THE MYSTERY OF MR. AND MRS. PEACOCKE.

CHAPTER I.—DR. WORTLE.

The Rev. Jeffrey Wortle, D.D., was a man much esteemed by others,—and by himself. He combined two professions, in both of which he had been successful,—had been, and continued to be, at the time in which we speak of him. I will introduce him to the reader in the present tense as Rector of Bowick, and proprietor and head-master of the school established in the village of that name. The seminary at Bowick had for some time enjoyed a reputation under him;—not that he had ever himself used so flowery and unpalatable a word in speaking of his school. Bowick School had been established by himself as preparatory to Eton. Dr. Wortle had been elected to an assistant-mastership at Eton early in life soon after he had become a Fellow of Exeter. There he had worked successfully for ten years, and had then retired to the living of Bowick. On going there he had determined to occupy his leisure, and if possible to make his fortune, by taking a few boys into his house. By dint of charging high prices and giving good food,—perhaps in part, also, by the quality of the education which he imparted,—his establishment had become popular, and had outgrown the capacity of the parsonage. He had been enabled to purchase a field or two close abutting on the glebe gardens, and had there built convenient premises. He now limited his number to thirty boys, for each of which he charged £300 a-year. It was said of him by his friends that if he would only raise his price to £350, he might double the number, and really make a fortune. In answer to this, he told his friends that he knew his own business best;—he declared that his charge was the only sum that was compatible both with regard to himself and honesty to his customers, and asserted that the labors he endured were already quite heavy enough. In fact, he recommended all those who gave him advice to mind their own business. It may be said of him that he knew his own so well as to justify him in repudiating counsel from others. There are very different ideas of what "a fortune" may be supposed to consist. It will not be necessary to give Dr. Wortle's exact idea. No doubt it changed with him, increasing as his money increased. But he was supposed to be a comfortable man. He paid ready money and high prices. He liked that other people under him should thrive,—and he liked them to know that they throve by his means. He liked to be master, and always was. He was just, and liked his justice to be recognized. He was generous also, and liked that, too, to be known. He kept a carriage for his wife, who had been the daughter of a poor clergyman at Windsor, and was proud to see her as well dressed as the wife of any county squire. But he was a domineering husband. As his wife worshipped him, and regarded him as a Jupiter on earth from whose nod there could be and should be no appeal, but little harm came from this. If a tyrant, he was an affectionate tyrant. His wife felt him to be so. His servants, his parish, and his school all felt him to be so. They obeyed him, loved him, and believed in him.

So, upon the whole, at the time with which we are dealing, did the diocese, the county, and that world of parents by whom the boys were sent to his school. But this had not come about without some hard fighting. He was over fifty years of age, and had been Rector of Bowick for nearly twenty. During that time there had been a succession of three bishops, and he had quarrelled more or less with all of them. It might be juster to say that they had all of them had more or less occasion to find fault with him. Now Dr. Wortle,—or Mr. Wortle, as he should be called in reference to that period,—was a man who could bear censure from no human being. He had left his position at Eton because the head master had required from him some slight change of practice. There had been no quarrel on that occasion, but Mr. Wortle had gone. He at once commenced his school at Bowick, taking half-a-dozen pupils into his own house. The bishop of that day suggested that the cure of the souls of the parishioners of Bowick was being subordinated to the Latin and Greek of the sons of the nobility. The bishop got a response which gave an additional satisfaction to his speedy translation to a more comfortable diocese. Between the next bishop and Mr. Wortle there was, unfortunately, misunderstanding, and almost feud for the entire ten years during which his lordship reigned in the Palace of Broughton. This Bishop of Broughton had been one of that large batch of Low Church prelates who were brought forward under Lord Palmerston. Among them there was none more low, more pious, more sincere, or more given to interference. To teach Mr. Wortle his duty as a parish clergyman was evidently a necessity to such a bishop. To repudiate any such teaching was evidently a necessity to Mr. Wortle. Consequently there were differences, in all of which Mr. Wortle carried his own. What the good bishop suffered no one probably knew except his wife and his domestic chaplain. What Mr. Wortle enjoyed, or Dr. Wortle, as he came to be called about this time,—was patent to all the county and all the diocese. The sufferer died, not, let us hope, by means of the Doctor; and then came the third bishop. He, too, had found himself obliged to say a word. He was a man of the world,—wise, prudent, not given to interference or fault-finding, friendly by nature, one who altogether hated a quarrel, a bishop beyond all things determined to be the friend of his clergymen;—and yet he thought himself obliged to say a word. There were matters in which Dr. Wortle affected a peculiarly anti-clerical mode of expression, if not of feeling. He had been foolish enough to declare openly that he was in search of a curate who should have none of the "grace of godliness" about him. He was wont to ridicule the piety of young men who devoted themselves entirely to their religious offices. In a letter which he wrote he spoke of one youthful divine as "a conceited ass, who had preached for forty minutes." He not only disliked, but openly ridiculed all signs of a special pietistic bearing. It was said of him that he had been heard to swear. There can be no doubt that he made himself wilfully distasteful to many of his stricter brethren. Then it came to pass that there was a correspondence between him and the bishop as to that outspoken desire of his for a curate without the grace of godliness. But even such Dr. Wortle was successful. The management of his parish was pre-eminently good. The parish school was a model. The farmers went to church. Dissenters there were none. The people of Bowick believed thoroughly in their parson, and knew the comfort of having an open-handed, well-to-do gentleman in the village. This third episcopal difficulty did not endure long. Dr. Wortle knew his man, and was willing enough to be on good terms with his bishop so long as he was allowed to be in all things his own master.

