Huron Signal.

"The Greatest Possible Good to the Greatest Possible Number."

VOL. XXIX. NO. 16. GODERICH, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 1876. WHOLE NO. 1524.

The Huron Signal,

(ESTABLISHED 1848,)

One of the largest Papers published in Canada, printed and published at Goderich, Ontario, every

WEDNESDAY MORNING,

at the Office, Montreal Street, adjoining the Market Square, by

ALLAN & DICKSON

PUBLISHERS AND PROPRIETORS.

TERMS: $1.50 per annum strictly in advance; $1.75 if paid within three months; $1.50 if paid within nine months, and over that time $2.00.

No paper discontinued till all arrears are paid, except at the option of the publisher.

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The large circulation of the SIGNAL makes it an unsurpassed advertising medium.

JOB WORK OF ALL KINDS

Executed with neatness and despatch. Bills printed while you wait. Orders by mail punctually attended to.

Business Directory.

M. NICHOLSON,

SURGEON DENTIST.

Office and residence, West Street. Three doors below Bank of Montreal, Goderich. 1311-1y

G. C. Shannon M.D.,

PHYSICIAN, SURGEON, &c.&c., Goderich, Ont. 1340-1y

DR. McLEAN,

PHYSICIAN, SURGEON, CORONER &c., office and residence on Bruce Street second door west of Victoria Street. 1522 1-yr.

Dr. Cassady,

McGill College

PHYSICIAN, SURGEON, &c., Office, Hamilton Street, Goderich, Ontario. xw102

A. TAYLOR, M. B.,

PHYSICIAN, SURGEON, &c. Residence at Mrs. McKid's, next door to the Old Kirk, Nelson Street. 1510-1yr

Drs. Campbell & Burgess,

PHYSICIANS, SURGEONS & ACCOUCHEURS. Office, Main Street, Seaforth, near the station.

JOHN CAMPBELL, M.D.

Coroner for the County.

John A. Burgess, M. D. C. M.

HOMŒOPATHY.

DR. CAMPBELL

PRESIDENT of the late Homœopathic Medical Board, now receives his patients between 10 a. m. and 1 p. m. Other hours by special appointment.

113 BAY STREET, TORONTO. 1495

Cameron & McFadden,

BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, CONVEYANCERS, &c. Office, Market Square, Goderich.

M. C. CAMERON. W. H. MCFADDEN.

B. L. DOYLE,

BARRISTER AND ATTORNEY, SOLICITOR in Chancery, &c., Goderich and Seaforth, Ont. 1357

G. ELLIOTT,

ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, SOLICITOR, IN Chancery, Conveyancer, &c. Crabb's Block, Goderich.

MONEY TO LEND. 1372

Seager & Wade

BARRISTERS, &c., Goderich.

C. Seager Jr. E. E. Wade, Jr.

Goderich, April 26th, 1876.

Squier & McColl

BARRISTERS, ATTORNEYS AT LAW, SOLICITORS in Chancery, Notaries Public, &c. Goderich and Brussels, Ont.

J. T. GARROW,

BARRISTER, ATTORNEY, SOLICITOR, &c. Office, corner Square and Hamilton Street, Goderich.

P. F. WALKER,

ATTORNEY-AT-LAW AND SOLICITOR IN Chancery and Insolvency. Notary Public, &c. West Street, Goderich. 15 2-1yr

G. CAMPAIGNE:

LAW CHANCERY AND CONVEYANCING Office—Over G. Parsons' Hardware store, Acheson's block, Market Square, Goderich. 1493

S. Malcomson,

BARRISTER, ATTORNEY, SOLICITOR, &c. &c., Clinton, Ont. w35

MONEY TO LEND.

REV. C. FLETCHER,

ISSUER OF MARRIAGE LICENSES Office, West side of St. Andrew's Street, Goderich 1432-1y

Buchanan, Lawson & Robinson

HAVE on hand all kinds of Sashes, Doors, Blinds, Mouldings, and Dressed Lumber, at the Goderich Planing Mill. 1309.

J. T. DUNCAN, V. S.

GRADUATE OF ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE. OFFICE, STABLES & RESIDENCE, St. Andrew's Street, back of D. Ferguson's Store, and directly opposite the residence of Horace Horton, Esq., M. P. N. B.—Horses examined as to soundness. 1313

PATENTS

For Inventors expeditiously and properly secured in Canada, the United States and Europe. PATENTS guaranteed free of charge. Send for printed instructions. Agency in operation ten years.

