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SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1845.

[15s. at the end of the year

From Chronicles of "The Fleet." The Ruined Merchant.

(Continued.)

It was about three weeks after Mr. Courtney's arrival in the prison that I missed him for several days in his accustomed walk; for I ought to say that about a month after his entrance he had been so fortunate as to be able to hire a room for himself, at a rate which, high as it was, could not be called immoderate for the time, for he got it for a pound a week, for the prison was very full.

I missed him, as I say, for several days; and the answer through his door always was that he was not very well, and would not leave his room that morning. So on the fifth day, after I had walked up and down a little while, smoking my pipe, and a little uneasy that he did not appear—for the day was fine, and the sun was shining cheerfully over the iron spikes of the wall—I determined to go to see him. This time, the moment I knocked, Louisa came to the door, and in a faint voice, said—"Come in."

I was grieved to find her father lying on a sort of wooden sofa, which served him for a bed at night, in a very weak condition. I had observed for some days before that he had walked languidly; but that did not particularly surprise me, as it is by no means uncommon for persons to fall into a low depressing way in this place. His daughter resumed her seat by his side, with her face to the light, and I was struck with the very thin look that she had; however it was natural as I thought, she should fret on account of her father's imprisonment. But there was something about her eyes which I fancied was a little wild and odd; she looked about as if she was seeking for something, and seemed to be in pain occasionally. Her father, too, was by turns excited and depressed, and lay uneasily, as it seemed to me, on his bed. I did not think it was so bad as it was; but I guessed from the symptoms—for I was used to the gradual disappearance of the wearing apparel among the inmates, and knew full well that that meant—that there was a lack of money in the house. Now I had received that very morning a sum which had been paid to me for an advertisement which I had written for a foreign singer, who with very kind consideration had forwarded me the seven and sixpence, which was the price agreed on, by a special messenger. I was casting over in my mind how I should introduce the subject in as delicate a way as possible, so that my offering an advance of money should not appear as if I thought them in a state of destitution, when Louisa suddenly cried out, as she caught sight of something from the window,—

"There's a man with bread!"

Louisa coloured, and for a moment became crimson all over; but in an instant after her face resumed the ashy paleness which I had observed at first, save a spot of red on each cheek, which looked unnatural; her eyes too were very bright and restless. All these were signs and tokens which I could not mistake; so I said in a careless way,—

"I come to propose that we should dine together to-day; that is, if you allow me to bring my dinner to your room and join it to yours; for I have bought a great piece of meat I said, which will not keep, and if some one does not help me to get through with it, it will be a waste; and without waiting for a reply, which I saw they were too much embarrassed to give, I went out and at once bought half a quarter of butter, and a large slice of cheese, at a shop in the fair."

"See, said I, taking the things in, how rich I am. I have brought them in first; and if Miss Courtney will lay the cloth, we shall be getting things ready."

The poor girl, at the sight of the bread, was nearly overcome. She seized the loaf with a trembling hand, and at first tried to break a piece off, but not being able from her weakness and nervousness to do it, she pointed to the bread and then to her father—and with a sort of scream cried out wildly,—

"He! pointing to her father—and I too! We have not eaten food for more than four days! Then, bursting into an hysterical fit of tears, she fainted away from exhaustion, and from the sight of the food so unexpectedly brought to her for which she was craving."

I was in a great fright, for I never could bear to see a woman in that way; but I had the presence of mind enough to make haste after a doctor, who lived in the fair, and he coming up, between her father and him, they contrived to restore her, though not without difficulty, for the faint was a very bad one, on account of her extreme weakness."

I was glad to see, on my return to their room after the lapse of some time, that a considerable part of the loaf had been consumed, and that my friends seemed the better for it. As the excitement of his daughter had revealed to me the secret which both had so long concealed, I made no scruple of repro-

aching them both for not having made me acquainted with the fact of their condition. It was Miss Courtney who spoke, and she told me, that for some time past they had been obliged to part with every little valuable they possessed, till they had nothing left; and then, with great hesitation and reluctance, she confessed that they had sold or pledged their clothes for food, till at last they had none left that they could part with. She told me that both she and her father felt a sort of delirium from hunger, but that she felt it most on the morning when I discovered their destitute state.

