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TIONESTA, PA., JUNE 17, 1874.

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BUSINESS DIRECTORY.

MEETS every Friday evening, at 8 o'clock, in the Hall formerly occupied by the Good Templars.

W. P. Mercillott, ATTORNEY AT LAW, cor. Elm and Walnut Sts., Tionesta, Pa.

Samuel D. Irwin, ATTORNEY, COUNSELLOR AT LAW AND REAL ESTATE AGENT.

PETTIS & TATE, ATTORNEYS AT LAW, Elm Street, TIONESTA, PA.

W. W. Mason, George A. Jenks, ATTORNEYS AT LAW, Office on Elm Street, above Walnut, Tionesta, Pa.

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D. BLACK PROPRIETOR, Opposite Court House, Tionesta, Pa. Just opened. Everything new and clean and fresh.

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FINE GROCERIES, CHOICE CIGARS, TOBACCO, CANNED FRUITS, STATIONERY, AND NOTIONS.

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All repairing in this line neatly done and warranted. Particular attention paid to the repairing of Watches.

ATTENTION!

REMOVAL. We will remove our stock of HARDWARE, STOVES, TINWARE, IRON, NAILS, FILES, BELTING, AND MILL SUPPLIES,

ON THE FIRST DAY OF APRIL, TO THE Reynolds, Hukill & Co. Block, SENECA STREET,

until which time we will sell at COST FOR CASH.

H. G. TINKER & CO., OIL CITY.

NO BUILDING FELT (No Tar used), for outside work and inside, instead of plaster.

JOB WORK neatly executed at the REPUBLICAN Office.

THE STRANGER AND "Old Steffie," the Ferryman.

BY MRS. MARY E. THROFF COSE.

Broke on them the wild waters; There was no hope for safety—none, And they were 'mid the flood alone.

Nearly opposite Valley Forge, on the north bank of the Schuylkill, stands a small deserted stone house, having but a room above and a room below.

This house was once tenanted by a good, honest old Scotchman, named Stephen Mathison, generally called "Old Steffie," who had tended the ferry for years, and was "well to do in the world then," as he quaintly expressed it; but since the towing path was continued down the south side of the river, rendering the ferry unnecessary, he had managed to earn but a scanty support for himself and wife by his daily labor on the farms of the neighborhood.

Old Steffie had, among many excellent traits of character, one or two prominent failings: He was self-willed, and sometime, despite his christian faith, apt to be despondent and fretful, especially when there was little work to be had, as was too frequently the case in the winter season.

But his patient, hopeful wife, bustled about at such times, and made a great show of the potatoes, cabbages, and other vegetables she had raised in their little garden. Yes, Nellie was thrifty, and a "canny house-keeper," as Steffie proudly observed to his friends, in confidence. And it was true, too, as any one could see who entered their humble apartment. To be sure, she was obliged to keep a curious assortment of articles in that one room: kettles and pans, and a barrel of flour, all ranged on one side; but the pans and kettles shone, they were so brightly scoured; the barrel, covered with a board cut in half oval shape, was covered with white muslin, from which a curtain of the same material depended to the floor, forming altogether Nellie's toilet-stand; the deal table and the few chairs were white and clean, and the cups and plates displayed to the best advantage in the corner cupboard; two brass candle sticks glittered on the mantle shelf, in the centre of which, like a treasure of known value, lay their Bible.

There was nobody in the wide world equal to Steffie, in Nellie's estimation, and it was touching to see the trusting admiring expression on her face, in the light of the splendid hickory fire, as she sat knitting and listening to her "gude mon" reading and expounding from that blessed book every night. She liked to hear "nae body say weel," she was once heard to say: "to be sure, Steffie had to spell a word betimes, but harrin' that, he was a beautiful reader."

At the time of which I speak, and this sketch embodies facts, it was February. The snow lay white and thick over the earth, when suddenly there came one of those warm spells of weather peculiar to this month. The snow began to melt, the ice-bound streams to flow, and there was every indication of a great thaw. All day long the warm sun shone brilliantly, but gradually a dense heavy fog arose over all the land, till one could not see a friend's face at a stone throw's distance. Toward evening it commenced to rain, a heavy, continuous rain. All night it rained unceasingly, and all the next day. The river rose rapidly, and Nellie became alarmed when its cold still waters crept silently around and up to the very threshold of their little dwelling, but still the vast, solid body of ice in the centre remained unbroken. During the day she had entreated Steffie, at intervals, to carry their movable furniture up stairs, and then leave the house until the rain ceased and the river fell. But old Steffie was "a little heady," as Nellie expressed it, and thought he knew best. Indeed, the pious old woman was overheard to pray, "Dear Lord, be pleased to make Steffie right, for Thou knowest he is very set." All in vain: Steffie was as immovable as the hills.

The house had stood "waur storms nor that," he said; "besides, was it not built on a braw foundation? She was always so easily frightened, poor wee body," and he regarded the little silver-haired woman fondly, "but noo there was nae danger, God be thankit; naetheless he wd assist her, just to keep her mind easy like," which he did accordingly, and they soon got everything portable to the second floor.