There had, too, been some fighting between Dr. Wortle and the world about his school. He was, as I have said, a thoroughly generous man, but he required, himself, to be treated with generosity. Any question as to the charges made by him as schoolmaster was unendurable. He explained to all parents that he charged for each boy at the rate of two hundred a-year for board, lodging, and tuition, and that anything required for a boy's benefit or comfort beyond that ordinarily supplied, would be charged for as an extra at such price as Dr. Wortle himself thought to be an equivalent. Now the popularity of his establishment no doubt depended in a great degree on the sufficiency and comfort of the good things of the world which he provided. The beer was of the best, the boys were not made to eat fat, their taste in the selection of joints was consulted. The morning coffee was excellent. The cook was a great adept at cakes and puddings. The Doctor would not himself have been satisfied unless everything had been plentiful, and everything of the best. He would have hated a butcher who had attempted to seduce him with meat beneath the usual price. But when he had supplied that which was sufficient according to his own liberal ideas, he did not give more without charging for it. Among his customers there had been a certain Honorable Mr. Stantiloup, and,—which had been more important,—an Honorable Mrs. Stantiloup. Mrs. Stantiloup was a lady who liked all the best things which the world could supply, but hardly liked paying the best price. Dr. Wortle's school was the best thing the world could supply of that kind, but then the price was certainly the very best. Young Stantiloup was only eleven; and as there were boys at Bowick as old as seventeen—for the school had not altogether maintained its old character as being merely preparatory—Mrs Stantiloup had thought that her boy should be admitted at a lower fee. The correspondence which had ensued had been unpleasant. The young Stantiloup had had influenza, and Mrs. Stantiloup had sent her own doctor. Champagne had been ordered, and carriage exercise. Mr. Stantiloup had been forced by his wife to refuse to pay sums demanded for these undoubted extras. Ten shillings a-day for a drive for a little boy seemed to her a great deal,—seemed so to Mrs. Stantiloup. Ought not the Doctor's wife to have been proud to take her little boy in her own carriage? And then £2, 10s. for champagne for the little boy! It was monstrous. Mr. Stantiloup remonstrated. Dr. Wortle said that the little boy had better be taken away and the bill paid at once. The little boy was taken away and the money was offered, short of £5. The matter was instantly put into the hands of the Doctor's lawyer, and a suit commenced. The Doctor, of course, got his money, and then there followed an acrimonious correspondence in the 'Times' and other newspapers. Mrs. Stantiloup did her best to ruin the school, and many very eloquent passages were written not only by her or by her own special scribe, but by others who took the matter up to prove that two hundred a year was a great deal more than ought to be paid for the charge of a little boy during three quarters of the year. But in the course of the next twelve months Dr. Wortle was obliged to refuse admittance to a dozen eligible pupils because he had no room for them. No doubt he had suffered during these contests,—suffered, that is, in mind. There had been moments in which it seemed that the victory would be on the other side, that the forces congregated against him were too many for him, and that not being able to bend he would have to be broken; but in every case he had fought it out, and in every case he had conquered. He was now a prosperous man who had achieved his own way, and had made all those connected with him feel that it was better to like him and obey him, than to dislike him and fight with him. His curates troubled him as little as possible with the grace of godliness, and threw off as far as they could that zeal which is so dear to the youthful mind, but which so often seems to be weak and flabby to their elders. His ushers or assistants in the school fell in with his views implicitly, and were content to accept compensation in the shape of personal civilities. It was much better to go shares with the Doctor in a joke than to have to bear his hard words.

It is chiefly in reference to one of these ushers that our story has to be told. But before we commence it, we must say a few more words as to the Doctor and his family. Of his wife I have already spoken. She was probably as happy a woman as you shall be likely to meet on a summer's day. She had good health, easy temper, pleasant friends, abundant means, and no ambition. She went nowhere without the Doctor, and wherever he went she enjoyed her share of the respect which was always shown to him. She had little or nothing to do with the school, the Doctor having many years ago resolved that though it became him as a man to work for his bread, his wife should not be a slave. When the battles had been going on,—those between the Doctor and the bishops, and the Doctor and Mrs. Stantiloup, and the Doctor and the newspapers,—she had for a while been unhappy. It had grieved her to have it insinuated that her husband was an atheist, and asserted that her husband was a cormorant; but his courage had sustained her, and his continual victories had taught her to believe at last that he was indomitable.