HENRY GRIST,

Ottawa, Canada,

Mechanical Engineer, Solicitor of Patents and Draughtsman.

Feb. 11th 1871. w-1y—

$20,000.

PRIVATE FUNDS to lend on Farm and Town Property at lowest interest. Mortgages purchased, no Commission charged, conveyancing fees reasonable.

N. B. Borrowers can obtain money in one day if title satisfactory.

DAVISON & JOHNSON,

Barristers, &c

1441-1y Goderich

Woodcock & Dickson.

Land Brokers.

CONVEYANCERS AND GENERAL AGENTS,

MONEY TO LEND

At Lowest Rates,

OFFICE—Acheson's Block, West Street over the Post Office, Goderich, Ont.

R. WOODCOCK. WALTER DICKSON

RESTAURANT.

JAMES VIVIAN

HAS REMOVED HIS RESTAURANT TO Acheson's New Block, West Street, where he will be glad to see all his customers and the public generally.

FRUIT, VEGETABLES, OYSTERS, &c., &c.

HOT AND COLD MEALS AT ALL HOURS

E. R. WATSON,

HOUSE, Sign and Ornamental Painter. Paper Decorations made a specialty.

GRAINING GILDING GLAZING

Shop on North Street opposite the Registry Office, Goderich. 1494 1y

St. Joseph's Convent.

Terms of Tuition for 1876.

THE usual English branches, pencil drawing, French and fancy work of all kinds included per quarter.....$3 00

Instrumental Music.....7 00

Vocal.....7 00

Painting and Drawing each.....7 00

For further particulars, apply at the Convent, North Street, Goderich.

Goderich, 18th Jan. 1876. 1509-1yr

NEW DOMINION BAKERY,

on the corner of

EAST STREET,

next door to the

FIREMAN'S HALL,

If you want to get first class

BREAD, CAKES, PIES, BISCUITS AND CONFECTIONERY

go to the

NEW DOMINION BAKERY.

For Oranges, Lemons, and all kinds of Fruits in season. Oysters prepared in every style. Parties supplied on short notice. Wedding cakes made to order.

WM. DOCHERTY.

WANTED.

LADIES and Gent amen to qualify as Telegraph Operators for offices now opening in the Dominion. Address.

MANAGER,

1492 1yr Box 955 Toron

Meetings.

GODERICH LODGE NO. 33

G.R.C., A.F. & A.M.

THE REGULAR COMMUNICATION is held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p. m. Visiting brethren cordially invited.

W. DICKSON, Sec.

Goderich, 4th May, 1871. xw75-1y

Money to Lend.

$25,000

TO Loan on Farm or Town property at 7 per cent. Apply to

G. CAMPAIGNE, Solicitor, &c., Goderich.

Oct. 20th, 1871 41tf

MONEY TO LOAN

AT LOW RATES OF INTEREST.

FREEHOLD Permanent Building and Savings Society of Toronto.

For particulars apply to

A. M. ROSS, Agent at Goderich.

Secretary and Treasurer,

CHAS. ROBERTSON,

Toronto. 1343.

MONEY TO LEND

At Greatly reduced Rates of Interest

THE undersigned has any amount of money to Loan from two to fifteen years, at a low rate of interest and favourable terms of repayment, payable by yearly instalments; rate of expenses will defy competition.

HORACE HORTON

Appraiser for the Canada Permanent Building & Savings Society, of Toronto.

INSURANCE CARD

The Subscriber is agent for the following first-class Insurance Companies:

PHŒNIX of London, England.

HARTFORD of Hartford.

PROVINCIAL of Toronto.

BRITISH AMERICA, at Toronto.

Fire & Marine business done at the lowest possible rates

HORACE HORTON

Office Market Square, Goderich.

Oct. 26th 1870. x36-1y.

Money to Loan

THE CANADA LANDED CREDIT COMPANY, TORONTO.

JOHN LAING SEAGER, ESQ., President.

MONEY is lent by this Company to individuals upon the same system as it is by municipalities. Send for Circulars

HUGH HAMILTON,

1495 1y C. L. Agent, Goderich.

Money to Lend.

$50,000 00.

Rusting for want of Applicants

Best terms yet offered to the public.

