THE ACADIAN

AND KING'S CO. TIMES.

HONEST, INDEPENDENT, FEARLESS.--DEVOTED TO LOCAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

Vol. XV. WOLFVILLE, KING'S CO., N. S., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1896. No. 26.

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THE ACADIAN.

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The ACADIAN JOB DEPARTMENT is constantly receiving new type and material, and will continue to guarantee satisfaction on all work turned out.

Newsy communications from all parts of the county, or articles upon the topics of the day are cordially solicited. The name of the party writing for the ACADIAN must invariably accompany the comm unication, although the same may be written over a ficticious signature.

Address all communications to

DAVISON BROS.,
Editors & Proprietors,
Wolfville, N. S

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Hurrah for the ski! and the taut snow-shoe,
And the swift skate's shrill refrain
When the world's enwrapped in its mantle new
And winter wakes again!

I laugh as I see him cover the world
With a fair soft pall of white,
And rejoice at the drifting, swirling folds
That bury them out of sight.

For the wattled shoe will come by its own
And so will the speeding ski;
Now the white paved track has at last been sown
Where the Mercury footed flee.

Then hail to the frost! and the Northern King!
And hail their reign benign;
May the snowshoe's swing and the keen skate's ring
Be heard till the end of time.

For they bring good health, and the sturdiest strength,
And healing on their wings,
And the flame will glow, and the blood swift flow
Wherever their music sings.

—*Outing.*

SELECT STORY.

Wolfe the Ranger.

CHAPTER X.—*Continued.*

Intent and absorbed in her search, she crossed the hall and reached the drawing-room, and went instantly to the chair in which she had sat listening to Mr Hendrick.

Going on her knees, she searched every inch of the thick carpet in the vicinity, but the locket was not there.

With a sigh and a choking sensation in her throat, that was the presage of a burst of tears, she rose, and was going, candle upheld, toward the door, when she started and stood upright, with an awful thrill of horror running through her.

She was facing the great French window, and she heard, or fancied she heard a sound as if some one had turned, or tried to turn, the handle.

For a second she stood spell-bound, staring with distended eyes at the window; then to her horror she saw the curtains wave to and fro, and the door open.

Moved by an instinct more than anything else, she blew out the candle, and darted behind the heavy curtains which hung at the division of the two rooms.

Clinging to these to prevent herself from falling, she fought hard for courage and presence of mind.

That the intruder was a burglar there could be no doubt; probably there were half a dozen. The slightest movement on her part would reveal her presence and seal her fate.

For a second or two fear, pure and simple, was in the ascendant; then a nobler and more courageous feeling gained ground.

If an attack was being made upon the castle, it was per duty, it would be a delight, to outwit the ruffians and save the marquis's property from the thieves.

How should she do it? how could she give an alarm sufficient to arouse someone before her presence was discovered by the burglars and the alarm prevented?

She heard through the thick curtains, which seemed almost to suffocate her, someone enter the room, and heard the window curtains drawn aside slightly. Then she knew that some one was passing close beside her.

Next there came the sound of a match being struck, and she knew that he was lighting a candle. The footsteps then repassed her, as if they were returning to the window.

Fighting fiercely for courage, and knowing that his back was toward her hiding-place, she ventured to open the curtains slightly and look out.

She was on the point of uttering a scream, for the shock of her discovery was so great as almost to be unendurable.

The midnight burglar was none other than—the marquis!

For a moment she thought that she must be mad or dreaming; but there was no mistaking his stalwart figure, notwithstanding the riding-cloak which covered it from neck to heels; indeed even as she looked he tossed the cloak—streaming with rain—on to the floor, and revealed himself to her in the evening dress in which she had seen him a few hours before.

In that moment of horrified amazement she felt that she would rather it had been what she at first dreaded—an ordinary burglar.

Why should the Marquis steal into his own house at the dead of night with all the caution of a thief.

She clung to the curtains, but still watched him, with no other desire than to fly the scene.

The marquis went to the window and opened it?

"Come in!" he said to some one outside.

The door opened, and a man stepped into the handsome room, heightening its splendor by the contrast of his own squalid presence, for the man whom the marquis admitted secretly to his drawing-room at three o'clock in the morning was the wretched-looking being whom Constance had seen—or dreamed she had seen—in the ruined cottage on the moor; the man from whom the marquis had obtained the brandy, and whom he had dismissed with the stern contempt of a man addressing a dog.

