

Weekly Monitor, PUBLISHED Every Wednesday at Bridgetown.

SANCTON and PIPER, Proprietors.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—\$1.50 per annum, in advance; if not paid within six months, \$3.00.

Advertising Rates. One inch—First insertion, 50 cents; every after insertion, 25 cents; one month, \$1.00; two months, \$1.75; three months, \$2.50; six months, \$4.50; twelve months, \$8.00.

One Square, (two inches)—First insertion, \$1.00; each continuation, 25 cents; three months, \$3.50; six months, \$6.00; twelve months, \$10.00.

HALY COLUMNS.—First insertion, \$4.50; each continuation, \$1.00 per month; one month, \$10.00; two months, \$17.00; three months, \$24.00; six months, \$40.00; twelve months, \$75.00.

A COLUMN.—First insertion, \$3.00; each continuation, \$2.00; one month, \$22.00; two months, \$38.00; three months, \$54.00; six months, \$90.00; twelve months, \$165.00.

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Windsor & Annapolis Railway

SPRING ARRANGEMENT.

Monday, 3rd of April, 1876.

HALIFAX TO ST. JOHN.

Table with columns: Station, Exp. and Ret., Pass. and Frgt. Rates.

ST. JOHN TO HALIFAX.

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N.B.—Express Trains run every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, stopping at all Stations.

International Steamers leave St. John every MONDAY and THURSDAY at 8 a.m.

Through Tickets at reduced fares by above routes to all parts of the United States and Europe.

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ERB & BOWMAN, COMMISSION MERCHANTS, 3 & 4 NORTH MARKET WHARF, ST. JOHN, N. B.

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White Lead, Oils, Brushes, Paper Hangings of a kind, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

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GEORGE MURDOCH, Bridgetown, Dec. 8th, 1875.

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THE subscriber has opened an above, and will keep constantly on hand a full line of Superior Furniture of every description.

GEORGE MURDOCH, Bridgetown, Dec. 8th, 1875.

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Select Literature.

A Lost Letter.

We must enter the fashionable church of a prosperous country town. On this particular Sunday, and contrary to the usual arrangement, Alice Lahman, the contralto, and Arthur Gilbert, the tenor, sat together on one side of the organist, Mabel Strickland and Herbert Stacey, soprano and basso, on the other.

Of these four persons, Alice Lahman and Herbert Stacey gave the usual amount of attention to their duties; and nothing save the small coquetries and whispered flatteries common to voluntary, and perhaps to other, choirs, interrupted their enjoyment of their own and their mental criticism of the others' performances.

With Miss Strickland and Mr. Gilbert all was different. Miss Strickland probably could not have looked plainer if she had tried, but she approached it as nearly to-day as Heaven had made it possible. In Arthur Gilbert a change had taken place since his entrance into the church, which could not have escaped the observation of his companions, had they not been entirely taken up with themselves. His manner then had been radiant with such a glad, bright, hopeful look that it ought to have been a pleasure merely to look at him.

On taking his usual seat beside Miss Strickland, he had leaned forward and spoken to her in a whisper—an ardent whisper, it would have seemed—receiving in return the frigidly spoken and very distinctly audible monosyllable "No." A hurt and hurried remonstrance had then been answered by the lady's crossing over and taking the seat usually occupied by Miss Lahman. Since then she had not glanced toward him. Amusement sat at first alone upon his brow; but its place was soon divided with the indignation of feeling causelessly outraged. During the whole service he waged with himself a terrible warfare. To leave her to a long repentance—bitter enough he knew it would be—the resolution combated by the better determination to make at least one attempt to understand her conduct.

At last the service approached its close. The solemn benediction was pronounced over the bowed heads of the congregation. The people slowly dispersed. Miss Lahman paused to arrange her ribbons, and to permit Mr. Stacey to join her, if such should be his pleasure. With down-cast eyes Miss Strickland passed quickly down stairs evidently desiring solitude for a companion. But after a thousand struggles with pride, Mr. Gilbert had conquered himself. He met her at the foot of the stairs, and would have walked beside her. She paused with decision.

"Do you not intend to allow me to walk with you, Mabel?" Mr. Gilbert asked in a voice of suppressed emotion; but already he was growing angry again.

"I am much obliged, but prefer to be alone," said Miss Strickland.

"Is it true, then, that you were wounded so deeply? Is it possible, Mabel, that you have not yet forgiven me?"