B. L. DOYLE, Solicitor, &c. Goderich

Jan. 18th, 1876. 1509-1yr

Insurance.

THE LIVERPOOL & LONDON And Globe Insurance Company.

Available Assets, $27,000,000

Losses paid in the course of Thirty-five years exceed

FORTY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS!

Claims by CHICAGO FIRE estimated at nearly $2,000,000, are being adjusted as fast as adjusted without demurrer. Security, Prompt Payment, and Liberality in adjustment of its losses are the prominent features of this wealthy company.

FIRE and LIFE POLICIES issued with very liberal conditions.

Head Office, Queen's Hotel, Montreal.

G. F. C. SMITH, Resident Secretary, MONTREAL

A. M. ROSS, Agent for Goderich

CANADA

Live Stock

INSURANCE Co'y.

Head Office, Toronto.

HORSES AND CATTLE

Insured against death from any cause. For rates apply to

R. RADCLIFF, Agent, Goderich.

BEVERLY ROBINSON, Manager.

1466—6mo

GODERICH AGENCY

OF THE

Trust & Loan Company of Canada,

Incorporated by Royal Charter

CAPITAL—ONE MILLION POUNDS STERLING.

Funds for Investment.

LOANS made on the Security of approved Farm or City or Town Property for periods of Five years or to suit the convenience of Borrowers, and either repayable at expiry of time or by annual instalments. Payments in reduction of Loans will be accepted at any time on favorable terms.

Approved Mortgages purchased.

G. M. TRUEMAN, Agent,

1317 Market Square, Goderich.

Artificial Stone.

The ubscribers having commenced the manufacture of Artificial Stone, are prepared to receive and execute orders for

WINDOW CAPS,

KEYSTONES,

WINDOW SILLS,

DOOR SILLS and all kinds of ORNAMENTAL WORK

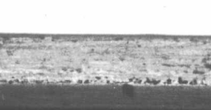
required for buildings. This Stone is as durable as any other, and can be furnished at half the cost of cut stone. We invite the public to inspect the same at the factory, opposite Neiburgall's Salt Works, or at the Town Clerk's Office, where specimens will be kept on view, and orders received. As this is a new enterprise, we trust the people of Goderich will give us proper encouragement.

Orders received and shipments made to any point in Canada.

J. & G. W. THOMSON,

1473- 3m Goderich, On

Something New



ALL KINDS OF

SEWING MACHINES

repaired and put in good running order before taken from the shop or no charge. Remember the place. McIntosh's Gunshop, in rear of F. Jordan's Drugstore, Goderich. Aug. 18, 1874. 1435

STAR BAKERY

Victoria St., foot of Hamilton St,

GODERICH, Ont.

HARRIES, ARTHUR & CO.

BAKERS and Confectioners. Wedding and Parties supplied on short notice. Also, Vessels supplied. Flour and Feed constantly on hand. Good delivered in any part of the town.

Goderich, Nov. 23, 1874. 1449-1yr

NEW MEAT MARKET

N. LINDSAY.

BEGS to notify the inhabitants of Goderich that he has opened out a new Meat Market in the store opposite the Colborne Hotel, where he will always have for sale the best of meat, and having received the services of a first-class butcher from Toronto, will warrant satisfaction. Meat delivered to any part of the town.

December 22nd, 1875. 1505-1yr

A NEW ENTERPRISE

Turning Shop and Bedstead Factory,

On the corner of Waterloo and Lighthouse Streets,

In the shop formerly occupied as an axe factory, where the public can be accommodated with all kinds of TURNING, PLANING, SAWING and general JOB WORK.

All very cheap for Cash and on the Shortest Notice.

Give me a call, and support home manufacture.

SAM'L CURRAN.

Goderich Sept. 29, 1875. 1492—1yr

Goderich & Kincardine

MARBLE WORKS.

HEADSTONES,

HOUSE TRIMMINGS,

MONUMENTS.

And work of all kinds in Marble designed and executed in the best style and at most reasonable prices.

MARBLE MANTLES

KEPT IN STOCK.

GRANITE MONUMENTS

AND

HEADSTONES.

Imported to order.

ALL WORK WARRANTED.

SCOTT & VANSTONE.

1482-1yr

H. DUNLOP,

Merchant Tailor,

WEST STREET,

HAS RECEIVED A LARGE STOCK of

Spring & Summer Cloths, Tweeds, &c.

