wertensfield.'

'Tis all very fine, my master,' interrupted the stranger, taking part of the conversation; 'but yet I'll wager a trifle that none of these here, who show so much incredulity, dare venture to repair alone at this late hour to the cross roads of Wertensfield. Come, let us see' he added, drawing out his purse; 'this piece of gold shall be his who, with this bit of red chalk, will go and write his name on Het Kruys, and bring us back a branch of the wild box which grows beside it.'

On hearing this singular proposition, the assembled peasants turned towards the stranger, whose eyes had assumed an expression of contemptuous cunning, and gazed on him silently and long; but none seemed disposed to accept the challenge. At this moment a soft and gentle hand had pressed lightly on the shoulders of the unknown.

'Give me the piece of gold,' said Krettel, whose eyes were yet filled with tears, 'and I will go to the crossways of 'Het Kruys.'

'Thou, young girl!'

'Krettel! bravo, Krettel!' cried all the peasants, laughing loud, and clapping their hands.

'I will go,' continued Krettel resolutely.—She took a morsel of red chalk, and threw her eyes on the Widow Vanderstitchel. 'It will thus be seen whether I have not more courage than a town bred girl.'

Madame Vanderstitchel would doubtless have opposed Krettel's rash design, but the young girl had taken the piece of gold, and despite the darkness of the night, darting through the door, already disappeared.

When she suddenly decided on accepting the stranger's challenge, Krettel had but one motive, that of atoning for her clumsiness, and proving to Madame Vanderstitchel that she was not so faint hearted and timid as she thought; and then that threat which had been made her of driving her from the auberge, the thought of being compelled to take her departure, of being for ever separated from Michael—all—all—had impelled her to brave a moment's fear. But when she found herself all alone in the dark wood at an advanced hour of the night, far from every habitation, and in a place of so many fearful things were told, her heart began to fear with quick and hurried movement, and she was compelled to invigorate her drooping courage by the thought of all she might gain from perseverance, and lose by failure. Already had she almost traversed the gloomy fortes of Holsters, already did she perceive looming on a far off height the dreaded walls of the chateau of Wertensfield. The sky was dark and menacing, thick vapers rolled heavily along in the space; they veiled and unveiled by turns the pale rays of the moon who herself seemed gliding rapidly on her way to take shelter behind the lowering cloud. The alternate light and shade rendered the savage aspect of those desolate and dismal places yet more striking and fearful. The sight of the chapel of the chateau, with its half ruined arches, whose sculptured and indented outlines were darkly defined against an heroism of ghastly hue; the tufts of lichens and other creepers which clustered over the fallen building; the gigantic masses of forest trees, that stretched majestically around; in fine the old stone cross which, sad and solitary, rose from its sunken pedestal at the deserted cross roads, where the four ways leading into the neighbouring woods joined together, all contributed, with the silence that reigned around, to increase with ten fold force the terrors of the poor young girl. However, like the spirit of the surrounding darkness, she still advanced, making the least noise as possible, and painfully retaining even the breath, when, at the moment of her reaching the foot of Het Kruys, she distinctly saw a light flash from the vaults of the chapel; at the same instant, a singular noise which sounded near her made her turn her head, and she perceived in mute alarm a horse already bridled and saddled, a valice on his back, pawing the ground with impatience, fastened to the branches of the tree under whose shade he seemed awaiting the arrival of his master. There was no longer room for doubt—the place was inhabited by the Black Brotherhood of Holsters! She instantly fell on her knees on the steps of Het Kruys, piously invoked the protection of Heaven, and then, after having with a bit of red chalk traced her name hurriedly on the pedestal, and broke off a branch of wild box, she hastened to resume her way back to the auberge, but as she turned towards the chapel, a human form, whom terror prevented her from clearly distinguishing, rose erect in one of its roofless aisles.

'Stop!' cried an imperious voice, which was repeated by all the startled echoes of Wertensfield.

Then Krettel perceived that promptness of resolution and great presence of mind could alone save her from death, or something worse. The shrill sound of many whistles ran loud through the resounding ruins; a pistol was fired, but she luckily escaped all injury in the surrounding thick gloom. Hastily did she unfasten the horse, throw herself into the saddle, and dart off at a gallop on the road to Becks.