Hour after hour they waited, and hoped, and silently in their own hearts they prayed as the night advanced, but still the waters encroached and

the rain continued. They had been obliged to take refuge upstairs themselves, and Nellie had ceased to turn imploring looks to Steffie now, for the water was filling the room below, and they could not leave without assistance.

Suddenly there was a loud crashing noise. The Schuylkill burst its strong fetters of ice, and rushed and roared and spread itself like an angry sea over the meadows beyond Steffie's house. The frail tenement rocked to its centre in the shock, and the terrified couple rushed to the window and screamed loudly for assistance.

Alas! what human could reach them? Who could think of trusting himself in that fierce torrent among those fearful blocks of ice?

Speedily their cow and pig were carried away, and unless the rain abated they must soon follow them inevitably. Already among the cakes of ice they could discern animals, trees and cabins floating down in the gathering darkness. Already the flood was over their chamber floor, and it was heart-rending to hear their agonizing cries over the din and roar of the terrible waters. Who could bear to see them swept away without an attempt at succor?

Poor old people! They were too good, too unoffending, and too much respected not to have the heartfelt sympathy and commiseration of the little band of men and women collected on a bluff on the opposite shore, trying to contrive what could be done for their rescue.

In their eagerness to do something a boat was procured, and ropes; but where was the man who would peril his life in that raging flood? or where was the wife or mother that could let husband or son go to almost certain destruction? It was not to be thought of, and all were standing uncertain what to do, whilst the torturing cries of "Old Steffie" and his wife made themselves heard distinctly above the roaring of the river, when up came the proprietor of the public works of the village.

All instinctively turned to him, for he was a kind-hearted man and a generous one. He could not hear the cries of old Steffie unmoved—but what was to be done? He could not make the attempt himself, for there was a delicate wife and five fair children in his handsome home, to whom he was all in all.

Standing in their midst, he made a short but moving speech in behalf of the old ferryman and his wife, and concluded by offering a purse of a hundred dollars to the man who should succeed in rescuing them.

This was a tempting sum to these poor factory people, most of whom were to use the expressive language of common parlance, "from hand to mouth" in their way of living.

There was silence for a moment or two, save the sullen roar of the river, and the screams of its victims, during which one or two of the men seemed irresolute, almost willing to go, when the womanly touch or whisper, that could not give them up restrained them.

At this juncture a messenger came running almost breathless, from "The Locks" a mile above, to say that the bridge near there had been swept away, and was now coming down the river, taking everything in its way. Poor old couple, all gave them up now as lost, when at this critical moment, a stranger of fine figure, erect and tall, emerged from the midst of the little band, gave a few quiet but imperative orders, and springing into the ready boat, rowed away in amongst the blocks of ice with an energy and strength that seemed almost superhuman.

There had been lighted pine torches affixed to the prow and stern of the boat, and the dark, athletic form of the stranger could be seen distinctly, now rowing desperately, now springing out on huge blocks of ice, and pushing or pulling the boat, now borne down the stream in spite of every effort for a time, then rallying, turning and pushing shoreward again, like one sustained by miraculous power, until the little boat shot under the window of old Steffie's house.

During that perilous passage, there was not a heart on shore that had not prayed for the safety of the daring stranger, and excitement grew intense, almost to agony, as the little boat with its added burden was seen buffeting the waters again. The rain which had ceased for awhile, now poured down in torrents. The torches of the boat were soon extinguished, and nothing could be heard but the rain, and the roaring of the ice. Unmindful of the rain, and in breathless expectation, the men held out their lanterns, and strained their eyes to see through the thick darkness.

Nothing could be seen, and oh! the long moments of intolerable suspense! The men could endure it no longer; they shouted and listened, but no answer came. Again they shouted and again and again, listening at intervals.

At length, to their inexpressible relief, they were answered, and soon, by the light of the lanterns, could be seen the prow of the boat, and the stranger, erect and bare-headed, wielding a long pole and struggling on with incredible difficulty toward the shore. A shout, loud and prolonged, rent the air, and in another instant a dozen stout hands were hauling the boat up the bank. As soon as it touched the shore the stranger sprang out, and lifting Nellie out carefully and tenderly gave her in charge of the women. Old Steffie following, and marvelous to relate, all three of them were evidently unharmed.

Ostensibly to see Nellie, but really to see the stranger, lanterns were lifted to the range of the stranger's face. It was strikingly handsome and superior looking, with classical features, large dark eyes, and a superb forehead, over which the rich dark hair swept in damp massive waves; but it was pale as death despite the exertion, and so sorrowful in expression, that the hearts of the beholders were touched with sudden and involuntary sympathy.

At this moment the proprietor pressed forward through the crowd, offering the purse. A sudden contemptuous gleam, accompanied by a haughty, impatient gesture, flashed from the dark eyes of the stranger, but instantly subsided into a melancholy smile and indulgent pity as he took the purse, placed it in Nellie's hand, and bowing to the proprietor in a manner that commanded too much respect to admit of curiosity, silently withdrew.

