

THE ACADIAN

AND KING'S CO. TIMES.

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

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THE ACADIAN.

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(IN ADVANCE.)

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The Acadian Job Department is con-
stantly receiving new typewritten material,
and will continue to guarantee satisfaction
at all work turned out.

Newspaper 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 communi-
cation, although the same may be written
under a fictitious signature.

Address all communications to
DAVIDSON BROS.,
Editors & Proprietors,
Wolfville, N. S.

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Office Hours, 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Mails are made up as follows:
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day School at 2:30 p.m.; B. Y. F. U.
paper-meeting on Tuesday evening at
7:30 o'clock; Church prayer-meeting on
Thursday evening at 7:30. Woman's Mis-
sionary Aid Society meets on Wednesday
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at the Woman's prayer-meeting on the
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at 10:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
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Sunday at 11 a.m. and at 7 p.m. Sunday
School 9:45 a.m. Prayer Meeting on Wed-
nesday at 7:30 p.m.; Chalmers Church,
Lower Horton; Public Worship on Sunday
at 11 a.m. Sunday school at 10 a.m. Pray-
er Meeting on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

METHODIST CHURCH.—Rev. J. E.
Donald, Pastor. Services on the Sabbath
at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sabbath school
at 10 o'clock, a.m. Prayer Meeting on
Thursday evening at 7:30. All the
saints are and strangers welcomed at
all the services.—At three o'clock, preaching
at 3 p.m. on the Sabbath, and prayer
meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

St. John's Church.—Sunday services
at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Holy Communion
at 11 a.m.; 2d, 4th and 6th at
11 o'clock, a.m. Service every Wednesday at 7:30
p.m.

REV. KENNETH C. HIND, Rector.
Robert W. Clark, { Wardens
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St. Francis (R.C.).—Rev. Mr. Kennedy,
F. S. Kennedy, 11:00 a.m. on the first Sunday
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Episcopal.

St. George's Lodge, F. & A. M.
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F. A. Dixon, Secretary.

Temperance.

WOLFVILLE DIVISION B. O. T. M.
meets every Monday evening in their Hall
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The Little Peace Maker.

A STORY OF CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

"Anything else, Miss Euphemia?"

"Miss Euphemia shook her head as she took the next little package from the grocer's hand. A tiny sprig of holly was tucked under the string.

"With the compliments of the season," added Mr. Briggs, his round, red face beaming with good-will.

"Miss Euphemia said nothing as she hurriedly turned and left the store. The grocer looked after her wonderingly.

"Odd as Buck Hays's goat! How she and her sister can hold out again each other hater me. It's a queer world, I'll say that much!"

A portion of this harsh criticism reached Miss Euphemia's ears and struck a chill to her heart as she hastened on with averted face. She met through of merry-makers on their round

her direction as she carefully turned out the flaky rounds and covered them with a snowy napkin.

There was a golden pat of butter on a table near by, a jar of marmalade and a platter of cold ham, but there was only one plate and knife and fork.

Miss Euphemia seemed not a bit surprised at this. She removed her bonnet and shawl, undid her bundles and sat down preparing her own meat at the other stove. Then she drew out another table, laid it with a cloth, added a plate and knife and fork.

When the tea was drawn and the bread toasted to a delicate brown she sat down to eat by herself.

Silently the two sisters took their repast, each without a smiting knowledge of the other's presence, but for all that Miss Euphemia was fully aware that Abigail had got to her last jar of peach preserves and had commenced on her orange marmalade; and Miss Abigail, strangely enough, was pretty positive that Euphemia had been trying a new recipe for pickled pears.

The short meal over and the dishes cleared away, a red cloth took the place of the white one, a small lamp was placed in the centre of either table, and the maiden sisters, each in an arm-chair of the same cut and pattern, set themselves to perusing the *Daily Chronicle*.

Both figures were straight and erect, and the long thin faces, with the high cheek-bones, and heavy-marked brows, were so alike that each seemed the shadow of the other—only, Miss Euphemia's hair, powdered, expressed in the lower jaw, seemed contracted by a softer glance in the pale blue eyes. To a casual observer this might not be detected. Their own mother had only been able to distinguish between them, by the mole on Abigail's neck.

Promptly as the old time piece struck nine the sisters would fold up their papers, take a candle that stood on either side of the mantel, light it and go silently to bed.