They had one child, a daughter, Mary, of whom it was said in Bowick that she alone knew the length of the Doctor's foot. It certainly was so that, if Mrs. Wortle wished to have anything done which was a trifle beyond her own influence, she employed Mary. And if the boys collectively wanted to carry a point, they would "collectively" obtain Miss Wortle's aid. But all this the Doctor probably knew very well; and though he was often pleased to grant favors thus asked, he did so because he liked the granting of favors when they had been asked with a proper degree of care and attention. She was at the present time of the age in which fathers are apt to look upon their children as still children, while other men regard them as being grown-up young ladies. It was now June, and in the approaching August she would be eighteen. It was said of her that of the girls all round she was the prettiest; and indeed it would be hard to find a sweeter-favored girl than Mary Wortle. Her father had been all his life a man noted for the manhood of his face. He had a broad forehead, with bright grey eyes,—eyes that had always a smile passing round them, though the smile would sometimes have that touch of ironywhich a smile may contain, rather than the good-humor which it is ordinarily supposed to indicate. His nose was aquiline, not hooky, like a true bird's beak, but with that bend which seems to give the human face the clearest indication of individual will. His mouth, for a man was perhaps a little too small, but was admirably formed, as had been that chin with a deep dimple on it, which had now by the slow progress of many dinners become doubled in its folds. His hair had been chestnut, but dark in its hue. It had now become gray, but still with the shade of the chestnut through it here and there. He stood 5 feet 10 in height, with small hands and feet. He was now perhaps somewhat stout, but was still as upright on his horse as ever, and as well able to ride to hounds for a few fields when by chance the hunt came in the way of Bowick. Such was the Doctor. Mrs Wortle was a pretty little woman, now over forty years of age, of whom it was said that in her day she had been the beauty of Windsor and those parts. Mary Wortle took mostly after her father, being tall and comely, having especially her father's eyes; but still they who had known Mrs Wortle as a girl declared that Mary had inherited also her mother's peculiar softness of complexion.

For many years past none of the pupils had been received within the parsonage,—unless when received there as guests, which was of frequent occurrence. All belonging to the school was built outside the glebe land, as a quite separate establishment, with a door opening from the parsonage garden to the school-yard. Of this door the rule was that the Doctor and the gardener should have the only two keys; but the rule may be said to have become quite obsolete, as the door was never locked. Sometimes the bigger boys would come through unasked—perhaps in search of a game of lawn-tennis with Miss Wortle—perhaps to ask some favor of Mrs. Wortle, who always was delighted to welcome them—perhaps even to seek the Doctor himself, who never on such occasions would ask how it came to pass that they were on that side of the wall. Sometimes Mrs. Wortle would send her housekeeper through for some of the little boys. It would then be a good time for the little boys. But this would generally be during the Doctor's absence.

Here, on the school side of the wall, there was a separate establishment of servants, and a separate kitchen. There was no sending backwards or forwards of food or clothes,—unless it might be when some special delicacy was sent in if a boy were unwell. For these no extra charge was ever made, as had been done in the case of young Stantiloup. Then a strange doctor had come, and had ordered the wine and the carriage. There was no extra charge for the kindly glasses of wine, which used to be administered in quite sufficient plenty.

Behind the school, and running down to the little river Pin, there is a spacious cricket-ground, and a court marked out for lawn-tennis. Up close to the school is a racket-court. No doubt a good deal was done to make the externals of the place alluring to those parents who love to think that their boys shall be made happy at school. Attached to the school, forming part of the building is a pleasant, well-built residence, with six or eight rooms, intended for the senior or classical assistant-master. It had been the Doctor's scheme to find a married gentleman to occupy this house, whose wife should receive a separate salary for looking after the linen and acting as matron to the school, doing what his wife did till he became successful,—while the husband should be in orders and take part of the church duties as a second curate. But there had been a difficulty in this.

CHAPTER II.—THE NEW USHER.

The Doctor had found it difficult to carry out the scheme described in the last chapter. They indeed who know anything of such matters will be inclined to call it Utopian, and to say that one so wise in worldly matters as our schoolmaster should not have attempted to combine so many things. He wanted a gentleman, a school master, a curate, a matron, and a lady,—we may say all in one. Curates and ushers are generally unmarried. An assistant schoolmaster is not often in orders, and sometimes is not a gentleman. A gentleman, when he is married, does not often wish to dispose of the services of his wife. A lady, when she has a husband, has generally sufficient duties of her own to employ her, without undertaking others. The scheme, if realized, would no doubt be excellent, but the difficulties were too many. The Stantiloups, who lived about twenty miles off, made fun of the Doctor and his project; and the bishop was said to have expressed himself as afraid that he would not be able to license as curate any one selected as usher to the school. One attempt was made after another in vain;—but at last it was declared through the country far and wide that the Doctor had succeeded in this, as in every other enterprise that he had attempted. There had come a Rev. Mr. Peacocke and his wife. Six years since Mr. Peacocke had been well known at Oxford as a Classic, and had become a Fellow of Trinity. Then he had taken orders, and had some time afterwards married, giving up his Fellowship as a matter of course. Mr. Peacocke, while living at Oxford, had been well-known to a large Oxford circle, but had suddenly disappeared from that world, and it reached the ears of only a few of his more intimate friends that he had undertaken the duties of vice-president of a classical college at St. Louis in the State of Missouri. Such a disruption as this was for a time complete; but after five years Mr. Peacocke appeared again at Oxford, with a beautiful American wife, and the necessity of earning an income by his erudition.