The poor girl, wearied out with exhaustion, fell asleep on her father's couch.

Mr. Courtney took four shillings of the five that were left; and that lasted them pretty well for four days. It was leaving myself rather short; and, as ill-luck would have it, no work came in, so I was obliged to live on the remaining shilling as well as I could; but I could not bear to see that beautiful girl wanting food. It is ridiculous to talk of love at my age, but I certainly had a great affection for that girl; I felt it from the first.

I observed, during the four days following that on which I had discovered the Courtneys' condition that Louisa never smiled and seldom spoke, but seemed absorbed, by some thought which engrossed all her faculties. I felt uneasy—I did not well know why; but I was possessed with a vague presentiment of some coming evil.

Mr. Courtney once or twice talked of the possibility of the return of his son; and I observed that Louisa caught at the idea eagerly, but when he came to consider the little probability there was of his son coming back for many years, of the uncertainty of his prospects, and of the climate, she returned again to melancholy abstraction, and seemed plunged in the same black despair which had recently overwhelmed her. I could not help being struck, however by her manner when her father spoke of a Captain Morton, to whom, it seemed, her brother was to go on his arrival in India. When her father dwelt on the good heart and the amiable qualities of Captain Morton, and on the kind and brotherly reception which his son was sure to receive from his old friend, I remarked that Louisa blushed and breathed thick, and that the tears rushed into her eyes. It struck me that there had been an intimate acquaintance between Miss Courtney and that Captain Morton. I left the room, and smoked my pipe up and down the gallery, a good deal discomposed by the thoughts that assailed me of the pain and disappointment to which all are exposed in this world of care and sorrow!

When I went with her father to the gate that evening, to see his daughter out of the prison, the gate-light, shining full in her face, made her paleness assume so ghastly a hue, that I was alarmed. She kissed her father most affectionately just before she went through the gate, which was unusual, as she generally wished him good night in his own room. But on this occasion she clung to him with a sort of desperate fondness; and I saw, though her features were rigid as marble, that her eyes shone with a supernatural brightness. Just as she went out she gave my hand to me; and when I pressed it in mine I thought it felt icy cold. I did not like all these appearances, although I did not know what definite cause to ascribe them to; and I went to bed in a very melancholy state; and next morning I felt very weak and low, which was owing, perhaps, to my not having had any supper, and to me not knowing how to get my breakfast. Luckily I had a little tobacco left, so I sat down and smoked, with my eyes directed towards the entrance of the yard—not expecting to see Miss Courtney, however, for it was before the gate was open; and I always made it a rule to be ready at the entrance to accompany her to her father's room.

When the clock struck the hour for opening the gate I went to the lobby to meet her, but I did not take my pipe. I felt very dull that morning—and the turnkey, who was a civil and remarkably polite person, remarked it; for all the officers were very respectful to me, in deference to my long residence in the prison and my respectability. I made some civil reply to the turnkey's remark—I forgot what, and kept my eyes fixed on the door through which strangers passed to the lobby.

You are waiting for Miss Courtney? said the turnkey.

Yes, said I. "I am: Miss Courtney is late this morning."

I had no idea that my attention to Miss Courtney had been remarked, which shows how careful gentlemen should be in their attentions to ladies, lest they should unwittingly compromise their reputations, and give occasion for disparaging reports; and I was astonished when the turnkey said, with a knowing look, and lifting up the key which he held in his hand in an admonishing way,—

"Ah! Mr. Seely, you have been a rare one in your days, I'll be bound; but you are a little too old to play the gallant now."