This had been the daily programme ever since the "difference" arose between them, five years ago last February. Previous to that the twin-sisters had been devoted to each other. Miss Euphemia's mind wandered back to that happy time this evening, as she held the paper absently before her, letting her glance stray now and then to the crayon portrait of a child that hung over the mantel.

She remembered so well when their only brother died and Abigail brought the child to the old home. How carefully they had nursed the little baby, Hester, and watched her grow to maidenhood—the beauty and pride of the village. What fond hopes they had drawn of her future! And then—she ran off and married "one of those shiftless Perkesies!" What a blow it was to them both! Miss Abigail, in her anger, had driven the girl from her home, but Miss Euphemia had been more merciful. After a month's banishment she had related so far as to hold secret intercourse with the culprit. Gossip brought this fact to Miss Abigail's ears and there had been a stormy scene. Miss Euphemia remembered it well, and how, for the first time in her life, she had turned on her sister in anger.

"You are hard and cruel, Abigail," she had said, "and I will never open my lips to you until you bring that poor child home again."

"Then we shall be silent the rest of our lives," was Abigail's quick reply, "for I shall never forgive her if I live to be as old as Methuselah."

With real Brent stubbornness they had kept the vow. Even after the first bitterness had worn away, neither sister could bring herself to say the first word, and each year had only cemented the barrier of silence. Their habits were still in full accord, and they kept up a double routine of household duties in accordance with the methodical tread of the past. They started their soap-making on Christmas Day and set their hop yeast on the increase of the moon. They seemed to divine each other's thoughts even to the point of paring apples for a roly-poly. Their flower beds revealed the same choices of seeds, and their quilts the same intricate pattern.

The prying of the neighbors was very hard to evade. Of course, there was a great deal of gossip when Alec Perkins suddenly left the place and took his wife with him without leaving any trace behind.

Conscious of the hourly scrutiny and criticism, the sisters withdrew from all intercourse with outsiders. Estranged from the world and each other, they kept up their daily monotonous existence. Only every Sunday morning, as the church-bells began to ring, the two would come down the village street side by side and wend their way to church with the other worshippers, taking their place in the old family pew, one stately figure at the head, the other at the foot.

Once Abigail had been very ill, Miss Euphemia had nursed her tenderly and silently. For weeks her life was despaired of. Every night Miss Euphemia knelt by the bed and hungered for the sound of that voice, but even in her weakness, when she at last recovered, the railing passion was strong and Miss Abigail clung tenaciously to her resolve, so that her sister could only divine her wants by the questioning of her eyes.

After this test neither one had a hope of breaking the barrier. They took up the burden of silence once more, but the holidays were the hardest to bear. Miss Euphemia always dreaded Christmas. Each anniversary brought back the past so vividly. At this season of remembrance and generous giving, it seemed so selfish to be sitting solitary—to have a whole turkey all to one's self, but both sisters were too proud to surrender one jot of the puritan feast, even to the proper number of pies and vegetables. Each time, Miss Euphemia went through the form, but every mouthful choked her, and she always managed after dark to carry her share to some poor neighbor. Most remarkable of all, she always met sister Abigail on the same errand of charity.

To-night Miss Euphemia felt more depressed than usual. She dropped her paper every now and then to listen wistfully to the sleigh-bells jingling to the joyful accompaniment of laughter, as the young people dashed by on some pleasure jaunt. She felt rather than saw that Abigail labored under the same restlessness.

Both of them gave a start when, furtively harking to the last merry peal, it suddenly ceased, and shortly after there sounded a sharp rap at the door. Euphemia glanced at Abigail timidly, and then hurried to open it.

Farmer Joyce, a next neighbor, stood on the threshold, holding a little girl by one hand.

"Well, I've brought you something for Christmas, this time, no mistake," he said jovially. "She's an express package, ticketed right through from Boston. I was down to the depot, and I brought her right along with me. I don't believe no one will get a puttier present this year. She's got a paper 'all tell you all about her. I must be

off, ladies. Wish you all a Merry Christmas!"

The door closed on Farmer Joyce, and the two women stood dazed and mute on either side of the room, the little child between them. There was no fear, not even timidity in the questioning glances she sent from one to the other.

"Which is Aunt Abby?"

This blunt inquiry, in clear, bird-like tones, caused Miss Euphemia to sink speechless into a chair, but Miss Abigail stood stiff and erect by the table, her lips working convulsively.