It would at first have seemed very improbable that Dr. Wortle should have taken into his school or into his parish a gentleman who had chosen the United States as a field for his clerical labors. The Doctor, whose mind was by no means logical, was a thorough-going Tory of the old school, and therefore considered himself bound to hate the name of a republic. He hated rolling stones, and Mr. Peacocke had certainly been a rolling stone. He loved Oxford with all his heart and some years since had been heard to say hard things of Mr. Peacocke, when that gentleman deserted his college for the sake of establishing himself across the Atlantic. But he was one who thought that there should be a place of penitence allowed to those who had clearly repented of their errors; and moreover when he heard that Mr. Peacocke was endeavoring to establish himself in Oxford as a "coach" for undergraduates, and also that he was a married man without any encumbrance in the way of family, there seemed to him to be an additional reason for pardoning that American escapade. Circumstances brought the two men together. There were friends at Oxford who knew how anxious the Doctor was to carry out that plan of his in reference to an usher, a curate and a matron, and here were the very things combined. Mr. Peacocke's scholarship and power of teaching were acknowledged; he was already in orders; and it was declared that Mrs. Peacocke was undoubtedly a lady. Many inquiries were made. Many meetings took place. Many difficulties arose. But at last Mr. and Mrs. Peacocke came to Bowick and took up their abode in the school.

All the Doctor's requirements were not at once fulfilled. Mrs. Peacocke's position was easily settled. Mrs. Peacocke who seemed to be a woman possessed of sterling sense and great activity undertook her duties without difficulty. But Mr. Peacocke would not at first consent to act as curate in the parish. He did however after a time consent to perform a portion of the Sunday services. When he first came to Bowick he had declared that he would undertake no clerical duty. Education was his profession and to that he meant to devote himself exclusively. Nor for the six or eight months of his sojourn did he go back from this; so that the Doctor may be said even still to have failed in carrying out his purpose. But at last the new schoolmaster appeared in the pulpit of the parish church and preached a sermon.

All that had passed in private conference between the Doctor and his assistant on the subject need not here be related. Mr. Peacocke's aversion to do more than attend regularly at the church services as one of the parishioners had been very strong. The Doctor's anxiety to overcome his assistant's reasoning had also been strong. There had, no doubts, been much said between them. Mr. Peacocke had been true to his principles, whatever those principles were, in regard to his appointment as a curate,—but it came to pass that he for some months preached regularly every Sunday in the parish church, to the full satisfaction of the parishioners. For this he accepted no payment, much to the Doctor's dissatisfaction. Nevertheless it was certainly the case that they who served the Doctor gratuitously never came by the worse of the bargain.

Mr. Peacocke was a small wiry-looking man, anything but robust in appearance, but still capable of great bodily exertion. He was a great walker. Labor in the school never seemed to fatigue him. The addition of a sermon to preach every week seemed to make no difference to his energies in the school. He was a constant reader, and could pass from one kind of mental work to another without fatigue. The Doctor was a noted scholar, but it soon became manifest to the Doctor himself, and to the boys, that Mr. Peacocke was much deeper in scholarship than the Doctor. Though he was a poor man, his own small classical library was supposed to be a repository of all that was known about Latin and Greek. In fact Mr. Peacocke grew to be a marvel; but of all the marvels about him, the thing most marvellous was the entire faith which the Doctor placed in him. Certain changes even were made in the old-established "curriculum" of tuition,—and were made, as all the boys supposed, by the advice of Mr. Peacocke. Mr. Peacocke was treated with a personal respect which almost seemed to imply that the men were equal. This was supposed by the boys to come from the fact that both the Doctor and the assistant had been Fellows of their colleges at Oxford; but the persons and other gentry around could see that there was more in it than that. Mr. Peacocke had some power about him which was potent over the Doctor's spirit.