I declare I never felt more hurt in my life. But the vulgarity and impertinent familiarity of these people is disgusting. I said nothing, but left the lobby, and waited by the iron rails so that I could see Louisa when the door opened; but I waited and waited, and no Louisa came. Her father came down, and I expressed to him my surprise that his daughter had not come in, with her usual punctuality,—to make breakfast, I was going to say; but I remembered that most likely, he had nothing for breakfast that morning, like myself; so I checked myself, that I might not hurt his feelings. Well, there we stood waiting and wondering, and at last I asked one of the char-women of the place to go to Miss Courtney's lodging, and inquire for her,—for she still lodged at the rooms of their old servant, who, by the way, had only just sufficient to live on. She informed us, on her return, that the young lady had gone out early that morning with another lady and a gentleman, who fetched her in a coach; that she was dressed in white, as if she was going to a wedding; but that she was in such a fainting state that they were obliged to lift her into the coach, and that then the coach drove away.

That heroic girl, said he, has by some means found out the secret of the cause of my imprisonment, and she has sacrificed herself to that man for my sake!

I could not speak. If the whole building of the prison had been placed on my heart, I could not have felt a heavier load.

How she has discovered the secret, he continued, I cannot imagine; but this dressing in white, and the story of the gentleman and lady taking her away in a coach, seems to show that she has taken a desperate resolution.

I did not know what to say: I did not like her to marry at all.

This may not turn out so bad at last as we both think. One thing seems to be in favor of the man; if our surmises are indeed true, he marries your daughter without fortune, and at a time when your own affairs are at the lowest possible ebb. Matters are so bad, said I, that they cannot well be worse.

He shook his head, and replied mournfully. You do not know Louisa! Let us send out again, and try if we can get any further information.

There was a quiet and discreet man, about my own age, who acted as a messenger for the inmates of the prison, and whom I knew to be trustworthy. Seeing him standing by the entrance, I beckoned to him, and explaining as much as was necessary begged him to endeavor to trace where Miss Courtney was gone.

You went to Miss Courtney's lodging? They told me there, that a lady had been brought to the Church; and she was so ill that the clergyman at first refused to perform the ceremony. But the lady recovered a little, insisted; and so—she was married! And was that all? I asked.

I ascertained where the coach which took them away from the church had been ordered to drive, and I followed them, and knocked at the door, and said, I had come from the young lady's father. It was a woman-servant that opened the door;—and there was a great bustle of running up and down stairs. While I stood at the door a lady rushed past us; and the woman wanted to question him, but he said, Don't stop me; I'm going for a doctor.

It was the young lady. She had fainted away the moment she quitted the church, and nothing they could do could restore her. I waited in the hall, for nobody took much notice of me in the confusion, till the doctor came. He went up stairs very quick, and after some time came down again slowly. An elderly looking woman came down with him; and I heard him say at the door, "There is no hope." As the lady turned back from the door she noticed me, and asked me my business. I said I had come there from Mr. Courtney to inquire about his daughter. The lady mused for a moment on this, and then said, "It's a bad business; and I told my brother he was wrong; I don't know how you are to break it to her father, said she."

She said that the poor girl was—dying!

I saw that her poor father was choking. He motioned to me to put my face close to his and in a hollow voice which made me start, he never had heard such sounds from human throat before, he said,—

"I will go to her!"

You forgot, I said, trying to soothe him, that you cannot go to her: we are in prison.

Presently after several men appeared bearing a sofa without a back, and resembling a stretcher, such as is used for transporting bodies which have met with sudden death or accident in the streets.

I guessed in a moment what that female was; I did not doubt that the death-stricken Louisa, finding her end approaching, had insisted on being conveyed to her father in the prison. And it was so, as I learnt afterwards.

While I was deliberating there was a tap at the door which I opened, when I found the procession on the outside. I conveyed

Louisa into her father's cell, after first expressing him of her arrival. We had her on her father's couch;—She tried to speak, but she only uttered some inarticulate words which we could not understand; but we gathered from a feeble gesture which she made that she wished to present it to her father. He took it; but all his faculties seemed paralysed, and he could neither read it nor open it: he held it forward to me.