Which he is selling very cheap.

READY-MADE CLOTHING

always on hand,

Gents' Furnishings

A large and well selected stock to select from, and as cheap as any house in the Dominion

CLOTHING MADE TO ORDER.

On the shortest notice, and a good fit guaranteed.

Hugh Dunlop.

Goderich, May 3, 1876. 1524

PHILO NOBLE,

MERCHANT TAILOR,

HAMILTON STREET,

GODERICH,

Has on hand the best assorted stock of

Cloths, Tweeds, &c. &c

I hope from my long experience in the trade and employing the best of workmen, to receive the support of my friends and the public.

Clothing made to Order

on the shortest notice and guaranteed to fit. Call and inspect the stock.

2 doors East of W. Acheson's harness shop. 1489ly

WELLER & MARTIN,

Pump Makers.

Wells Sunk & Repaired

on short notice.

Also, Soft water Tanks

made and repaired.

Parties requiring good work done would do well to call upon the subscribers at their shop on Victoria Street in the old marble work.

Weller & Martin.

1475 1yr

GODERICH

AUCTION MART.

JOHN STEWART

INFORMS the inhabitants of the County of Huron, that he has just received a large stock of

Dry Goods, Crockery, GLASSWARE,

COOKING & PARLOR, STOVES,

Hardware and Fancy Goods.

And as the goods in stock were purchased at a low figure he is enabled to sell them cheaper than any other store in the place. The goods are of the very best description and will be sold at a great sacrifice on original cost. Parties wishing goods will do well to call and look at the stock.

Cash advanced on goods consigned.

Cash paid for all kinds of Household Goods.

No charge for storage of goods for sale at auction

Bankrupt and other stocks bought and sold.

Goods appraised and debts collected.

A number of Farms and Town Lots for Sale.

Goderich, April 6th, 1875. 1468-1yr

THE SUPERIOR SAVINGS AND LOAN SOCIETY.

LONDON, ONT.

Incorporated by act of Parliament.

CAPITAL, $1,000,000.

Shares $50 each, payable in full or by instalments of $1 per month or in ten quarterly payments of $5 each.

Money Advanced on Real Estate.

CHAS. HUTCHINSON, Esq., Clerk of the Peace, President.

A. KEENLYSIDE, Esq., Vice-President.

DIRECTORS.

Geo. Philips, Esq., Alderman, City of London; John Ross Esq., Alderman City of London; C. D. Tufford Esq., M. D.; E. Plummer Esq., Wholesale Druggist; Hugh Stevenson Esq.; J. J. Lancaster, M. D.; J. D. Saunby Esq., North Branch Mills; John Wheaton Esq., London Township; R. S. Murray Esq., Merchant; Saml. Crawford Esq., Globe Agricultural Works; Thos. Peel Esq., J. P.

BANKERS,

Bank of Montreal,

DARTRUM & LOVE, Solicitors.

JAS. MILNE, Manager.

Office, Dundas St., North Side between Talbot and Ridout St.

Application for stock or to borrow money can be made to Alex. McD. Allan, Branch office, Goderich. 1468-1y

Manhood Restored!

PROFESSOR RUBERT'S

ESSENCE OF LIFE, is a sure cure for Seminal Weakness, Nervous Debility, Mental and Physical Prostration, &c. Obstacles to Marriage removed. All suffering from the errors of youth should send for a Circular, to

RUBERT & CO.,

Sole Agents and Proprietors.

No. 22 St. John Street

1506-1yr (Montreal P. Q.

Poetry.

The Primrose.

Welcome, pale primrose! starting up between
Dead matted leaves of ash and oak that strew
The every lawn, the wood, and spinney through,
'Mid creeping moss and ivy's darker green;
How much thy presence beautifies the ground!
How sweet thy modest unaffected pride
Glows on the sunny bank and wood's warm side!
And where thy fairy flowers in groups are found,
The school-boy roams enchantedly along,
Plucking the fairest with a rude delight;
While the meek shepherd stops his simple song,
To gaze a moment on the pleasing sight;
O'erjoyed to see the flowers that truly bring,
The welcome news of sweet returning spring.

My Friend.

(AFTER THE GERMAN.)

