

TECH (1984) associates

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Guelph Evening Mercury
OFFICE.....MACDONNELL STREET.
MONDAY EVEN'G. JAN'Y 13, 1868.

The Maiden's Choice

OR, THE LAIRD OF BIRKENLEUCH.

A Tale of the Obvenanters.
Jackson having been left to bring Walter and Marion away prisoners, executed his orders in a civil manner, but, of course, as became a soldier, he had to obey the letter of the instructions he had received. Walter knew this and offered no resistance, but he was secretly smothered about the light in their place of confinement. It might be supposed he was permitted to return to Birkenleuch, and if Mr. Gordon and Hugh were left all the time in their cave without food, they would perish of cold and hunger. While the preparations were making for their departure, he gave Andrew a significant look, which the shrewd and faithful fellow understood, for, when they were about to leave the chamber, he caught an opportunity to whisper in Walter's ear—
"I'll make them a right!"
The rope is in the lumber closet, whist! pered Walter in return, the soldier, who observed the conversation.
"I was only saying, Mr. Walter, that I hoped he would come back. There's surely this day a war, will bring yer Captain into a bonny place, and he'll no light matter to carry away prisoners the Laird of Birkenleuch and his bride, and nae came given for the same. If Sir James Turner does right he'll take the captain's coat and drum him out of the regiment."
"You allow your tongue to wag too freely," said Jackson, with a grim nod. "Less than this day a war, will bring yer Captain into a bonny place, and he'll no light matter to carry away prisoners the Laird of Birkenleuch and his bride, and nae came given for the same. If Sir James Turner does right he'll take the captain's coat and drum him out of the regiment."
This little bit of conversation took place between Andrew and the Sergeant, while Walter and Marion were being taken to the residence of a trooper, to make some little preparations for their enforced journey. In a very few minutes they were ready, and Walter's steed had been provided with a pillion, and he and Marion mounted it together, and the cavalcade, with the prisoners in the centre, moved away from Birkenleuch.

Great was now the commotion in the neighborhood, for the news had spread like wildfire that the troopers, along with Brian, the curate, were about to lodge the prisoners in the castle, and that the Laird of Birkenleuch and his bride were about to be taken to the castle, where his presence was a crime to be punished severely by the Government, and that the trooper had ridden up from Stoughton to effect his capture. In intense anxiety, therefore, several of the inhabitants of Greytown lingered about the entrance to Mr. Elliot's mansion, trying to discover what was taking place; and, as an increased excitement, mingled with surprise, seized on them when the prisoners were brought forth, and proved not to be their minister, but his daughter and the laird. Marion's appearance produced utter amazement, for no one knew of her arrival, and that at the hour of midnight she and Walter had been married. They could only gaze in silence as the cavalcade passed along, for the soldiers suffered no communication with their prisoners. It was plain, however, to them all, that Mr. Gordon had not been taken; and this was a matter of the greatest satisfaction, though at the same time it caused them both grief and anxiety to behold the youthful pair, whom old and young warmly loved, dragged away to prison for their devotion to a good cause. On the countenances of the men came an expression of stern indignation, and tears stood in the eyes of the women, as they silently gazed on the spectacle of trampled liberties and unprovoked outrage.

Day by day the violence and application of the soldiers were becoming greater and greater, and it did not require the gift of prophecy to declare that ere long, if the cruel policy were not altered, the Government would be goaded into open and armed rebellion. As yet they had offered but a passive resistance, and suffered in a spirit of amazing forbearance the oppressions and exactions to which they were being subjected. But the Scottish spirit of freedom and independence was not extinct in the bosoms of the people. Their Christian principles caused them to bear long with the cruel persecution of the Government, but a point could be reached when combined resistance must ensue, and to that point the policy of the Government seemed fast verging.

Murmurs of discontent and indignation were loudly uttered by the assembled villagers as the cavalcade came near to Greytown, and these became more vehement when in the officer who commanded the party they recognised Charlie Allan, who was well known to them from his long residence in the Nassau.

These expressions of honest disapprobation reached Allan's ears, and were answered by him with a scornful smile. Nevertheless, he thought it prudent to order the men through the village at a gallop, and soon they were at a considerable distance on the road to Stoughton.