Ten minutes after, completely breathless, Krettel reached the door of the auberge where she was received with acclamation by all the peasants, who praised her courage high, and with mute but expressive tenderness by Michael Vanderstitchel, who, on his return home, having learnt with much disquietude what had taken place, was just on the point of setting out to meet her at the cross-ways of Het Kruys. Krettel hastened to relate what had befallen her, and then admired the beauty of the horse of which she had thus possessed herself and which it was evident must have belonged to the chief of the band of robbers himself. The valise contained some articles of men's apparel, and four thousand livres in gold. At sight of so large a sum, all present cried out more loudly declaring that the poor girl had well earned it all, and Madame Vanderstitchel, in her exuberant joy, nearly stifled her in a warm embrace. Then the aubergister, without further explanation, locked up the four thousand livres in a strong box, and had the horse bedded up in her stable.—It was only at this moment that it was perceived with surprise that the stranger was no longer in the hall, without any one being exactly able to tell when he left it.

However, the next day being Sunday, Madame Vanderstitchel dressed herself in her best at an early hour to go and hear mass at Turkhout, and at the same time give information to the officers of justice, for she was anxious to know whether the horse and his burden might be considered a lawful capture. But before setting out, she enjoined Krettel to take great care of the house in her absence.

'Clean the pewter dishes well, child,' she said, 'and get breakfast. We—my son and me, I mean—shall soon return.'

'And we'll go this evening to the kenesse of Hoogstraeten,' said Michael, gazing tenderly on Krettel.

'And I will bring thee a silk apron and maline handkerchief with crimson spots from Turkhout,' resumed Madame Vanderstitchel, embracing her.

'Courage, I have good hopes,' whispered Michael in her ear, and squeezing her hand.

'Adieu, Krettel, adieu, my daughter.—Thou remainest alone, therefore take great care of everything, and mind the business of the house as well as that of the kitchen.'

In the intoxication of her delight, Krettel stood on the threshold of the door until her eyes ached, gazing earnestly after Madame Vanderstitchel and her son as long as she could see them wending their way on the road to Turkout. Then, at length, she entered the house with a gentle sigh, and set to work with ardor and diligence, thinking all the while on what Michael had said to her in a low voice. And if any one from the top of one of the eminences about Holsters had cast his eyes on the high road, he might then have seen a man of lofty stature, enveloped in an ample cloak, cautiously leaving the wood where he had kept concealed while Michael and his mother passed by, cast a look at the many windings of the pathway to see if they had disappeared, and at length bend his steps towards the auberge of Beckx, after having first made sure of the solitude and silence which reigned around.

Krettel reflected long and deeply within herself after the departure of Michael and his mother. Never had she experienced so much happiness at any one time. Madame Vanderstitchel had called her her child, Michael pressed her hand and bid her hope. Hope, what a joyous future, and what happy projects did the poor young girl build on that single word. A few minutes had scarce flown away when she heard a knock at the door.—She hastened to open it, and it was with a surprise somewhat mixed with uneasiness, that she found herself in the presence of the unknown, who the evening before had thrown out the challenge to go during the night to write her name on the pedestal of Het Kruys.

'Well,' said the man to Krettel, 'here thou art, young girl, who so cleverly makest laughing stocks of the brotherhood of Holsters, and venturest all alone to brave the general terror which they inspire by the dead man's cross. I could never have suspected so much courage under such a pretty face, nor in that sweet and timid look of thine.'

The strange tone with which he uttered these words froze the life-blood of Krettel's heart.

'What mean ye?' she hesitatingly asked.

'Listen!' he roughly replied; 'this is no time for concealment. I am Jaen, the chief of the Black Brotherhood of the Holsters. It was my horse thou stolest away at Het Kruys, and I am now come to demand an explanation from the audacity of thy conduct yesterday in the ruins of Wertensfield.'

Krettel, half dead with alarm, fell trembling on her knees.

'Mercy! mercy, monsieur!' she said, clasping her hands; 'take back your gold, and do not kill me!'

Jaen laughed aloud.

'Kill thee, Krettel! and who ever had such a thought? Listen attentively. On the contrary, I am charmed at thy bold conduct, at the unshrinking courage of which thou hast given proof. I tell thee wench, thou art affianced to me by writing thy name on the stone base of Het Kruys, and I am resolved to take thee with me to the ruins of Wertensfield, amidst the forest of Holsters. I will make thee my companion, my mistress, or my wife, as thou mayest please.'

'Holy Virgin,' exclaimed the girl, writhing her arms in despair.

