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**Guelph Evening Mercury**  
 OFFICE:.....MACDONNELL STREET.  
 MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 23.

**The Maiden's Choice**  
 OR, THE LAIRD OF BIRKENLEUCH.

A Tale of the Covenanters.

She paused, and a deep blush, which was, of course, unseemly, spread itself over her sweet face when she found herself about to give expression to her secret admiration of the man who had won her heart. A silence ensued, which her companion did not break, but at the end of a few minutes Marion broke it herself, by saying gaily—  
 "I wonder what a woman you will choose for a wife, Hugh. She will require to be goodness itself."  
 "That is a choice I am not likely to make in a hurry," answered Hugh, gravely. "The times are such that a minister of the Gospel cannot marry if he would, and should not if he could. The cause of the Covenant requires all the energies of his heart and mind, and much I fear that darker times still are at hand, when all faithful ministers must bear their testimony, at a sacrifice greater than even that they have already made—aye, even to death itself."  
 "It is, indeed, a dreadful time," said Marion, "when four hundred ministers in Scotland are banished from their parishes, and forbidden to preach to the people; when the people are fined and imprisoned for giving them shelter, and punished with the utmost severity if they do not attend on the preaching of those men who have been thrust into their pulpits. Oh, Hugh! this cruel tyranny cannot continue."  
 Her companion was about to reply, when a sound reached their ear, which made them both start and look anxiously across the moor in the direction from whence it came. It was the sound of a galloping horse and the clanking of armour, and to their dismay they beheld a mounted trooper coming over the heath at full speed. He was alone, but he was evidently making towards them; and if he had not yet seen them he speedily would, for there was neither tree nor bush nor hollow to hide them from his view.  
 To seek safety in flight was also useless, for their horse, though put to his utmost, was no match for the trooper's steed, and neither of them were very bold or skilful riders. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to continue on their way; and this they did, fervently praying that the soldier did not mean them harm.  
 "It is one of the persecuting malignants," groaned M'Kail.  
 "Heaven protect us!" prayed Marion, as instinctively she clung more closely to her companion.  
 The horseman came thundering on, and would have struck the track considerably in advance of them, but chancing to turn round his head he suddenly saw them, and as suddenly causing his horse to wheel, he came cantering towards them, and pulled up directly in their path.  
 "Hilloo; who are you, and what takes you abroad on the moor after nightfall?" he loudly and insolently demanded. Before he spoke they saw that he wore an officer's uniform, but the moment he uttered the words they recognized the voice as that of Charlie Allan—the very man who had been the subject of their previous conversation.  
 "Who are you, I say?" thundered the trooper, still more insolently, for they had made no reply to his question. "Some Whig minister, I'll be bound, who has been holding a field preaching with more of the rebels. Give me an instant answer, or I shall find a way to force one."  
 "This is a rough salutation to give to old acquaintances, Mr. Allan," said M'Kail.  
 The trooper started, and bent eagerly forward, to scrutinize their faces, which were both turned towards him.  
 "Ha!" he exclaimed. "By heavens, Hugh M'Kail and Marion Gordon! Well, if this isn't rare luck! And where, pray, are you skulking to? But I needn't ask, for well do I guess you are bound for Birkenleuch, or near it."  
 "You are very impertinent, sir," returned M'Kail, calmly. "Truth compels me to say that your new trade of a soldier has not improved your manners."  
 "Ha! say so!" exclaimed Allan, with a mocking laugh. "Times are changed since the day we parted in Greystone Manse—the day, Marion Gordon, when I was ignominiously dismissed as a rejected suitor, and told that your choice had fallen, not on me, but on Walter Elliot, the laird of Birkenleuch. You remember the day well, I daresay, when you had your triumph by sending me from your presence with the information that he was preferred to me."  
 "You are unjust, Mr. Allan," said Marion, in a tone, the tremulousness of which she could not fully disguise. "There was no triumph either shown or felt. I was grateful for your proffered love, and felt sorry for any disappointment you experienced; but my heart being already given to another, how could I do aught but—"  
 "Oh, yes," he interrupted with bitter emphasis. "You took care to let me know that my rival had been beforehand with me, and snatched the prize I sought. Then, as a punishment for my presumption, your father expelled me from the manse."  
 "Oh, Charlie, how can you say so," burst out Marion, impetuously. "My father never, by word or deed, interfered in the matter, but left me perfectly free to decide as my heart dictated."  
 "Aye, and was all the better pleased because your choice was to his liking. Perhaps you will say it was not him who put me out of doors."  
 "Not in unkindness," replied the maiden. "But after what I know of you, I think it would be better even for yourself to leave."  
 "That my rival might have the field to himself," cried the trooper.  
 "That could not be," interposed M'Kail. "For Marion having made her choice, there could no longer be rivalry, since honour required you to relinquish the pursuit."  
 "Say you so?" sneered Allan. "Pray remember, Mr. Allan, that you are not a field preacher here, and that an officer of His Majesty is not to be taught by a canting rebel like you. Times are changed now, and we have got to different sides of the hedge. So I may tell you that I am not one accustomed to relinquish any pursuit, and now expect to find my chance with Marion the best of the two. I was nobody then, and Elliot was the laird of Birkenleuch. Now I am Captain Allan of His Majesty's Horse, and Elliot is more than suspected of favouring the rebels, therefore I have the power to crush him."  
 "All which makes no difference in Marion's relation to you and Walter," calmly observed M'Kail.  
 "Hold your tongue, fellow," thundered Allan. "We want none of your interference. You may find you have enough to do to keep yourself right. Let the girl speak for herself."  
 "I can only repeat what Hugh has said," answered Marion, indignantly. "No change of circumstances can alter the choice I have made."  
 "Would you prefer one who may soon be a beggar and a prisoner," said Allan, incredulously.  
 "Yes," was the noble reply. "I have pledged my name to Walter Elliot, and I will be true to him in prosperity and adversity, in freedom and in bondage, in safety and persecution."  
 "Then, by heaven, if you will not yield to my persuasion, you shall be my power!" roared Allan. "I will both secure you and subdue you. Mine you shall be, and for your former scorn I shall have revenge in torturing those you cling to—this white-faced coveting constable, and your prescribed father, and the insolent laird of Birkenleuch— Doubtless you were on your way to a nice snug family meeting, but as it is also a meeting of rebels, it is equally my duty and my pleasure to prevent it. Mr. M'Kail, I will have you of your charge by sending Marion before me, and you accompany us as my