CHAPTER VII.—THE WIFE TO SQUABER—FIRST APPEARANCE OF SIR GILBERT BARTON—THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRISONERS AT GREY TOWN.
Walter Elliot felt it a hard matter to maintain an external calmness and composed dignity as he rode on, with Marion behind him, in the centre of the troopers. It was not the malevolence of Allan that chiefly distressed him much. He could have borne with comparative equanimity the mean spite and bitter passion of his hated rival, and compensated himself by any amount of scorn and ridicule which he might have poured upon the sides of his enemy. But it was a very different thing to find that Allan had within his reach an irresistible instrument wherewith to manifest his rage. The power of the State was at his call, and that was the aggravating element in the business. If a military officer was allowed by the Government to gratify his own personal hate by placing the objects of his spiteful feelings in the degrading position of captives, what could be expected of the private citizen? Walter felt as he had never felt before how serious the state of matters were becoming—how the yoke of oppression was beginning to settle heavily on the necks of the people—and the sacred birthright of Scotchmen—their freedom—was being invaded. He had often heard of the excesses and outrages of the soldiery which had been let loose in the west of Scotland to make the people Episcopal by force and violence, but the stern and startling truth was now being brought home to his own experience, and he saw, as he had not seen before, the magnitude of the conflict that was impending.

Diseases amongst Fishermen.

The amount of suffering amongst the fishermen of Nova Scotia, resulting from mephitic voyages during the past season is very distressing, and measures are being adopted in Halifax and elsewhere for their relief. A Committee has been formed in that city, and in one ward alone \$500 was soon subscribed. In some of the harbours on the Western shore of Nova Scotia the destitution is most alarming. In one settlement upwards of fifty families are supported entirely on fishing, and, unless relieved, be not only without the necessities of life but without any prospect of obtaining them until the opening of the season next year, and in several other harbours destitution of the same extreme nature prevails, while in all there are forty, if not fifty, residents unable to meet so great an emergency, or to afford assistance to their neighbours on a scale commensurate with the distress existing. In the Gaspe district the same state of things exists to a great extent. Many of the fishermen-families are being obliged to leave their wives and families in charge of the boats, and of sheer starvation, and the last voyagers were worse than the previous ones.

THE LATEST PURCHASE BY THE UNITED STATES.—The Island of St. Thomas continues shaking and quaking in the prospect of becoming a portion of the United States, and being compelled to help to pay the debt of that country. More earthquakes are reported as occurring there, and it seems probable that that unfortunate little island will shake itself to pieces before the American Eagle has time to perch itself upon its tail.

NORTH BRITISH REVIEW.—The contents of the December number of this sterling quarterly, which we have received from the Leonard Scott publishing Co., New York, are—Relations of Heathenism and Judaism with Christianity; Modern Provencal poems; Ralph Waldo Emerson. The natural history of man; The military systems of Europe; Population; Italy in 1867; The social sorrows of Britain. For sale at the Bookstores in town.

COMMERCIAL.

Guelph Markets.
MERCURY OFFICE, GUELPH, J. 13, 1868.

Flour, per 100 lbs.	\$3 75	4 00
Soft Wheat per bushel	1 75	1 90
Spring Wheat	1 55	1 70
Oats	40	45
Peas	30	35
Barley	30	35
Hay, per ton	9 00	11 00
Straw	1 00	1 50
Shingles per square	1 00	1 50
Wood per cord	2 00	2 20
Wool per lb.	0 25	0 30
Sheep, per dozen	0 14	0 15
Goose, each	0 25	0 30
Turkey do.	0 50	0 60
Chickens per pair	0 30	0 35
Poultry	0 50	0 60
Apples per bushel	1 00	1 20
Lamb per lb.	0 06	0 07
Butter	4 00	4 50
Beef, per lb.	5 00	5 50
Pork per 100 lbs.	5 50	6 00
Sheep Pails each	0 50	0 60
Wool	1 00	1 20
Hides per 100 lbs.	6 00	6 50

MONEY MARKET.

JACOBSON'S EXCHANGE OFFICE.

Gold, 1867	100	100
Greenbacks	72	75
Half	36	37
Quarter	18	18
Five Cents	7	7
Exchange on London	105	105
Exchange on New York	100	100
Exchange on Liverpool	100	100
Exchange on Hong Kong	100	100
Exchange on India	100	100
Exchange on China	100	100
Exchange on Japan	100	100
Exchange on Australia	100	100
Exchange on South America	100	100
Exchange on Africa	100	100
Exchange on Asia	100	100
Exchange on Europe	100	100
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