"I have forgiven you so fully," replied Miss Strickland, slowly and coldly, "that I have forgotten both the offence and the offender. Be kind enough if you please, to let me pass."

He stepped back a little, looking at her in wonder; but she spoke once more, in a voice made intense by deep feeling.

"Think one moment, Mabel. Do you realize what you are doing?"

"I quite realize that no gentleman detains a lady against her consent. When it is your pleasure to allow me, I shall be glad to go."

"And this is our farewell?"

"That has already been spoken. I hoped it had been final."

Mr. Gilbert bowed profoundly and stepped aside. Her face was an emotionless mask; but upon his amazement, pain and anger were plainly painted.

Before Miss Strickland reaches home a very few words will throw light upon the reason—or unreason—of her conduct to her betrothed lover.

A lover's quarrel had begun, as such quarrels usually do, about a trifle. Unhappily, in this instance, the impetuosity of the gentleman, irritated by the cold pride of the lady, had widened the breach until it had grown to formidable dimensions, each dwelling upon their own particular grievance, and each declining to take that step that hurst the first one. But three or four days passed in this way had plainly demonstrated to each how dear was the bond with which they were trifling. Miss Strickland waited eagerly for some token of repentance; Mr. Gilbert look-

ed anxiously and in vain for a sign that repentance would be accepted. But, after all, he knew that the initiative was his part, and love and generosity urged him, he took it—in an unfortunate manner. Detained from church this morning, he sent to Miss Strickland a note full of love and magnanimous self-blame; a note that would have touched a very much harder heart than hers. But she never received it. Sitting in her place in the choir, before service, she saw Joe—the unhappy wight who blew the organ—coming up the steps with a note in his hand, and upon his countenance, shining with the recent application of brown soap, a look of unusual perturbation. Joe had played Mercury ere this. Miss Strickland smiled with outward encouragement and a thrill of secret joy, and held out her hand. Joe blushed underneath all his tan and freckles, became confused, and stammered something.

"Why, is it not for me?" said Miss Strickland, drawing back her hand as if she had touched a burning coal.

"No ma'am. This 'n ain't. This is for—for Miss Lahman. Mr. Arthur Gilbert he sent this 'n to her."

This was a piece of gratuitous mendacity, caused by Joe's embarrassment. The note was indeed for Miss Lahman for, by an unfortunate coincidence, Joe had had confided to his care a communication for each of the two ladies. He had lost the note for Miss Strickland, and having no intention of confessing the fact, jumbled up names in this peculiarly indescribable manner. Counseled by anger, Miss Strickland believed him. She saw Miss Lahman after that she saw very little more during the day. And Mr. Gilbert's words at the church door seemed to her no more than a gratuitous insult.

Four weeks passed after that Sunday without a word of explanation. Nor did she once see her lover. Time forgot his wings, and crept on leaden feet. Miss Strickland's face grew paler and thinner; a look of expectancy became almost habitual to her eyes and lips. The postman's ring startled her. A sudden voice, a step quicker than usual, sent a rapid flush into her cheeks, fading, left her paler than before. Instead of saddening, however, she was even gay and more vivacious than was usual or perhaps even natural with her. But her health sank under the effort, despite her courage, and at length her mother, becoming alarmed, proposed a sojourn among the mountains.

So to the mountains they went. But now, weakened a little by the ill health from which all her pride could not shield her, Mabel begged for quiet—some pleasant farmhouse, not the great, crowded, noisy hotel.

Money can find almost anything, and they discovered the farmhouse, the ideal farmhouse, large, pleasant, beautifully situated, and containing, as their hostess told them, but three or four boarders besides themselves.

"It would be perfect," said Mabel, sinking on the sofa when the landlady had left them—"It would be perfect, if there was nobody, mamma, but just you and me."

The day following their arrival Mr. Strickland was too unwell to go down stairs at all; but the next evening, feeling better, she went down to tea. Mrs. Kittrell, the landlady, casually remarked that afternoon to the top of a hill famous for its view. Miss Strickland, she added, would find them very pleasant, lively people, and she hoped, would like them.

"Oh, no doubt of it," said Miss Strickland, with languid politeness. "What are their names, Mrs. Kittrell?"

"The two that I have been speaking of are from your city, too. How pleasant it should happen to know them! They are Mr. Arthur Gilbert and Miss Alice Lahman."