'What dost thou fear? With me, consider well thou wilt enjoy perfect freedom, shalt have gold, rich clothes, and joyous banquets in abundance. 'Tis no ordinard robber that speaks to thee, but the chief of a determined band of freebooters, who will respect thee as the sharer of thy master's bed, and pay thee tribute. There are more joys than thou thinkest of in our unknown retreat. 'Tis my bushy eyebrows, my thick beard, my severe looks which frighten thee, I see. By Belzebub, my patron, I never knew what it was to court a pretty girl, or play the lovesick swain by her side, but a passion worthy of three lies hid, however, beneath this rude exterior. Come then, fool that thou art, thy heart is warm & free—come to my arms, let me press thy bee like waist, and snatch a kiss from thy pleasure-provoking lips of thine.'

Krettel darted to the other side of the room and hastened to put the table between Jaen and her.

'No, no,' she cried, doubtless reckoning much on this new means of defence, my heart is not free. I love Michael Vanderstitchel, the son of my mistress. He is to marry me next spring. O monsieur, do not destroy me.

'Tis false! by all the devils that were ever spawned! Thou must have lied. I say, confess it quick!' and in his anger the brigand drew a large knife from his belt, hurled it across the table with such force that the blade was plunged quivering up the hilt in the thickness of the wooden wall. Nevertheless when he saw the terror printed on the young girl's features, he made a gesture as though to stop himself.—'Come, come, I am wrong,' he said; let us lay aside, these war of words; but remember, my beauty, I never beeseech in vain—thou art henceforth mine. Thou must needs penetrate the mysteries of Wertensfield and now our safety imperatively requires that we make sure of thee. Thou must either die or become my companion. Choose then. And now draw me some beer, and get some glasses down. I expect two of my band, anon and hope before their arrival to have appeased thy reluctance, and silenced those scruples of thine which offend me.'

Krettel hastened to serve him, hoping thereby to turn away his attention from herself and thus escape his brutal advances. She lighted a lamp, raised a trap-door, which opened in the hall itself, and descended a flight of steps. But scarce had she passed the lowest step, and reached a cold damp passage, than she heard steps behind, which she doubted not were those of Jaen following her. The wretch, doubtless, hoped in a place so small to reduce his victim, more easily to his vile purpose.—Then terror inspired Krettel with a desperate resolution. The moment she saw him enter the passage, she blew out the light, glided swiftly between him and the wall in the dark, and before he could recover from his suprise, had darted up the ladder, let down the trap, thrown upon it the table and kitchen dresser, and fallen breathless on her knees to thank Heaven for having thus miraculously escaped the danger which had threatened her.

Krettel was yet all agitation, anxiously listening to the robber, who dashed himself against the trap, uttering fierce blasphemies, when she heard a loud knock at the door of the auberge. To rush in a moment thither, to lock and double lock and bolt the door, was the work of a single moment, for she guessed that the applicants for admission must be the villians whom Jaen de Holsters expected. Surprised at not receiving an answer, the two men pushed on one side the shutter of a small low window, defended by iron bars, and casting a look into the interior of the house they first observed Kettrel; whom fear had called to the place. The robbers were disguised as mendicants.

'My good girl,' said one of them, with a hypocritical drawling twang,' have compassion upon two poor wretches who have not tasted food since yesterday.'

'Go away, I have nothing for you,' was the reply.

'We have travelled the whole night from Tilburg, and are worn out with fatigue. Give us a morsel of bred for mercy's sake, and allow us to rest under this auberge?

'No, no—it is impossible.' said Kettrel.

'You treat us very harshly,' resumed the man with distrust, for the short sharp tone of the young servant, her extreme paleness, and doubtless also the disorder that reigned in the apartments, began to give rise to some suspicions in his mind. Have you not seen on the road near hear a man of elevated stature, with a brown cloak, and whose head was covered with a brord brimmed hat?

'Not a soul! I am alone—I have not seen a soul!' interrupted Krettel quickly, whose terror augmented in proportion with the obstinancy of the two men to remain at the grated window.

At this moment Jaen again threw his body violently against the cellar trap, for, as he heard a faint murmur of conversation with the young girl, he suspected that his allies were at hand.

'Help, help!' he howled from the depth of his prison house. 'Help, comrades! beat in the door!'

'Ha! ha!' cried the robbers, laying aside all further attempt at dissimulation and instantly assuming a tone of menace.