Mrs. Peacocke, in her line, succeeded almost as well. She was a woman something over thirty years of age when she first came to Bowick, in the very pride and bloom of woman's beauty. Her complexion was dark and brown,—so much so, that it was impossible to describe her color generally by any other word. But no clearer skin was ever given to a woman. Her eyes were brown, and her eyebrows black, and perfectly regular. Her hair was dark and very glossy, and always dressed as simply as the nature of woman's head will allow. Her features were regular, but with a great show of strength. She was tall for a woman, but without any of that look of length under which female altitude sometimes suffers. She was strong and well made, and apparently equal to any labor to which her position might subject her. When she had been at Bowick about three months, a boy's leg had been broken, and she had nursed him not only with assiduity, but with great capacity. The boy was the youngest son of the Marchioness of Altamont; and when Lady Altamont paid a second visit to Bowick, for the sake of taking her boy home as soon as he was fit to be moved, her ladyship made a little mistake. With the sweetest and most caressing smile in the world, she offered Mrs. Peacocke a ten-pound note. "My dear madam," said Mrs. Peacocke, without the slightest reserve or difficulty, "it is so natural that you should do this, because you cannot of course understand my position; but it is altogether out of the question." The Marchioness blushed, stammered, and begged a hundred pardons. Being a good-natured woman, she told the whole story to Mrs Wortle. "I would just as soon have offered the money to the Marchioness herself," said Mrs. Wortle, as she told it to her husband. "I would have done it a deal sooner," said the Doctor, "I am not in the least afraid of Lady Altamont; but I stand in awful dread of Mrs. Peacocke." Nevertheless Mrs. Peacocke had done her work by the little lord's bedside, just as though she had been a paid nurse.

And so she felt herself to be. Nor was she in the least ashamed of her position in that respect. If there was aught of shame about her, as some people said, it certainly did not come from the fact that she was in the receipt of a salary for the performance of certain prescribed duties. Such remuneration was, she thought, as honorable as the Doctor's income; but to her American intelligence, the acceptance of a present of money from a Marchioness would have been a degradation.

It certainly was said of her by some persons that there must have been something in her former life of which she was ashamed. The Honorable Mrs. Stantiloup, to whom all the affairs of Bowick had been of consequence since her husband had lost his lawsuit, and who had not only heard much, but had inquired far and near about Mr. and Mrs. Peacocke, declared diligently among her friends, with many nods and winks, that there was something "rotten in the state of Denmark." She did at first somewhat imprudently endeavour to spread a rumour abroad that the Doctor had become enslaved by the lady's beauty. But even those hostile to Bowick could not accept this. The Doctor certainly was not the man to put in jeopardy the respect of the world and his own standing for the beauty of any woman; and, moreover, the Doctor, as we have said before, was over fifty years of age. But there soon came up another ground on which calumny could found a story. It was certainly the case that Mrs. Peacocke had never accepted any hospitality from Mrs. Wortle or other ladies in the neighborhood. It reached the ears of Mrs. Stantiloup, first, that the ladies had called upon each other, as ladies are wont to do who intend to cultivate a mutual personal acquaintance, and then that Mrs. Wortle had asked Mrs. Peacocke to dinner. But Mrs Peacocke had refused not only that invitation, but subsequent invitations to the less ceremonious form of tea-drinking.

All this had been true, and it had been true also,—though of this Mrs. Stantiloup had not heard the particulars,—that Mrs. Peacocke had explained to her neighbor that she did not intend to put herself on a visiting footing with anyone. "But why not, my dear?" Mrs. Wortle had said, urged to the argument by precepts from her husband. "Why should you make yourself desolate here, when we shall be so glad to have you?" "It is part of my life that it must be so," Mrs. Peacocke had answered. "I am quite sure that the duties I have undertaken are becoming a lady; but I do not think that they are becoming to one who either gives or accepts entertainments."

There had been something of the same kind between the Doctor and Mr. Peacocke. "Why the mischief shouldn't you and your wife come and eat a bit of mutton, and drink a glass of wine, over at the rectory, like any other decent people?" I never believed that accusation against the Doctor in regard to swearing; but he was no doubt addicted to expletives in conversation, and might perhaps have indulged in a strong word or two, had he not been prevented by the sanctity of his orders. "Perhaps I ought to say," replied Mr. Peacocke, "because we are not like any other decent people." Then he went on to explain his meaning. Decent people, he thought, in regard to social intercourse, are those who are able to give and take with ease among each other. He had fallen into a position in which neither he nor his wife could give anything, and from which, though some might be willing to accept him, he would be accepted only, as it were, by special favor. "Bosh!" ejaculated the Doctor. Mr. Peacocke simply smiled, said it might be bosh, but that even were he inclined to relax his own views, his wife would certainly not relax hers. So it came to pass that although the Doctor and Mr. Peacocke were really intimate, and that something of absolute friendship sprang up between the two ladies, when Mr. Peacocke had already been more than twelve months in Bowick neither had he nor Mrs Peacocke broken bread in the Doctor's house.