There was a scarcely perceptible pause. Miss Strickland brushed something from her shoulder.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Kittrell. I know Miss Lahman very well indeed, and have met Mr. Gilbert several times, also, though so casually I can scarcely call him an acquaintance." Then the poor girl seemed to think it necessary to resume her old mask of gaiety, though save the two mentioned, there was not a soul within a hundred miles of her who could have imagined any thing of her affairs.

After tea, Miss Strickland stood a moment alone on the gallery. She noticed a narrow grass-grown foot-path leading down the hillside. It was quite lost from view among the trees at the bottom of the hill, and bending an attentive ear, she thought she heard the soft sound of running water. The shadows, the solitude, the beauty promised, tempted her. Drawing her shawl close around her, Miss Strickland walked down the path unnoticed, and seated herself upon a stone at the foot of

of a great tree. This solitude, these sweet sounds and vague forest odors, had all the delight of novelty.

"Ah, delicious!" she murmured. "Here it would be possible to be almost happy!"

She was quite wrapped in her own thoughts. And not until they were just crossing the brook did she notice the approaching figures of Mr. Gilbert and Miss Lahman; they were then within two or three yards of her. Too late to retreat, she could only hope that they would pass without observing her.

Arthur was talking in a lowered voice; rapidly and fervently, Miss Lahman listening with down-cast eyes and attentive, interesting face. Two or three phrases reached Miss Strickland's ear.

"If I have offended you," he said, in a voice of pleading, "still you can forgive me; because you know—you must know—that my heart belongs to you as absolutely as my soul to its Maker."

"Ah me! Miss Strickland had some glaring faults, which you have perceived; but her sense of honor was real, and not worn for show. Unable to move away, she lifted her fingers and stopped her ears. And never was sense of honor more unapparently obeyed than in this instance. For see how it was.

During these months Miss Lahman's comedy had had a tragic conclusion. Mr. Stacey had left for new scenes. The coquette's heart was now much wounded, but her vanity was sorely hurt, and she was ready for anything that would help to reanimate her good opinion of her own fascinations.

By an accident she had happened upon poor Arthur's retreat during the summer. Something she knew of the estrangement which she suffered, and more she guessed. Arthur was decidedly a catch. She made use of her beauty, her Madonna eyes, her aureole of hair, Arthur, like other sensible candid men, was in some respects very near a fool. He believed all her expressions and glances and timidities perfectly natural. Every day she looked prettier than the day before; the logical conclusion was, of course, that so much beauty indicated every moral excellence. Then they had been much together in happier days, and he could utter the beloved name to one who knew its wearer. All this Miss Lahman quite approved, having no doubt heard the wise proverb respecting confidantes.

This afternoon a step had been taken which, she felt, was leagues long. Simple Arthur had told her the whole story. And just as they reached the brook, with a man's egregious egotism he even repeated the unfortunate note which he had written, and which Mabel had never received.

"If I have offended you, still you can forgive me; because you know—you must know—that my heart belongs to you as absolutely as my soul to its Maker."

Here as you know, Miss Strickland topped her ears.

Arthur paused a minute. Miss Lahman lifted her blue eyes, swimming with tender pity.

"Even that," he said, "did not move her! I do not blame her—Heaven bless her!—but I still must think I had done all that I could do!"

"All! how could she?" cried Alice Lahman. Her white hand rested for one brief minute in mute sympathy upon his arm. Then she blushed and looked down. It is really true that some women can blush at will. And though Miss Strickland could not bear she could see, she somehow did not or could not turn her eyes away.

"Oh, pardon me!" murmured Miss Lahman, with confusion as natural as her blushes. "But I feel so sorry for you! If she ever had loved you, how could she have treated you so!"

"That is just what I say," said poor Arthur, very disconsolately—he had never said it at all, by-the-way, for he knew that she had loved him well. "I think, after all, that she may have mistaken herself. It was possible, was it not, Alice?"

Arthur, who had long ago worn out resentment and anger, merely wished to hear himself contradicted; a pleasure he did not enjoy. He had no weapon to match the untaught subtlety of mademoiselle, the born coquette.

They did not stop above three minutes beside the brook. When they were well out of ear-shot Miss Strickland released her hearing from prison.

At this moment she did not look like a proud woman. She sank back listlessly against the tree near which she had placed herself, and covered her face with her hands, a few tears trickled through her fingers. All nervous, her attitude spoke more eloquently than words. She knew at last that her hope had not been dead, but sleeping, for now its death-throes rent her bosom.

(To be Continued)