'What is that we hear below there? We counsel thee, ma mie, to open us the door, if thou wouldst not make acquaintance with the points of our knives.'

Krettel once more recalled her failing courage to her aid. She threw back the shutter of the small window, which was beside sufficiently defended by the iron bars, and bolted it fast—O! how her fingers trembled! and seizing Michael Vanderstuchel's gun, mounted to the first story, and took her place at the window, levelled her piece at the two brigands, who were endeavouring to force open the stout old oaken door, and threatened them with death if they did not instantly depart.—At the same time; in order to prove that it was no bravado, she fired and instantly recharged her weapon. The robbers held a council, and a few minutes after one of them recommenced his efforts against the door, which happily was, as we before said, stout and thick, whilst the other made a tour of the house to discover a weaker side by which he might gain admittance. Our heroine then flew on the wings of the wind, and barricaded every other outlet. For a long time she sustained this species of siege unflinchingly, and kept thus in check all the rage and mad attempts of the Black Brotherhood of Wertensfield. A large stack of straw chanced to be in the court; the wind blew from the north, there was no danger that the flames would be carried to the roof of the house; with her usual address Krettel profited by the circumstance.—She seized a flaming brand, hurled it from the window on the stack and in a few moments a bright red flame darted up, and called for the assistance of the neighborhood. She also seized the rope of a large bell, destined to summon the servants of the auberge from their outdoor work to meals, and rang it lustily, and without ceasing, scattering thus the alarm far and wide, whilst with the musket, which she pointed every moment she kept the men of Jaen's band at a respectful distance.

'Hag! devil's dam!. Wilt thou hold thy cursed noise!' cried the brigands, with an explosion of frantic rage difficult to express.

'Wait! wait!' said one of them, who had managed to scale one of the walls and get upon the roof. 'We will soon silence thee with a vengence!' and he crept into the kitchen chimney, intending by that means to make good his entrance. Krettel ran and threw two or three faggots of green vine branches on the embers. The smoke ascended in clouds, and speedily suffocated, asphyxiated the wretch. He fell heavily, his dress on fire, and half dead on the kitchen floor. At that moment the door gave way and was beaten in—The young servant turned round in speechless terror, for she fancied she was lost without resource, but she instantly recognized her mistress, and all the inhabitants of Beckx, who had run in haste to learn the cause on hearing the sound of the alarm bell as well as seen the fire, and fainted in the arms of Michael. It is scarcely necessary to add that the capture of Jaen and the two robbers brought on the arrest execution of the rest of the band of the Black Brotherhood of Holsters. As a testimony of the countrys gratitude for so eminent a service, the sum of gold which she had so cleverly taken away from the ruins of Wertensfield was granted to Krettel as a dowry. She was henceforth rich, and Madame Vanderstitchel, touched by her devotion, no longer opposed her marriage with her son. The ensuing spring, as she had herself said, Michael led her blushing and happy to the altar of the village church, and a few years after, Madame Vanderstitchel having paid the debt of nature, Krettel at length found herself the mistress of that auberge in which she had so long and so diligently filled the place of servant.

'Indeed!' I exclaimed, after having listend to the story with much interest. Krettel deserves better things than so obscure and tranquil a happiness. I would give this chain of gold to have known her, and obtained the kiss she refused to Jaen de Holsters.'

'You will have no trouble in doing so monsieur,' interrupted my hostess with a malicious smile, 'for you see before you Krettel and Michael Vandersitchel.'

At the sight of the wrinkled visage of the worthy old dame I soon felt my enthusiasm for the young and pretty servant of the inn of Beckx cool down to zero. But that circumstance perhaps, added a fresh charm to the event of the evening. It was the fact that I was then in the presence of Krettel and Michael, the house where I had taken shelter was the very old auberge of Beckx, the trap-door which opned in a corner of the apartment was the identical one which had fallen on the head of Jaen de Holsters; and the next morning when, after having taken leave of my kind hosts I resumed the road from Tilburg Maslines, it was with a new interest that I passed through the ruins of Wertensfield, and perceived afar off, at the junction of the way leading from Hoogstraeten to Eindhoven, the degraded remains and solitary base of 'Het Kruys.'

HOPE.—'Hope is a flatterer, but the most upright of all parasites; for she frequents the poor man's hut, as well as the place of his superior.'—Shenstone.

WIT.—'Wit to be well defined, must be defined by wit itself; then 'twill be worth listening to.'

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