And yet the friendship had become strong. An incident had happened early in the opening of the year which had served greatly to strengthen it. At the school there was a little boy, just eleven years old, the only son of a Lady de Lawle, who had in early years been a dear friend to Mrs Wortle. Lady de Lawle was the widow of a baronet, and the little boy was the heir to a large fortune. The mother had been most loath to part with her treasure. Friends, uncles, and trustees had declared that the old prescribed form of education for British aristocrats must be followed,—a t'other school, namely, then Eton, and then Oxford. No; his mother might not go with him, first to one, and then to the other. Such going and living with him would deprive his education of all the real gains. Therefore Bowick was chosen as the foot or school, because Mrs. Wortle would be more like a mother to her poor desolate boy than any other lady. So it was arranged, and the "poor desolate boy" became the happiest of the young pickles whom it was Mrs. Wortle's special province to spoil whenever she could get hold of them.

Now it happened that on one beautiful afternoon towards the end of April, Mrs Wortle had taken young De Lawle and another little boy with her over the foot bridge which passed from the bottom of the parsonage garden to the glebe-meadow which ran on the other side of the little river, and with them had gone a great Newfoundland dog, who was on terms equally friendly with the inmates of the rectory and the school. Where this bridge passed across the stream the gardens and the fields were on the same level. But as the water ran down to the ground on which the school-buildings had been erected there arose a steep bank over a bend in the river, or, rather, steep cliff, for, indeed, it was almost perpendicular, the force of the current as it turned at this spot having washed away the bank. In this way it had come to pass that there was a precipitous fall of about a dozen feet from the top of the little cliff into the water, and that the water here, as it edged round the curve, was black and deep, so that the bigger boys were wont to swim in it, arrangements for bathing having been made on the further or school side. There had sometimes been a question whether a rail should not be placed for protection along the top of this cliff, but nothing of the kind had yet been done. The boys were not supposed to play in this field, which was on the other side of the river, and could only be reached by the bridge through the parsonage garden.

On this day young De Lawle and his friend and the dog rushed up the hill before to romp, as was their custom. Mary Wortle, who was one of the party, followed them, enjoining the children to keep away from the cliff. For a while they did so, but of course returned. Once or twice they were recalled and scolded, always asserting that the fault was altogether with Neptune. It was Neptune that knocked them down and always pushed them towards the river. Perhaps it was Neptune; but be that as it might, there came a moment very terrible to them all. The dog in one of his gyrations came violently against the little boy, knocked him off his legs and pushed him over the edge. Mrs. Wortle, who had been making her way slowly up the hill, saw the fall, heard the splash, and fell immediately to the ground.

Other eyes had also seen the accident. The Doctor and Mr. Peacocke were at the moment walking together in the playgrounds at the school side of the brook. When the boy fell they had paused in their walk, and were standing, the Doctor with his back to the stream, and the assistant with his face turned towards the cliff. A loud exclamation broke from his lips as he saw the fall; but in a moment,—almost before the Doctor had realized the accident which had occurred—he was in the water and two minutes afterwards young De Lawle, drenched indeed, frightened and out of breath, but in nowise seriously hurt, was out upon the bank; and Mr. Peacocke dren had also, but equally safe, was standing over him, while the Doctor on his knees was satisfying himself that his little charge had received no fatal injury. It need hardly be explained that such a termination as this to such an accident had greatly increased the good feeling with which Mr. Peacocke was regarded by all the inhabitants of the school and rectory.

[*To be continued.*]

Executors' Notice.

All persons having any just claims against the estate of Hon. Kennedy F. Burns late of Bathurst in the County of Gloucester, merchant, deceased, are hereby requested and notified to file the same, duly attested, with the undersigned within one month from date.

P. J. BURNS
MARIA MCKENNA } Executor and Executrix

Bathurst, N. B. Feby, 20th 1896.
3-26

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CROWN LAND OFFICE, 19 JULY, 1894.

The attention of all holders of Timber Licenses is called to Section 19 of the Timber Regulations, which reads as follows:—

"19 No Spruce or Pine trees shall be cut by any Licensee under any License, not even for piling, which will not make a log at least 18 feet in length and ten inches at the small end; and if any such shall be cut, the Lumber shall be liable to double stumpage and the License be forfeited"

and all Licensees are hereby notified, that for the future, the provisions of this section will be rigidly enforced.

L J TWEEDIE.
Surveyor General

THE LONDON GUARANTEE AND ACCIDENT CO.

The only British Co. in Canada issuing

Guarantee Bonds and Accident Policies.

Accident Insurance at lowest rates. Protect your life and your time by taking a policy in THE LONDON.

FRANCIS A. GILLISPIE, AGENT.

Dressmakers' Magic cale.

Persons desirous of learning how to use the

"Dressmakers' Magic Scale"

may do so at the HOTEL DIEU CONVENT, where a class is being opened for that purpose.

By means of this clever invention any lady may cut any style of ladies' or children's garments without refitting.

Now is also the regular time for formation of classes in Phonography, Typewriting and Telegraphy, those intending to begin should not delay.

For Terms apply to

MOTHER SUPERIOR,
Hotel Dieu Convent.
Chatham, N. B.