The friend who holds a mirror to my face,
And hiding none, is not afraid to trace
My faults, my smallest blemishes, within;
Who friendly warns, reproves me if I sin—
Although it seem not so—he is my friend,
But he who, ever flattering, gives me praise,
Who ne'er rebukes, nor censures, nor delays
To come with eagerness and grasp my hand,
And pardon me, ere pardon I demand—
He is my enemy, although he seem my friend.

The New Magdalen.

FIRST SCENE.—THE COTTAGE ON THE FRONTIER.

PREAMBLE.

The place is France.

The time is autumn, in the year eighteen hundred and seventy—the year of the war between France and Germany.

The persons are, Captain Arnault, of the French army; Surgeon Surville, of the French ambulance, Surgeon Wetzel, of the German army; Mercy Merrick, attendant nurse to the French ambulance, and Grace Roseberry, a travelling lady on her way to England.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO WOMEN.

It was a dark night. The rain was pouring in torrents.

Late in the evening a skirmishing party of the French and a skirmishing party of the Germans had met, by accident, near the little village of Lagrange, close to the German frontier. In the struggle that followed the French had (for once) got the better of the enemy. For the time, at least, a few hundred out of the host of the invaders had been forced back over the frontier. It was a trifling affair occurring a long after the great German victory of Wissembourg, and the newspapers took little or no notice of it.

Captain Arnault, some days after the French skirmish, received at the French headquarters, in Metz, a letter from the Surgeon of the French ambulance, in which the writer, by the light of a solitary tallow candle, wrote the official dispatches taken from the Germans. He had suffered the wood fire, scattered over the large open grate, to burn low; the remaining fuel was all that remained in part of the room. On the floor behind him lay a bed of the miller's empty sacks. In a corner opposite to him was the miller's solid walnut-wood bed. On the walls all round him were the miller's coloured prints, representing a happy mixture of devout zeal and domestic subjects. A door of communication leading into the kitchen of the cottage had been torn from its hinges, and used to carry the men wounded in the field. There was now comforting by laid at rest in the kitchen, under the care of the French surgeon and the Regimental nurse attached to the ambulance. A piece of coarse canvas crossed the opening between the two rooms in place of the door. A second door, leading from the bed-chamber into the yard, was locked; and the wooden shutter protecting the one window of the room was carefully barred, lest the light should betray the presence of the outposts. The French commander had neglected no precaution which could reasonably insure for him a good night for his men a quiet and comfortable night.

Still absorbed in the general of the dispatches, and in the pen when making notes of what he read by the help of writing materials placed at his side, Captain Arnault was interrupted by the appearance of an interpreter in the room. Surgeon Surville, entering from the kitchen, drew aside the canvas screen, and approached the little round table at which his superior officer was sitting.

'What is it?' said the captain, sharply.

'A question to ask,' replied the surgeon. 'Are we safe for the night?'

'Why do you want to know?' inquired the captain, suspiciously.

The surgeon pointed to the kitchen, now the hospital of wounded men.

'The poor fellows are anxious about the next few hours,' he replied. 'They dread a surprise, and they ask me if there is any reasonable hope of their having a good night's rest. What do you think of it, colonel?'

The captain shrugged his shoulders. 'The surgeon persists,' thought, 'I ought to know?' he said.

'I know that we are in possession of the village for the present,' replied the Captain Arnault, 'and I know no more. Here are the papers of the enemy. He held them up, and shook them impatiently as he spoke. 'They give me no info mation that I can rely on. For all I can tell to the contrary, the main body of the Germans, outnumbering us ten to one, may be nearer this cottage than the main body of our friends. Draw your own conclusions. I have nothing more to say.'

Having answered in these discouraging terms, Captain Arnault got on his feet, drew the hood of his great coat over his head, and lit a cigar at the candle.

'Where are you going?' asked the surgeon.

'To visit the outposts.'

'Do you want this room for a little while?'

'Not for some hours to come. Are you thinking of moving any of your wounded men in here?'

'I was thinking of the English lady,' answered the surgeon. 'The kitchen is not quite the place for her. She would be more comfortable here; and the English nurse might keep her company.'

Captain Arnault smiled, not very pleasantly. 'They are two fine women,' he said, 'and Surgeon Surville is a ladies' man. Let them come in. If they are rash enough to trust themselves here with you.' He stopped himself on the point of going out, and looked back disturbingly at the lighted candle. 'Caution the women,' he said, 'to limit the exercise of their curiosity to the inside of this room.'