"No, no, Charlie. You would not harm us," cried Marion. "These are but empty threats uttered in your anger."  
 "Are they?" said Allan, with an oath and a look which made the maiden shudder.  
 "You are not so devoid of gratitude as to injure those who were so kind to you," expostulated M'Kail. "Has not Mr. Gordon been to you as a father, and Marion as a sister. Had you not a comfortable home with them for years. Have you forgot those things, or can you require them with aught but that forbearance and protection which a cruel and unjust Government causes them to require."  
 "Ha! you dare talk treason to me," vociferated the trooper. "The time was when I had to bear your parson's lectures, but I can see you now."  
 As he spoke he brought his horse close to the side of that on which they rode, and made a snatch at Marion to place her before him. But Hugh instinctively caught her by the waist to wheel, and brought his horse round towards the trooper's saddle. Baffled thus in his object, a furious rage took instant possession of Allan, and raising his heavy riding whip he struck the preacher on the head.  
 "A most brave soldier's deed, to strike the unarmed and defenceless," said Hugh, as he calmly kept his place between Allan and Marion.  
 "I'll have her though I should ride you down," hissed the latter, through his foaming lips.  
 "For shame!" exclaimed M'Kail. "You are the very last who should offer insult to you as a sister. If the fear of God do not deter you, think of the scorn and contempt of men."  
 "Don't preach to me, you canting hypocrite," thundered Allan. "Marion Gordon goes with me to-night, though all the rebel Whigs in Scotland dared to oppose."  
 He snatched the bridle rein from Hugh's unpractised hand, and gave it a jerk, which caused the horse to swerve round till the trembling Marion was again brought within his reach, when he immediately laid a vigorous grasp upon her, with the intention of placing her on his own steed. The attempt was, however, frustrated by the tenacity with which she now clung to her companion, and the consequence was that all three of them were unhorsed and fell together upon the heather, Marion uttering a loud piercing shriek as she descended to the ground.  
 Allan sprang first to his feet, and poured forth a volley of oaths, as he saw his horse career wildly away in the distance. Then as Hugh was assisting Marion to rise, he sprang forward and, thrusting her in a furious aside, seized the maiden in his arms.  
 "Oh, Hugh, save me!" shrieked the terrified girl, and the latter, in answer to the appeal, grasped her firmly by the skirt, thus preventing her captor from carrying her off, as he evidently intended.  
 TO BE CONTINUED.

