

THE OAK-TREE.

Once—a long time ago—two young men, named Edmund and Oswald, appeared in a court of justice.

Edmund said to the judge, "When I was going on a journey, three years ago, I gave to this Oswald, whom I then considered my best friend, a valuable ring with precious stones, to keep for me. But now he will not give the ring up to me."

Oswald laid his hand upon his breast, and said, "I swear, upon my honour, I know nothing about the ring. My friend Edmund must be out of his senses in this matter."

The judge said, "Edmund, can nobody give evidence that you gave the ring to him?"

Edmund replied, "Alas! there was nobody near; there was only an old oak-tree in the field, under which we took leave of one another." Oswald said, "I am ready to take an oath, that I know no more about the tree than I do about the ring."

The judge said, "Edmund, go and bring me a twig from the tree. I wish to see it. Meanwhile do you, Oswald, wait here till Edmund returns."

Edmund went. After a little while the judge remarked, "Where, now, can Edmund be remaining so long? Oswald, open the window, and see if he is not coming."

Oswald said, "Oh, sir, he cannot come back again so soon. The tree is above a mile distant from this place."

Then said the judge, "O you godless liar! who would have made your false oaths before God, the highest judge, who looks into all hearts. You know as much about the ring as about the tree!"

Oswald was obliged to give up the ring, and was sentenced to prison for a year.

"There," said the judge, "you will find time to consider the important truth:—

"It comes at last, the judgement-day, Which every falsehood will display."

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THE MANSION AND THE COTTAGE.

A young lady, named Gertrude, lived in a beautiful mansion, and prided herself not a little on her lofty station.

One day Maria, the daughter of a poor bricklayer, came and said to her, "My father, who is at the point of death, has sent to entreat you to come him, as he has something of importance to tell you."

The young lady replied, sneeringly, "It must indeed be something of importance which such a poor man has to say to me, Go

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along! I have nothing to do in your wretched cottage."

After a while Maria came back again, almost out of breath, and said, "Oh, dear young lady! do come now directly. Your late mother had a quantity of gold and silver concealed in the walls during the war-time, and charged my father to mention the place to nobody but yourself, as soon as you were twenty years old. But he is now just dying, and cannot wait so long."

Miss Gertrude now made as much haste as she could; but when she entered the room, the good man was already gone. She was almost beside herself with terror and vexation. She had the walls of the mansion broken through, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another, but found not the least trace of the treasure. Oh, how she lamented now, that through her pride she had troubled such an honest man in his last moments, and had deprived herself of a large possession! Although, indeed, these griefs arose from selfishness, and so were worth but little, yet she now perceived the truth of the saying,—

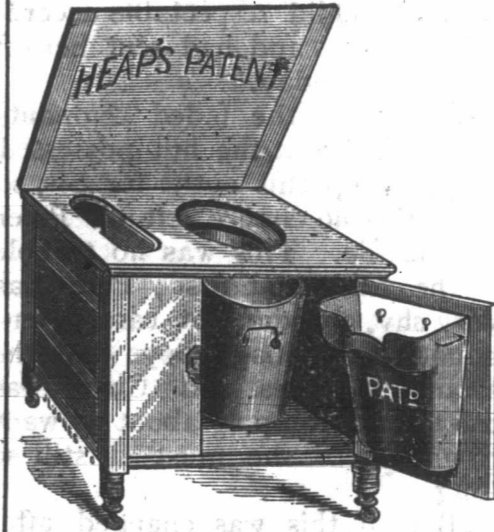
"A haughty mind, an iron heart, Makes both itself and others smart."

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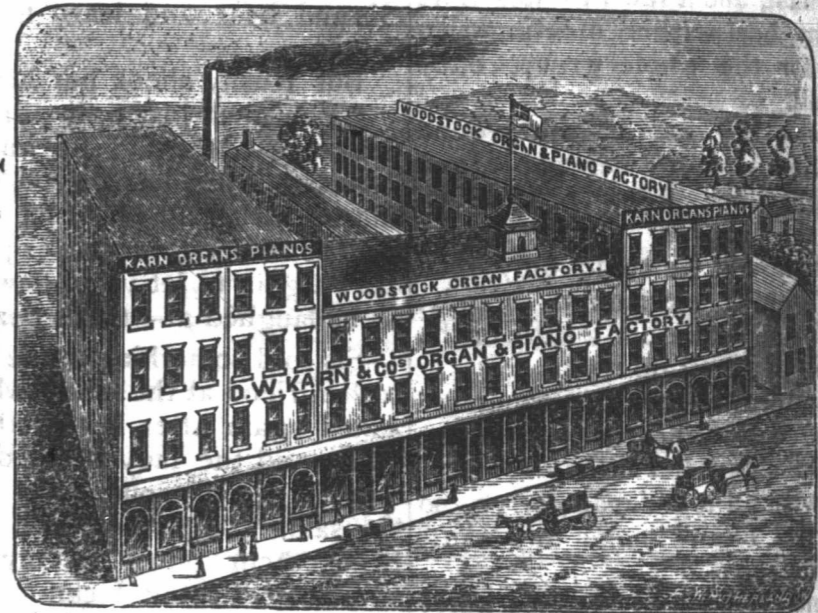


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