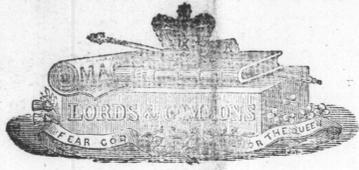


The Star



AND Conception Bay Journal.

HEARTS RESOLVED AND HANDS PREPARED, THE BLESSINGS THEY ENJOY TO GUARD.—SMOLLET.

VOL. V.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1840.

No. 290

HARBOUR GRACE, Conception Bay, Newfoundland:—Printed and Published by JOHN THOMAS BURTON, at his Office, opposite the MARKET PLACE.

JACK SHEPPARD'S VISIT TO HIS MANIAC MOTHER.

"When Jack entered the cell, she was talking to herself in the muttering unconnected way peculiar to her distracted condition; but, after the eye had rested on the same time, the fixed expression of her features relaxed, and a smile crossed them. This smile was more harrowing even than her former rigid look.

"You are an angel," she cried, with a look beaming with delight.

"Rather a devil," groaned her son, "to have done this."

"You are an angel, I say," continued the poor maniac; "and my Jack would have been like you if he had lived. But he died when he was a child—long ago—long ago—long ago."

"Would he had done so!" cried Jack.

"Old Van told me if he grew up he would be hanged. He showed me a black mark under his ear, were the noose would be tied. And so I'll tell you what I did—"

"And she burst into a laugh that froze Jack's blood in his veins.

"What did you do?" he asked, in a broken voice.

"I strangled him—ha—ha—ha!—strangled him while he was at my breast—ha!—ha!—and then with a sudden and fearful change of look she added—'That's what has driven me mad. I killed my child to save him from the gallows—oh! oh! One man hanged in a family is enough. If I'll not gone mad they would have hanged me.'

"Poor soul!" ejaculated her son.

"I'll tell you of a dream I had last night," continued the unfortunate being.

"I was at Tyburn. There was a gallows erected, and a great mob round it—thousands of people, and all with white faces like corpses. In the midst of them there was a cart with a man in it—and that man was Jack—my son Jack—they were going to hang him. And opposite to him, with a book in his hand—but, it couldn't be a prayer-book—sat Jonathan Wild, in a parson's cassock and band. I knew him in spite of his dress. And when they came to the gallows, Jack leaped out of the cart and the hangman tied up Jonathan instead—ha! ha!—How the mob shouted and huzzaed—and I shouted too—ha! ha! ha!"

"Mother!" cried Jack, unable to endure this agonizing scene longer.—"Don't you know me, mother?"

"Ah!" shrieked Mrs. Sheppard.—"What's that?—Jack's voice!"

"It is," replied her son.

"The ceiling is breaking! the floor is opening he is coming to me!" cried the unhappy woman.

"He stands before you," rejoined her son.

"Where?" she cried. "I can't see him. Where is he?"

"Here," answered Jack.

"Are you his ghost, then?"

"No, no," answered Jack; "I am your unhappy son."

"Let me touch you, then; let me feel if you are really flesh and blood," cried the poor maniac, creeping towards him on all fours.

"Jack did not advance to meet her. He could not move; but stood like one stupefied, with his hands clasped together, and eyes almost starting out of their sockets, fixed upon his unfortunate parent.

"Come to me," cried the poor maniac, who had crawled as far as the chain would permit her; "come to me," she cried, extending her thin arm towards him.

"Jack fell on his knees beside her.

"Who are you?" inquired Mrs. Sheppard, passing her hands over his face, and gazing at him with a look that made him shudder.

"Your son," replied Jack—"your miserable son."

"It is false," cried Mrs. Sheppard. "You are not. Jack was not half your age when he died. They buried him in Willesden churchyard after the robbery."

"Oh, God," cried Jack "she does not know me. Mother—dear mother!" he added, clasping her in his arms, "look at me again."

"Off!" she exclaimed, breaking from his embrace with a scream. "Don't touch me. I'll be quiet. I'll not speak of Jack or Jonathan. I won't dig their graves with my nails. Don't strip me quite. Leave me my blanket! I'm very cold at nights. Or, if you must take off my clothes, don't dash cold water on my head. It throbs cruelly."

"Horror!" cried Jack.

"Don't scourge me," she cried, trying to hide herself in the farthest corner of the cell. "The lash cuts to the bone.—I can't bear it. Spare and I'll be quiet—quiet—quiet!"

"Mother!" said Jack, advancing towards her.

"Off!" she cried, with a prolonged and piercing shriek. And she buried herself beneath the straw, which she tossed above her own head with the wildest gestures.

"I shall kill her if I stay longer," muttered her son, completely terrified.

"While he was considering what it would be best to do, the poor maniac over whose bewildered brain another change had come, raised her head from under the straw, and peeping round the room, asked in a low voice if they were gone?"

"Who?" inquired Jack.

"The nurses," she answered.

"Do they treat you ill?" asked her son.

"Hush!" she said, putting her lean fingers to her lips. "Hush!—come hither and I'll tell you."

"Jack approached her.

"Sit beside me," continued Mrs. Sheppard. "And now I'll tell you what they do. Stop! we must shut the door, or they'll catch us. 'See!' she added, tearing off the rag from her head, 'I had beautiful black hair once. But they cut it all off.'

"I shall go mad myself if I listen to her longer," said Jack, attempting to rise.

"I must go."

"Don't stir, or they'll chain you to the wall," said his mother detaining him.