**The Pure White Coal Oil at MR. HORSMAN'S Gives the most Brilliant LIGHT, and does not Smoke the Chimney.**

The best brands of Smoking and Chewing Tobaccos are kept at Geo. Wilkinson's  
**PHRENOLOGY IN THE MONTREAL POST OFFICE.**—The Montreal Postmaster has dismissed four employees of the post-office—all French Canadians—because a phrenologist assured him that these individuals were lacking in certain bumps necessary to their proper performance of their duties. To be without bumps is bad enough, but to be without bumps and employment in the depth of winter is pitiable in the extreme. We had imagined that this humbug had long since exploded.  
**The NEW BURNER for Safety, Economy and brilliancy of flame is unsurpassed. To be had at MR. HORSMAN'S.**  
 Dickens has realized \$300,000 from his four readings in Boston, and it is estimated that during his stay in this country his entire profits will reach \$300,000. He devotes himself closely to his work, and has three new papers in preparation, one of which is to be published in the Atlantic. He will read his "Christmas Carol" at Boston on Christmas eve, after returning from New York.  
**The NEW BURNER at MR. HORSMAN'S saves one-third Oil, and gives a Light Clear, White, and Cheerful.**  
 If you want Sugars at low rates, go to Geo. Wilkinson's.  
**THE PAY OF MEMBERS.**—It is stated that the members of the Quebec Cabinet are to receive \$3,000 a year as salary, and that the Premier, Mr. Chauveau, will get \$4,000. Members are to receive a seasonal allowance of \$300—as the Quebec Legislature consists of two branches, and the printing will be done in English and French, it seems as if that Province is going it pretty extravagantly. It is reported that the members of Mr. Sandfield McDonald's Cabinet will get \$2,000 a year, and that the pay of members will be \$4 per day.

**The Largest, Cheapest and Best Assortment of Coal Oil Lamps in Town, at MR. HORSMAN'S.**

**COMMERCIAL.**

**Guelph Markets.**  
 MERCURY OFFICE, GUELPH, }  
 December 23, 1867. }

Flour, per 100 lbs.	\$3 75	4 00
Fall Wheat per bushel.	1 55	1 65
Spring Wheat, do.	1 38	1 40
Oats, do.	0 45	0 48
Barley, do.	0 62	0 65
Hay, per ton.	9 00	12 00
Straw, do.	4 00	5 00
Shingles per square.	1 00	1 00
Wood per cord.	3 00	4 00
Wool, do.	0 27	0 20
Eggs, per dozen.	0 14	0 19
Butter (skim), per lb.	0 14	0 16
Geese, each.	0 25	0 25
Turkeys do.	0 50	0 50
Chickens per pair.	0 20	0 25
Ducks do.	0 20	0 30
Potatoes.	0 50	0 55
Apples per bushel.	0 90	0 90
Lamb per lb.	0 06	0 07
Beef, do.	4 00	5 00
Butter, dairy 16c to 19c; store packed 14c to 16c. Ashes—Pots \$5 45 to \$5 50, pearls \$5 95 to \$6 00.		

**Money Market.**  
 JACKSON'S EXCHANGE OFFICE }  
 Guelph, December 23, 1867. }

Gold, 133 1/2  
 Greenbacks 67 1/2 to 74 1/2; Sold at 75 to 75 1/2.  
 Silver bought at 4 to 4c. dis.; sold at 3 1/2 to 3 1/2c.  
 Upper Canada Bank's Bills bought at 90c to 95c.  
 Commercial Bank Bills bought at 92c to 95c.