"Mamma said I could not tell you apart, but I know how," and without waiting for an answer, she ran across the room. "Please bend down your head, Auntie." Miss Abigail obeyed automatically.

"Oh, there it is!" There was a burst of childish laughter as she spied the little brown mole just behind the left ear. "Mamma told me just where to find it. So you are Aunt Abby; this is for you then," and she slipped the letter into the rigid palm.

"Open it, please," she said, entreatingly. "Mamma took so long to write it. She cried over it so much, she spoiled it six times. She said it made her think of the time you taught her to make the great round O and crossed S. Do you remember it, Auntie?"

Miss Abigail made no answer, but her fingers trembled as she opened the letter, and something blurred the few teaching lines that were enclosed:—

"Dear Aunt Abby:—

"I never asked your forgiveness while living. But now, when I am dying, I send my little Sunshine as a peace-offering. May she bring light into your home as she has brought it into mine. She is alone in the world. Be kind to her for the sake of that other child you used to love."

Your affectionate niece,
"HESTER."

Miss Euphemia, from the other side of the room, waited breathlessly for the result, but little Sunshine had no fears. She had removed her cloak and bonnet, and was stooping down to take off her overshoes. It was a hard task for the little fingers, and Miss Euphemia longed to run and assist her, but she dared not while that other figure stood rigid and immovable looking on.

"Mamma said I must be a little woman, and not make trouble, nor 'erupt when you were talking to each other," rattled the little one. "I can dress and undress myself, and I can read in the first primer, and spell way up to h-o-u-s-e!"

Still the child did not notice the oppressive silence. She had been raised in the quiet of a sick-room, and had learned to hush her merry tones and suppress her laughter. She tugged at the straps and buttons with labored breath, until, at last, the feat was accomplished; then she looked around the room investigatively.

The double cooking-apparatus seemed to puzzle her, but not so with the other appointments—a loving hand had painted the picture for her.

"Oh, there's Hans and Gretchen," and her gaze rested for a moment on the two plaster-paris ornaments facing each other sedately from either end of the mantelpiece. "And there's the big clock in the corner, too, with the big ball that goes swing, swing, and—oh yes! there's the very log that drew fairy stories out of the fire!" and she knelt down for a closer view of the ugly griffin-heads surmounting the quaint old brass andirons.

"Mamma told me the same stories you told to her, but most of all I liked her to tell me about my twin aunties who loved each other so much—how no one could tell you apart—and how, one time, when Aunt Phemie was naughty you

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and was going to be punished, Aunt Abby took her place and the teacher never knew it. Mamma said that was being a hero in—what's a hero in—Auntie?"

No one answered. The little one looked up inquiringly.

"It's something nice, I guess, for mamma said my twin aunties were always good—they never did anything naughty." Suddenly the little face shadowed over with a bewildering doubt, and she ran forward and nestled one hand in Miss Abigail's confidingly.

"To-morrow is Christmas—did you know? Mamma said I'd be a Christmas gift. Are you glad? I never had many presents. I never had my stocking quite to the top. Mamma said when I went to live with my twin aunties, Santa Clause would fill it full. Do you think he will?"

Miss Abigail wrenched her hand from the little palm with a strong effort and hurried from the room. The child gazed after her, wonderingly, and then all at once the tender lips quivered, the soft eyes overflowed. The sight was too much for Miss Euphemia's overcharged heart. She rushed forward and drew the sunny head to her bosom. It rested there contentedly.

"Mamma said my aunties would love me," she sighed. "I know you will, Aunt Phemie, for you smile with your eyes."

Miss Euphemia hugged her close, while she listened for Abigail's returning step.

"Is it now time to hang up my stockings? It's so 'eepy."

Taking silence for consent she quickly whisked off one shoe and laid her chubby little foot bare.

"It'll hang it just where mamma hung hers, so Santa will know where to find the new little girl."

Miss Euphemia was in a quandary. Of course, Abigail would not think of turning the child away. If she took such an inhuman course she should go, too. To-night, at least, little Sunshine could share her bed. As if fearful of some interference with her own resolve, she caught the little one in her arms and carried her through the hall and up the winding stairs.

At the first landing she stopped in amazement. The door opposite stood ajar. It opened into a nest of a room with dimly draperies and hangings. The little base bedstead had waited long

CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR.

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