"Now, tell me why they brought you here?"

"I came to see you dear mother," answered Jack.

"Mother!" she exclaimed, staring eagerly in his face. "Are you my son?—Are you Jack?"

"I am," replied Jack. "Heaven be praised, she knows me at last."

"Oh, Jack!" cried his mother, falling upon his neck, and covering him with kisses.

"Mother—mother," said Jack, bursting into tears.

"You will never leave me," said the poor woman, straining him to her breast.

"Never—never!"

"The words were scarcely pronounced when the door was violently thrown open, and two men appeared at it. They were Jonathan Wild and Quilt Arnold.

"Ah!" exclaimed Jack, starting to his feet.

"Just in time," said the thief-taker.—"You are my prisoner, Jack."

"You shall take my life first," rejoined Sheppard.

"And, as he was about to put himself into a posture of defence, his mother clasped him in her arms.

"They shall not harm you, my love," she exclaimed.

"The movements was fatal to her son. Taking advantage of his embarrassed position; Jonathan and his assistant rushed upon him and disarmed him.

"Thank you, Mrs. Sheppard," cried the thief-taker, as he slipped a pair of

handcuffs over Jack's wrists, "for the help you have given us in capturing your son. Without you, we might have had some trouble."

"Aware, apparently in some degree, of the mistake she had committed, the poor maniac sprang towards him with frantic violence, and planted her long nails in his cheek.

"Keep off, you accursed jade!" roared Jonathan.—"Keep off, I say, or—" And he struck her a violent blow with his clenched hand.

"The miserable woman staggered, uttered a deep groan, and fell senseless on the straw.

"Devil!" cried Jack; "that blow shall cost you your life."

"It'll not need to be repeated, at all events," rejoined Jonathan, looking with a smile of satisfaction at the body.—"And now—to Newgate!"—*Bentley's Miscellany.*

Our Countryman's Journey to China.

It is certain that an Irishman, who "had a living" for a term in Sydney, when he started for China, found a country he little dreamed of; for the joke runs, that this native of the "first flower of the land" cut, very sagaciously, the plate of the compass out of an epitome of navigation, and he pasted it in the crown of his hat, and having got a contribution of beef from his mess, the all-determined Paddy cleared the sentry in the dark, and the next dawn found him thirty miles on the road to China. On consulting his compass at starting, he found his course lay north half west; and the hat being referred to, enabled him to walk in the true way the compass pointed: thus, such a remarkable bore, by his *Noire* exactly north: for that tree then did Paddy steer. By some means or other, the unlucky traveller put on his hat *hindsight before*; and, after many days and nights' hard tearing through the country, the first glimpse he got was a little hut, by a turnpike road, where he was fully prepared to sit down at the end of his travels, secure from all whips, work and chains, in China! The swinging sign of the "Turks Head" was a satisfactory assurance that the Chinese were a civilized nation; and Paddy was about unsuspectingly to enter, when he was recognized by a sergeant of Police; and in ten minutes our traveller was safely seated—not in the "Turks Head" at China, but in the lobby of Sydney gaol: he having got a fortnight's fag over the country, and by means of his invaluable compass, and the subsequent guidance of the sergeant, steered to the place whence he started.

A Greenwich Pensioner.

Is a sort of stranded marine animal, that the receding tide of life has left high and dry on the shore. He pines for his element like a sea bear, and misses his briny washings and wettings. What the

ocean could not do, the land does, for it makes him sick; he cannot digest properly unless his body is rolled and tumbled about like a barrel churn. Terra firma is good enough, he thinks, to touch at for wood and water, but nothing more. There is no wind, he swears ashore, every day of his life is a dead calm a thing above all others, he detests; he would like it better for an occasional earthquake. Walk he cannot, the ground being so still and steady, that he is puzzled to keep his legs; and ride he will not, for he disdains a craft whose rudder is forward, and not astern. Inland scenery is his especial aversion. He despises a tree "before the mast," and would give all the singing birds of creation for a boat-swain's whistle. He hates prospects, but enjoys retrospects. An old boat, a stray anchor, or decayed mooring ring, will set him dreaming for hours. He splices sea and land ideas together. He reads of shooting off a tie at Battersea, and it reminds him of a ball carrying away his own pigtail. "Canvassing for a situation," recalls running with all sails set for a station at Aboukir. He has the advantage of our economists as to the "standard of value," knowing it to be the British Ensign. The announcement of "an arrival of Foreign vessels, with our ports open," claps him into a Paradise of prize money, with Poll of the Pint. He wonders sometimes at "petitions to be discharged from the Fleet," but sympathises with those in the Marshalsea Court, as subjected to a Sea Court Martial. Finally, try him even in the learned languages by asking him the meaning of "Georgius Rex," and he will answer, without hesitation. "The wrecks of the Royal George."

A Turkish Marriage.

A Turk about to be married knows nothing of the figure, intellect, or accomplishments of his future wife, except what he learns from her parents, or some aged matron, whom he may have employed to examine and report thereupon. When the Parents have agreed, and fixed the sum the husband is to settle upon the wife, they make an inventory of all that belongs to her, which is returned, in case of divorce or repudiation. Preliminaries being settled, the future husband, the father, the next nearest relative to the lady, and the witnesses, go before a *cadi* to sign the articles of contract, and obtain a permission in writing. The celebration of the nuptials can only take place on Thursday night, which precedes their *sabbath*. A day or two before this, the lady is taken to a bath; and on the wedding night, she is dressed in the