**MONTREAL MARKETS.**  
 Kirkwood, Livingston & Co's report by Special Telegraph to "Evening Mercury," }  
 Montreal, December 23, 1867. }

Flour—Fancy, \$7 40 to \$7 50; Superfine No. 1, \$7 05 to \$7 25; Welland Canal, \$7 10. Bag flour, \$5 40 to \$5 50. Oats 40c to 42c. Barley 75c to 80c. Butter—dairy 16c to 19c; store packed 14c to 16c. Ashes—Pots \$5 45 to \$5 50, pearls \$5 95 to \$6 00.  
 Flour receipts liberal, market very quiet and but small sales at unchanged rates. Grain—wheat, no sales and rates unchanged; Peas no sales. Provisions—pork quiet at former rates; Hops, and car loads at quotations; arrivals heavy; Butter, choice wanted; ordinary quiet. Ashes dull at quotations.

**Valuable Building Lots for Sale IN EVERTON.**  
 THE subscriber offers for sale, cheap for cash, two valuable building lots in the Village of Everton, being No. 122 and No. 123, as laid out on the map made by Wm. Hasling, Esq., P.L.S.—There are two-fifths of an acre of land in the two lots, and being close to the Disputers Meeting House, and in a central part of the Village, form excellent sites for building on. For terms apply at the Manse Office, or (by letter post-paid) to DUNCAN ROBERTSON Everton P.O.

**THE GROCERY & WINE TRADE**  
**OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT.**

**FRANK SMITH & CO.**  
 77 Front Street, Toronto,

DEG to intimate to their Western friends and the public generally, that they have now received a large portion of their Fall supply of  
**Fresh English Groceries, Wines, Brandies, &c.,**  
 Ex. "Plant," "Chandlers," "City of Hamilton," "Glenborie," from London.  
 "Avon," "Onida," "Hibernia," "Peruvian," "Summer," and "Pericles," from Liverpool.  
 "Abeona" and "Glenlifer," from Glasgow.  
 "Agnes" from Charente. And are daily expecting the arrival of  
**Fresh New Crop Fruit and Mediterranean Cargo**  
 Ex. "Deodara," "Canny Scott" and "Mary Ann," from Malaga, Marseilles and Denia.  
**JUST RECEIVING IN STORE,**  
 208 Hds and Tierces of Barbadoes, Porto Rico and Cuba Sugars.  
 622 Hds Currants crop 1866, VERY CHAP.  
 5175 Half Chests and Cattes Souchong, Congou, Japan, Gunpowder, Young and Old Hyson Teas.  
 With a full assortment of Tobaccos, Refined Sugars, Wines and Liquors and Dry Groceries. All of which will be submitted to the trade, equal to and below Montreal prices.  
 Inspection invited. Terms Liberal. Cash and prompt paying customers desired.  
 Toronto, 6th November, 1867. dwtf

**CHRISTMAS BOXES.**

WE WOULD INVITE THOSE ABOUT TO PURCHASE  
**CHRISTMAS PRESENTS**

to step in and examine our stock, as it is larger and more varied than ever.  
**D. SAVAGEH.**  
 Guelph, December 14, 1867.

**Apothecaries' Hall,**  
 MARKET SQUARE, GUELPH.

**JUST RECEIVED**  
 A large supply of  
**SYDNEY BROWN'S**

**PERFUME**  
**WATCHES!**  
 Superior to either the "Russell" or "American" Watch, containing as it does a new and

**DELIGHTFUL PERFUME**  
 for the Handkerchief, unrivalled for the sweetness of its odour and lasting properties.  
 Price Twenty-five Cents each  
**ALEX. B. PETRIE,**  
 Chemist, Market Square.  
 Guelph, Dec. 7 1867. dw

**Funerals, Funerals!**  
**NATHAN TOVELL** has to intimate that he is prepared to attend funerals as usual Coffins always on hand. Horses to hire. His Steam Planing Mill in constant operation. All kinds of lumber, sashes, doors, blinds, mouldings, &c. He solicits a share of public patronage.  
 Guelph, 27th Aug. 1867. Nelson Crescent

**MEDICAL HALL,**  
 GUELPH.

**JUST RECEIVED!**  
 At the Medical Hall a large assortment of  
**LAMPS,**  
**SHADES,**  
**WICKS, & C.**  
 —ALSO—  
**No. 1 Coal Oil**  
 FOR FAMILY USE.  
 Perfectly clear and free from smell.  
**N. HIGINBOTHAM.**  
 Guelph, 20th Nov. 1867. d


**Valuable Building Lots for Sale IN EVERTON.**  
 THE subscriber offers for sale, cheap for cash, two valuable building lots in the Village of Everton, being No. 122 and No. 123, as laid out on the map made by Wm. Hasling, Esq., P.L.S.—There are two-fifths of an acre of land in the two lots, and being close to the Disputers Meeting House, and in a central part of the Village, form excellent sites for building on. For terms apply at the Manse Office, or (by letter post-paid) to DUNCAN ROBERTSON Everton P.O.