He was almost disguised by a worn and shabby ulster, the turned-up collar of which nearly concealed his face; but as he took off his battered felt hat Constance saw his face. It was pale and haggard, and wore with want and privation, and she noticed in the flash of the moment that a deep scar on his temple shone out redly from the palor of his face.

"I'm too wet, guv'nor," he said shrinking back as if dazed by the splendor of the room; "I'd better keep outside. Besides—" He started, and seemed to listen.

"Stay where you are," said the marquis, not angrily, with no trace of displeasure or excitment, but in a quiet tone of command. "Draw the curtains and hold them close so that the light does not shine through. Wait, and do not move."

The man gripped the curtains and held them close, and stood staring blushingly round the room. If there was no excitement in the marquis's face or manner, there were evidences of considerable agitation and anxiety in the man's. He looked like one who was simply trying to recover from some tremendous shock of surprise; and even as he stood alone Constance saw his white lips moving as if he were uttering a string of oaths or some exclamations of bewilderment and astonishment.

At that moment, rather than remain, Constance would have risked the chance of discovery and fled from the room. But the man stood immediately facing her place of concealment, and the slightest movement on her part would have been detected by him.

A few minutes passed—they seemed hours to her in her terrible suspense—and then the marquis returned.

She saw his face as he passed her on his way to the man. It was pale and weary looking, but perfectly calm, and in that respect a marked contrast to the man's.

He held something in his hand, and stopped a moment in front of the man, looking at him, as Constance felt, with a long and deep scrutiny in the black eyes, which must have assumed a fierce and terrible expression, for the man's face grew paler and worked with evident fear and agitation.

"Here," said the marquis, and he put out that which he held. "Take it; there is more than I promised you."

"I asked for nothing, guv'nor," stammered the man.

"I know," responded the marquis, "and yet I give it you. Why?"

The man raised his eyes, then dropped them again.

"Not because I fear you," said the marquis, and he laughed his short, curt laugh. "Even you are not fool enough to think that. You know me too well, I fancy."

"Yes, yes," mumbled the man, evidently in considerable fear himself. "I never said, never thought—you brought me here, guv'nor."

"I sought you, and brought you here because you were hard up—"

"Starving" put in the man humbly, and earnestly.

"And I do not choose that you should starve. No man can say that I ever turned my back on one who had done me a service. No man shall ever say so."

"I know—I know, guv'nor," said the man, deprecatingly.

"And for another reason," continued the marquis, "I give you this money to place you beyond the reach of temptation. Stop!" for the man was about to speak again—"say as little as you can, and listen to me. With this money you can turn over a new leaf and begin life again. Take my advice—it is worth more than the money—and do so. I don't ask you to go abroad, I don't care whether you do so or remain here within reach of me. I can trust you—" he laughed again, and there seemed to be something in the laugh that affected the man more than a threat would have done—"I trust you fully, and care nothing where you chose to live. But remember this—and I don't think you will forget it—wherever you may go, take care you never mention my name. If we meet—it is quite possible—pass me by without a word or look of recognition. Do this, and you may do what else you please."

There was a moment's pause, during which the man folded the notes and put them in his pocket, his eyes fixed on the marquis's face as if he were anxious not to miss a word or a look from the man of whom he stood in such abject fear.

"I think that is all," said the marquis. "Take care of your money; it is the last you will have from me. It is sufficient to start you with every chance in your favor. Go now—and remember."

The man put on his hat and buttoned his coat.

"You've—you've been very good to me, guv'nor, he said, huskily. "If I ever forget it, may—" he swore an awful oath, and his face flushed. "You never went back on your word, I know, and I'll stand by mine. If you'd never given me a penny, I'd have kept straight. But now—Won't you shake hands with a poor devil, guv'nor?"

The marquis laughed.

"I understand. It's a pledge and a promise? There, then!" and he held out his hand.

The man took it, his face working with conflicting emotion, and pressed it.

Then he turned, opened the window, and was gone.

The marquis waited for a moment or two, listening, as it seemed to Constance, to the man's departing footsteps, then he turned.

As he did so and Constance saw his face in the light of the candle he had placed on the table, something approaching actual fear seized upon her, and yet with the terror was mixed a kind of pity. For in that moment of two the expression of the marquis's face had changed from calm self-possession to one of mental agony so eloquent that if he had uttered a cry of pain it would not more clearly have expressed the torture he was evidently undergoing.