.30

IF YOU ARE HUNTING

for elegant novelties in jewelry and an all round display of watches, clocks and silverware, you can find it in our stock. Here is a tantalizing beautiful array of parlor ornaments, ladies' fancy articles, that will raise a desire to possess them. The trade clock indicates that the buyer's hour has come, and our store shows that buyers are not neglecting the timely hint. Come to us for a dazzling display, a golden shower of temptations including 15 year filled Waltham Watch for $15.00 etc. You'll always be right on time with one of our 8 day clocks or 25 Waltham watches that are marvels of accurate timekeeping. We have a full line of the latest jewelry. Call and see for yourselves.

OUR WATCH-REPAIRING DPARTMENT

is first class in all respects. All

WATCHES, CLOCKS, AND JEWELRY,

repaired at short notice, and

Guaranteed to Give the best Satisfaction.

W. R. GOULD.

Chatham Oct., 3.

INSURANCE.

The Insurance business heretofore carried on by the late Thomas F. Gillespie, deceased, is continued by the undersigned who represents the following Companies:—

SCOTTISH UNION AND NATIONAL,
ALBION,
IMPERIAL,
LONDON, & LANCASHIRE,
LANCASHIRE,
ÆTNA,
HARTFORD,
NORWICH UNION
ALLIANCE,
PHŒNIX OF LONDON,
MANCHESTER.

FRANCES A. GILLESPIE

Chatham, 29th Nov. 1893.

SPRINGHILL COAL,

FOR SALE

Apply to JOHN FOTHERINGHAM.

J. F BENSON,

TYPEWRITER, &C. &C.

—ALSO—

AGENT FOR "NEW YORK" TYPEWRITING COMPANY FOR NORTHERN COUNTIES

OFFICE:

BENSON BLOCK CHATHAM, N. B.

SMELT SHOOKS.

Smelt shooks on hand and for sale by

GEO BURCHILL & SONS

Nelson Dec. 22nd, 1894.

Lime For Sale

Apply to

THE MARITIME SULPHITE FIBRE CO. LTD.

THE BOUQUET.

Sweeping reductions in Millinery and Fancy Goods at the Bouquet.

Having to make room for midsummer and fall importations I have decided to dispose of the balance of my spring and summer stock at greatly reduced prices—in fact, wholesale prices thus giving my patrons the advantage of a cheap sale. The stock consists of the latest styles of Millinery, hats, flowers, feathers, ladies' wrappers, sunshades, gloves, hosiery, underwear and fancy goods. Babies' robes and hestwear a specialty.

All the above are high in finish and fashionable, being the latest importations from London, Paris and New York. Mail orders promptly and carefully attend to.

JOSIE NOONAN

CHATHAM.

SHERIFF'S SALE.

To be sold at Public Auction on Friday, the 10th day of April next, in front of the Post Office in Chatham, between the hours of 12 noon and 5 o'clock p m

All the right, title, interest and share of Charles A McDougall in and to all these several lots or tracts of land situate lying and being on the easterly side of the south west branch of the Miramichi River, in the Parish of Blackville and County of Northumberland, and abutted and bounded as follows, viz:—All that lot or tract of land situate, lying and being on the easterly side of said river bounded northerly by lands occupied by Alex McDonald, southerly by lands owned and occupied by Alex. Campbell, easterly by crown land and westerly or in front by the said branch of the Miramichi River, containing 400 acres more or less.

Also, all that other piece, lot or tract of land situate lying and being on the easterly side of said branch of the Miramichi River, bounded northerly by crown land, easterly by crown land and southerly by land owned or occupied by Jas. Campbell; and in front or westerly by the rear boundary line of lands owned by Alex. Campbell, containing 200 acres more or less.

Also all other the lands, tenements, hereditaments and premises of the said Charles A. McDougall, whatsoever and wheresoever situate in the said County of Northumberland.

The same having been seized by me, under and by virtue of an Execution issued out of the County Court of Saint John, by Austin T. Foster against Thomas H. Prescott and the said Charles A. McDougall.

JOHN SHIRREFF,
Sheriff.

Sheriff's Office Newcastle, this 21st day December, A. D. 1895.

DRS. G. J & H. SPROUL.

SURGEON DENTISTS.

Teeth extracted without pain by the use of Nitrous Oxide Gas or other Anæsthetics.

Artificial Teeth set in Gold, Rubber & Celluloid. Special attention given to the preservation and regulating of the natural teeth.

Also Crown and Bridge work. All work guaranteed in every respect.

Office in Chatham, BENSON BLOCK. Telephone No 53.

In Newcastle opposite Square, over J. G KETHRO's Barber shop, Telephone No 6.

WANTED—CANVASSERS, MALE AND FEMALE, in every township in Canada, to canvass for the greatest weekly newspaper in the world. *The Family Herald and Weekly Star* of Montreal. *The Family Herald and Weekly Star* has been enlarged to one hundred and twenty eight columns per week, equal to one hundred large volumes per annum. It is improved in every department so conspicuously as to be talked about all over the world. A splendid premium picture with the *Family Herald*. A good opportunity for canvassers to establish a yearly income. No experience needed. Only natural capacity for knowing a good thing at sight. Sample copies, etc., etc., free. Address immediately to secure positions: *Family Herald* Publishing Co., Subscription Department, Montreal, Canada.