**Gold & Silver Plating**  
**A. HOWIE & CO.**  
 Royal Hotel Buildings, James-st.,  
**HAMILTON.**

**Watches, Chains, Rings Penel Cases, and all kinds of Jewelry Plated in Gold.**  
 Tea Sets, Cake Baskets, Knives, Forks, Spoons, &c., Plated at reasonable rates.  
**Also, Door Plates & Carriage Trimmings**  
 of every description done to order with neatness and despatch.  
 Orders from a distance punctually attended to.  
 Hamilton, November 23 1867. dwtm

**GEORGE PALMER**  
 Barrister at Law, Solicitor in Chief, Guelph.  
 Guelph, November 14, 1867.

**NOTICE**

Opposite the MARKET.  Opposite the MARKET.  
**1,000 MEN WANTED**  
 At the **ELEPHANT Clothing Emporium**  
 TO FILL THOSE  
**OVERCOATS and PEA JACKETS**  
 which range in price from \$3.50 upwards. During the present month

**SMITH & BOTSFORD**  
 will sell their CLOTHING at prices much lower than that of any other house in Guelph. It is now generally admitted that this is the only Store in town where real Bargains can be obtained.  
 Commercial Bank Bills taken at par.  
**SMITH & BOTSFORD.**  
 Guelph, 11th December, 1867. dw-1f

**DIRECT IMPORTATIONS**  
 OF STAPLE AND FANCY  
**DRY GOODS!**  
 AT THE BRADFORD HOUSE.  
**GEORGE JEFFREY**  
 Has much pleasure in announcing the arrival of his  
**FALL AND WINTER STOCK!**  
 WHICH WILL BE FOUND ONE OF THE MOST ATTRACTIVE IN CANADA. HE WOULD PARTICULARLY DIRECT ATTENTION TO A FEW DEPARTMENTS:  
 SILKS, Black and Coloured.  
 REPS, PRINCESS' CLOTHS,  
 MANTLE CLOTHS,  
 Some things Quite New.  
 And every other description of Goods will be shown as they appear in the Market.  
**GEORGE JEFFREY.**  
 Guelph, September 21<sup>st</sup> 1867. d

**GREAT SALE OF**  
**BOOTS AND SHOES**  
 WITHOUT any exceptions, the Barclay Sewing Machine, Manufactured by the British American Sewing Machine Company,  
**AT PARIS, ONTARIO,**  
 are the best in the Dominion of Canada for general purpose. An examination is merely requested, which will be to the advantage of those intending to purchase. All machines warranted. Also, Agent for the DALTON KNITTING MACHINES, one of the best machines in the market.  
 Apply to **MOSES BECHTEL,**  
 General Agent for the County of Wellington Blair P. O., Dec. 4th, 1867

**PREST & HEPBURN**  
 WILL COMMENCE  
**On Monday next, 23rd Dec.,**  
 To sell off their entire Stock of Imported Goods  
**At Cost and Under!**  
 and will continue until the whole is CLEARED OUT, as they intend in future to keep nothing but their own manufacture. This will be the best opportunity ever offered in the Town of Guelph to buy cheap Boots and Shoes, as the  
**Whole Stock will be sold without Reserve for Cash only.**

**PREST & HEPBURN.**  
 Guelph, 16th October, 1867.

**Come and See the Bargains at the**  
**RUTHERFORD HOUSE!**  
**DRY GOODS, CLOTHING**  
 And a Cheap lot of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Underclothing,  
 All of which we are determined to sell cheaper than any house in the town, and our Groceries, Crockery and Liquors are Cheaper than evr l.

**Just Arrived from Newfoundland**  
 100 Barrels Latest Caught Labrador Herrings,  
 100 Half Barrels Latest Caught Labrador Herrings,  
 which can be confidently recommended as the best imported this year.  
 Commercial Bank Bills taken at par.  
 Guelph, November 14, 1867. dw