'What do you mean?'

The captain's fair face polished significantly to the closest resemblance of a frown.

'Did you ever know a woman who could resist looking out of window? he asked. 'Dark as it is, no sooner are these ladies in their rooms will feel tempted to open that shutter. Tell them I don't want the light of the candle to betray my bordeaux to the German scouts. How is the weather?' He stopped raining.

'Pouring.'

'So much the better. The Germans won't see us.' With that consolatory remark he unlocked the door leading into the yard, and walked out.

The surgeon lifted the canvas screen and called into the kitchen:

'Mrs Merrick, have you time to take a little rest?'

'Plenty of time,' answered a soft voice with an underlying melancholy in it, plainly dull audible though it had only spoken three words.

'Come in, then,' continued the surgeon, 'and bring the English lady with you. Here is a quiet room all to yourselves.'

He held back the canvas, and the two women appeared.

The nurse led the way—tall, lithe, and gracefully attired in her uniform dress of neat black stuff, with plain linen collar and cuffs, and with the scarlet cross of the Geneva Convention embroidered on her left shoulder. Pale and sad, her expression and manner both eloquently suggestive of suppressed suffering and sorrow, there was an innate nobility in the carriage of this woman's head, an innate grandeur in the gaze of her large grey eyes, and in the line of her finely proportioned face, which made her irresistibly striking and beautiful, even under any circumstances and disadvantages. Her companion, darker in complexion and smaller in stature, rose and attractions which were quite marked enough to account for the surgeon's polite anxiety to shelter her in the captain's room. The commonest man of mankind would have declared her to be an unusually pretty woman. She wore the large gray cloak that covered her from head to foot with a grace that lent its own attractions to a plain and even a shabby article of dress. The languor in her movements, and the uncertainty of tone in her voice as she thanked the surgeon, suggested that she was suffering from fatigue. Her dark eyes searched the dimly lighted room with a quick and half fast by the nurse's arm with the air of a woman whose nerves had been severely shaken by some recent shock.

'You have one thing to remember, ladies,' said the surgeon. 'Beware of opening the shutter, for fear of the light being seen through the window. For the rest, you are free to make ourselves as comfortable here as you can. Compose yourself, dear madam, and rely on the protection of a Frenchman who is devoted to you.' He gallantly emphasized his last words by raising the hand of the English lady to his lips. At the moment when he kissed it the curious scrutiny was strongly marked upon a person in the service of the ambulance appeared, announcing that a bandage had slipped, and that one of the wounded men was to all appearance bleeding to death. The surgeon, in hurrying to destiny, with the young gentleman, dropped the curtain behind him. The two ladies were left together in the room.

'Will you take a chair, dear?' asked the younger.

'Don't call me anything but Mercy,' said the other. 'My name is Grace Roseberry.'

'The nurse hesitated. 'Not a pretty name like mercy,' she said, kindly. 'Call me Mercy Merrick,' she added, with a sudden emphasis.

'That's given an unusual meaning. Was there some reason which lay concealed in it?' thought Miss Roseberry, did not said, aloud, with her sweetest smile, 'I'm sure I shall like it.' Mercy Merrick, gratefully, 'I'm sure it will be a happy omen to me.'

'I wish you your omen may come true,' said Mercy Merrick, gently. 'I'm tired to death.'

'I must speak of the situation you found me in when the French scouts drove the Germans away! My travelling carriage stopped, the horses startled by the firing, and I was thrown out by the shock. Without a word being exchanged, I was conducted to the cottage, and left to the care of the kind nurse. Is it not so? Have I not been treated like a lady? Have I not been left to my own reflections, and my own company, ever since? Have I not been treated like a lady? Have I not been left to my own reflections, and my own company, ever since? Have I not been treated like a lady? Have I not been left to my own reflections, and my own company, ever since?'

'Mercy planted herself in her place at the supper's table, and seated herself at some little distance, on an old chair, in a dark corner of the room. 'May I ask you a question?' she said, abruptly.

'A hundred questions, if you like, dear,' the lady blushed at the unexpected form, and at the dimly visible figure of her companion seated in the obscurest corner of the room. 'Ask me the easiest question first, and I will answer it,' she said, impatiently. 'It won't last much longer. Don't, we make the time more cheerful!' Mercy, ask away! Ask away! Ask away!