With bowed head he paced the room for a time, passing so close to her now and again that she could hear his labored breath; then he flung himself down on a chair, and covering his face with his hands, remained motionless and absorbed in thought.

Constance leaned against the woodwork, hidden by the curtains, trembling in every limb.

It was bad enough to have been an unwilling witness of the secret interview, but to remain a spectator of his agony was intolerable. She had almost resolved to emerge from her place of concealment and face him, let the result be what it might, when with a heavy sigh he rose, extinguished the candle, and with a slow and weary step left the room.

Constance, with a heart beating wildly, waited, as it seemed to her, for several minutes, then crept from her hiding-place, and felt her way across the room and toward the door.

In her confusion she lost her sense and memory of the position of the door, and she stood for a moment or two pressing her hand to her forehead and trying to realize exactly where she stood.

As she did so, she heard, with a horror indescribable, his returning footsteps.

He was coming back! Why? In an instant she remembered that he had left the wet coat lying upon the carpet; doubtless he too had remembered it, and was coming back for it.

It was possible that she was at that moment standing directly in his path, and that if he did not strike a light he would touch her. She crouched against a chair, and waited, feeling that, at any moment her overstrung nerves would give way and that she must shriek aloud. She heard him come in at the door, and pause as if doubtful for a moment, then went past her—thank Heaven, past her!—toward the inner room.

She was safe then, she thought. But the next moment her heart seemed to stand still, for she felt him coming toward her. An awful second of time passed, a second that was a century of agonized doubt, then what she had dreaded occurred. He touched her. With an inarticulate cry she sank into the chair; and as she did so she felt his hand, strong as steel, upon her arm.

For a breathing space he did not speak, then he said with terrible calmness;

"Who is it?"

Constance tried to answer, but her lips were dry and hot, and no sound would come from them.

He drew her to her feet, and slowly dragged her into the other room without a word.

Was he going to kill her? she though.

Still holding her, he felt for the table upon which he had placed the candle and matches, struck a light and lighted a candle, and catching it up, held it before her face.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed. "You Constance?"

Then, before she could speak, he seized her arm again.

"Be silent!" he said in a low voice, not so sternly as with an intensity of an emotion other than that of anger.

"Be silent! Do not call out! Let me look again! Yes, it is you! What are you doing here?" he demanded, his dark eyes fixed on her white face.

Constance fought hard for calmness but staggered slightly, and would have fallen if he had not held her so tightly. He put his arm round her and supported her.

"You are afraid! Do you think I would hurt you?"

There was a reproach, a terrible reproach, that thrilled through her, but no anger.

"Why are you afraid? What are you doing here?"

Constance found her voice.

"I came—" she begun.

His brows came down sternly.

"How long have you been here?" he asked in a low voice full of significance.

"I do not know," she replied, struggling against the terrible faintness that threatened to overcome her.

"You do not know? Did you see—were you here when I came in?" and he glanced toward the window.

"Yes," she said, and she raised her eyes to his. His did not falter.

"You were?" Where were you? Do not be alarmed!" and he smiled; but it was an awful smile in Constance's eyes.

"There behind the curtains," she replied. He did not start or express any surprise, but seemed to be grasping the situation.

"Then you saw the man who was here?"

She inclined her head.

"And heard every word we said?" he asked again.

"Yes, my lord," she replied.

"And you—listened?" he murmured, with a look of infinite pain which stung Constance to the heart.

"I listened—yes," she said, almost wildly. "Oh, my lord, do you not understand! I—I thought it was a thief coming in at the window, and I hid behind the curtains. When I saw it was you I was afraid—I thought that I might—You are crushing my arm, my lord!" she broke off piteously.

He loosened his iron-like clutch of her arm and raised it to the light.

"Forgive me!" he said, penitently. "I am a brute. I did not know. And you heard all—all?"

"Yes, everything, my lord," she assented, sadly.

She would have no concealment. If offense she had committed, she would make open confession.

He looked at her strangely.

"And what have you learned? What are your conclusions?"

She put her hand to her forehead confusedly.

"I do not know. Learned? I have learned nothing. I know nothing, want to know nothing. Let me go, my lord."

Continued Next Week.

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