SHERIFF'S SALE!

To be sold at Public Auction, in front of the Registry Office, in Newcastle, on Friday the 6th day of March next between the hours of 12 noon and five o'clock p m:

All the estate, share, right, title and interest of James O Fish of, in, to or out of all the following described pieces, or parcels of land situate lying and being in the Parish of Newcastle in the County of Northumberland, and Province of New Brunswick viz:

All that piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the Town of Newcastle in the said County of Northumberland, and bounded southerly or in front by Water street, on the lower or easterly side by lands formerly owned and occupied by the late Moses M. Sargeant and by lands presently owned by Mrs. Mary Vooght; northerly or in rear by Mary Street, and on the upper or westerly side by the Masonic Hall property.

Also, all that other piece of land situate in the said Town of Newcastle and County aforesaid, and bounded southerly or in front by Mitchell Street, on the lower or easterly side by lands formerly owned and occupied by the late John Williamson northerly or in rear by land occupied by Mrs. O Jolughlin, and on the upper or westerly side by a lane, being the land and premises formerly occupied by John Watters.

Also—A lot piece of land situate in the Parish of Newcastle, in the county aforesaid, bounded southerly or in front by the Great road the lower or easterly side by land formerly owned by the late John Atchison, on the upper or westerly side by lands owned and occupied by James Nevin, and extending northerly or in rear to the full extent of the original Grant,—being the land known and distinguished as "The Farm Lot" which several pieces of land were conveyed to the said James O Fish by James Fish by deed dated the eleventh day of April A. D 1888.

Also, all other the lands tenements, hereditaments and premises of the said James O Fish, whatsoever and wheresoever situate in the said County of Northumberland.

The same having been seized by me under and by virtue of an Execution issued out of the Supreme Court, at the suit of William A. Hickson against the said James O. Fish.

JOHN SHIRREFF,
Sheriff

Sheriff's Office Newcastle this 26th day of November, A. D. 1895.

FURNACES FURNACES, WOOD OR COAL,

WHICH I CAN FURNISH AT

REASONABLE PRICES.

STOVES

COOKING, HALL AND PARLOR STOVES

AT LOW PRICES!

PUMPS, PUMPS,

Sinks, Iron Pipe, Baths, Urcamers the very best, also Japanned stamped and plain tinware in endless variety, all of the best stock which I will sell low for cash

A. C. McLean Chatham.

Established 1866.

Dunlap Bros. & Co.,
AMHERST, N. S.

Dunlap, McKim & Downs,
WALLACE, N. S.

DUNLAP, COOKE & CO.,
AMHERST, N. S.

DUNLAP COOKE & CO.
MERCHANT TAILORS,
—AND—
GENTLEMEN'S OUTFITTERS
AMHERST.
N. S.

This firm carries one of the finest selections of Cloths including all the different makes suitable for fine trade. Their cutters and staff of workmen employed are the best obtainable, and the clothing from his establishment has a superior tone and finish. All inspection of the samples will convince you that he prices are right.

FANCY AND STAPLE GROCERY COMPLETE.

Turkeys, Geese, Ducks, and Chickens.
Raisins, Currants, Candied Peels.
Essences, Spices, Apples, Grapes
Figs, Nuts, Confectionery, Cigars Etc. Etc.
Best Family Flour, Meals, Hay, Oats, feed of all kinds.
Pork, Beef, Herring, Codfish, Molasses, Sugars. Oils, Tobacco, Etc Etc

CHEAPEST STORE IN TOWN,

Don't forget the PIANO—each dollar purchase, one ticket.
Ready-Made Clothing, Dry Goods, Caps, Robes, Horse-Rugs.
Boots and Shoes, Overshoes, Rubbers, Moccasins, Etc, Etc.,
At the greatest bargains ever were known.
DONT FORGET the piano; each dollar's worth you buy you receive one ticket.

MERRY X'MAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL.

W. T. HARRIS.

CHATHAM

CARRIAGE AND SLEIGH WOKS

CARRIAGES, HARNESS AND FARM IMPLEMENTS

OF ALL KINDS

I wish to make known to the public in general that I have on hand the best stock of carriages and farm implements ever offered for sale in this country. They consist of the following:

OPEN AND TOP BUGGIES of different styles
PHEATONS
MIKADOS,
JUMP-SEAT WAGGONS, open and with tops,
CONCORD WAGGONS, (one and two seats,)
EXPRESS WAGGONS and a number of other styles too numerous to mention,
ALSO TRUCK WAGGONS, (one and two horse,)
I have both the IRON AND SKANE AXLE WAGGON,
I have a SPECIAL LINE OF HARNESS MADE TO ORDER,
I handle the world-famed MASSEY-HAR