I made a shift to read it. The paper was an undertaking on the part of her father's detaining creditor to abandon all his claims on her father on the morning of the daughter's marriage with him. I asked her very gently, if she would like to see a clergyman?

I was about to repeat the question, when I was stopped by a hurried knock at the door, as if given by some one hasty. I went to open it, but before I had time to place my hand on the handle, it was opened on the outside, and a young man entered hastily, followed by another gentleman, tall and in a military frock coat. The exclamation of Mr. Courtney as they entered, revealed at once the name and relationship of the younger one.

My son! he exclaimed, in a voice and with an expression of mingled joy and sorrow—my son! In such a place!—and at such a time! And you too, Morton! he exclaimed to the other.

Louisa! exclaimed Morton. "My God! how is this?"

At this cherished name, and at the sound of the long-loved voice, the dying Louisa sprang up from the couch as if she had received an electric shock, and opening her eyes, which were fit up with a brilliancy that actually seemed to shed light throughout the cell, she fixed them on Morton, and uttered a scream, so loud, so shrill, so full of agony, that it penetrated into our very souls, while the stone walls of the cell seemed to vibrate with the thrilling sound!

Edmond! she cried out, as she raised up her arms and stretched them towards him. It was the first word that she had spoken, and it was her last. Edmund Morton flew to her, but at his approach some dreadful recollection seemed to come over her. She hurriedly felt for the third finger of her left hand; she held it up, and pointed to the fatal ring which encircled it. With a frantic gesture she tore it off and flung it from her. I heard its faint rattle as it struck on the stone floor. Then, placing her hand on her heart, her head slowly bent forward, like a drooping flower, and her body falling slowly back, she sank on the couch; she was dead!

Who has done this? said Morton, frantically: and what is the meaning of this ring? Has she been forced to marry? Can it be that he, looking at her father with a fearful look of suspicion.

I laid my hand on him and led him from the cell; the son followed us. I took him to the end of the gallery, by the window, where there was no one to overhear us, and there, in a few words, I told him the truth of the case. He made no reply; but I saw that he clenched his teeth, and bit his lip till the blood started.

George, he said, go to your father. George Courtney mused for a moment, and went in. I did not like to accompany him at such a time of sorrow, so I remained outside; but he had not been in the rooms many seconds before he opened the door hastily, and beckoning me in, pointed to his father.

His father was kneeling by the side of poor Louisa; his hands clasped, as if in prayer, and his head leaning forward and resting on her body. I approached him reverently; but I was alarmed at a certain air of motionless rigidity which his attitude presented. I went up to him and felt his hand; he made no pulse! I felt his pulse; there was no pulse! The shock had killed him!

I cannot pretend to describe the anguish of his son!

Mother! father! sister!—he kept on repeating—all dead! It was with difficulty that I could force him away from the room to show the necessary offices to be performed on the bodies of the father and daughter. I got him into my room, where he laid down on the bed in a state of grief which no solace could reach. I sat up with him all night. He asked repeatedly for Morton. And in the morning when the gate was opened, his impatience to see his friend became excessive almost to delirium. Alas! the news of his friend came too soon. And old chum of mine called me out of my room soon after the gate was opened, and asked me if the name of the tall gentleman, whom all the prison by some means had learnt was the lover of Louisa, was not Morton, and at the same time pointed out to me an account in the newspaper headed "Fatal Duel."

Young Courtney saw by my look that there was something in the paper which concerned him, and taking it from me, his eye caught the heading of the paragraph, and he ran over it with intense anxiety.

Thank God, he said, he is safe! Who is safe, I said!

Morton is safe! He has shot the rascal! He will want me now; I must go. Saying this he hastily left me! and I after-

wards learnt that he joined his friend and accompanied him abroad, but he returned in time to attend the funeral of his sister.

I wished that the sorrows of my tale ended here. But I grieve to tell that the suddenness and terrible nature of the shock of hearing the death of his mother, and witnessing the death of his father and his sister, all in the same moment, produced a fatal effect on the stunned intellects of George Courtney. He lost his reason,—perhaps it was best that it should be so; for to the last moment of his existence, if his memory had been preserved, he could not have forgotten the events of that fatal time: I am sure I never shall.

I never heard of Captain Morton afterwards; George Courtney is still living in a private asylum for the insane. I'm sure I wonder how I am still living, after all I have suffered and witnessed of the sufferings of others! But it cannot be long now before I shall be at rest too; and after my death, the publication of these Chronicles of the Fleet Prison may do good to my fellow creatures, exemplifying some of the consequences of Imprisonment for Debt!

COMMUNICATIONS.

For the Standard.

Mr. Editor,—

In a late number of your Journal, the Rev. Andrew Stevens, publicly contradicts a report, which, he says, "has been widely circulated," namely, "That he had obtained fifty pounds from the Established Church of Scotland, after the disruption, and immediately before giving in his adherence to the Free Church, and then received, or was to receive, fifty pounds from the Free Church also." And alleges that this statement originated with Mr. Ker, or that the assertion was made by me; and calls upon us to "settle this matter." Now, Sir, we cannot "settle this matter" in any other way than by stating the truth. And as I formerly wrote, so I still aver that I never made the above assertion; and, as far as I can learn, neither did Mr. Ker give any such "statement."

The Rev. Gentleman's quotation is not in accordance with the statement of the report. The mere rehearsal of a passing report, is very different from the assertion of a report being a matter of fact. I am informed that some of the Clerical Brethren told Mr. Stevens himself what was reported of him, according to the above statement, long before Mr. Ker related any thing on the subject. Mr. Stevens, therefore, might have traced the origin of the Report without looking through either Mr. Ker or me, as a medium. In connection with this report, I may add, that on the 23d of November, 1843, (about six months after the Disruption) I had a conversation with the Rev. Mr. Stevens, and, as I was at that time waiting very impatiently for pecuniary aid, from the General Committee of the Church of Scotland, I was induced to ask Mr. Stevens whether he had received his promised support from that quarter. He answered me in the negative; and said that not receiving it had put him to great inconvenience; and, as near as I can recollect, he added, either that he had declared, or was to declare his adherence to the Free Church, and had written, or was about to write, to Dr. Candlish that if he (Mr. Stevens) did not obtain immediate support from that body he would be obliged to return home, for he could not live here, on so small an income as he then realized, or words to that effect. And whether Mr. Stevens did, or did not, receive any pecuniary aid, either from the Established Church or from the Free Church, after the above date, (23d Nov. 1843) I cannot tell, and I never said that he did. Mr. Stevens' communication, which appeared in "The Standard," extorted from me the above explanation, and by giving it a place in your very useful paper, you will have done me a great service.

Your obedient Servant,
JOHN CASSIDY.
St. Patrick's, Sept. 17th, 1845.

For the Standard.

Mr. Editor,—

I have seen in your paper under date 3d inst., a statement signed Andrew Stevens, late Presbyterian Minister of St. Stephen's and St. James, wherein he says that I stated to Mr. William Gilmore and Dr. Blair that he, Mr. Stevens, had obtained fifty pounds from the Established Church of Scotland after the disruption and leaves it to me and Mr. Cassidy to explain the matter, which I can satisfactorily do, as far as I am concerned.

On the 13th August last, I met Mr. Gilmore and Dr. Blair, and after the compliments of the day, Dr. Blair said, well Mr. Ker, Mr. Stevens has shaken the dust from his feet—and left us. Dr. Blair said that he had been well paid, he has got upwards of £100, and only preached thirteen Sabbaths.

I then said I had heard it reported, that Mr. Stevens had received fifty pounds, from the Established Church of Scotland, and fifty [Concluded on the last page]