CHAPTER II. "I hear a voice you cannot hear, It tells me not to slay; I see a hand you cannot see, That beckons me away."

The bright sun shone as calmly down, next morning, over wreck and ruin, as though no sorrowing heart, mourning over lost homes and lost possessions, were there to welcome him. It shone also, on the pale, peaceful features of the dead, for there was a corpse in our little village. The noble stranger of the night before had committed suicide! He had come to "The Inn" only the evening before, and the proprietor had found him next morning lying back in an easy chair beside the window, with his face upturned to the solemn sky—dead! quite dead! Shot through the head by his own hand! The powerless hand, small and delicate as a woman's, had fallen over the arm of the chair, and the revolver lay on the floor by his side. On a small stand near him lay the miniature of a most beautiful woman in a gold case, set round by diamonds of priceless value. Enough of the bust was visible to disclose a dress of blue satin, and there was a simple turquoise necklace encircling the faultless neck. The face was exceedingly fair, with large deep blue eyes, and a white regal brow, from which the parted hair fell in natural curls of rich golden brown. The mouth was uncommonly beautiful, and there was an expression of angelic sweetness and innocence characterizing the whole face. On the stand also, was a sheet of foolscap paper, blotted and blurred, and evidently written over at intervals during the night. It was as follows:

"Death has no bitterness like life, Life, with a wasted heart."—Miss Landon.

"How true! Unhappy L. E. L. I But she is at rest; a little prussic acid put an end to her sufferings. After "Life's fitful fever" she sleeps well.

"The rain has ceased. Some prospect of clearing. Dreary enough notwithstanding. Dreary without, lonely and desolate within. How tired and bruised I feel! If I could but sleep; but there is neither sleep for my eyes, nor slumber for my eyelids.

"Strong and well, not yet twenty-seven, and so weary of life! O God! this intolerable weariness and restlessness! What a lifetime of misery before me! I will not endure it! But to rid myself of this accursed existence without sin. Impossible! Only the Creator can say: 'I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' The power to lay it down, and the power to take it again, being equal; both rest with OMNIPOTENCE. To rush unsummoned into the presence of God! Fearful! Wretched man that I am. O God! be merciful! Any other, and that raging river would have engulfed him, but no. Well, for the old people perhaps, it is better. They at least find life tolerable. They are together.

"How her face, pale and pitiful, baunts me to-night! It looked up at me from every flame of the fire till I put it out; peered over my shoulder in the mirror; gleamed up at me from between the blocks of ice in the black river; followed me through the darkness everywhere. There it is now, looking in at the window! Hark, she

calls! See, she beckons! Yes, love, I will come, but wait till I pray.

"Homeless, with as fair an estate as there is in all England. The sole representative of a time-honored race, a wanderer on the face of the earth. The whole world stretches out before me one dreary interminable waste. I cannot keep myself still, have no energy to impel me on. I wander about without motive, without aim. A very Cain without a crime. My punishment is greater than I can bear.

"O Emily, Emily, how different it might have been! How I should have rejoiced to hear thy light step echoing through the halls of that old pleasant home of my ancestors! To see thy gentle innocent semblance first among the stately dames of the East gallery, fairest, loveliest of them all; thyself enshrined in my heart, the honored, worshipped mistress of my happy home! I would have sheltered thee, my darling, my precious lamb, and thou couldst have made my happiness.

"What a fearful power to be vested in another, and she that light-hearted, girlish being to wield that power to my destruction. Was it wise, Emily, to discard the love that had grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength for one so utterly unworthy? They told thee there was insanity in our family, and so interfered between us—but he whom they have chosen will trample on thy trusting heart till it breaks. My poor, timid dove, God help thee! "A wounded spirit who can bear? I have borne it more than a year! What a lifetime of wretched days and sleepless nights! Yes, dear, I will bear it no longer, I am coming.

"The stars are shining and half the inhabitants of the globe are wrapped in slumber! Cold, cold, lonesome, and Emily out there waiting. Is there another among all God's creatures so wretched, desolate, injured to sorrow. Man of sorrows have mercy on me!"

The stranger was laid to rest in the quiet grave with the miniature of his beloved on his heart. It is a beautiful spot where they have laid him. "The narrow house" occupies a high bluff of the river shore, and there, on the farthest point of it, where there is the most extensive view of the river winding its solitary way afar off, under tall trees beautiful with sunshine and verdure, and tuneful with the songs of birds and whispering breezes, a simple white cross points out the stranger's grave.

An old white-headed man may still be seen there occasionally watering the grass and training the flowers his trembling hands have planted with reverent care; and if you approach him with kindness and tact, he will be very apt to tell you with tears in his eyes, how the noble-hearted dead under that stone periled his life for him, for him, a poor old ferryman, and as he goes on in his story he will point you to the old deserted stone house from which the stranger rescued him; and then, lowering his voice, he will tell you of the miniature of the beautiful lady of his love, and then coming nearer, and in a whisper, while the tears course slowly down his furrowed cheek, he will hint at his melancholy death, and finally with a fervent "God rest his soul!" turn away and busy himself about the grave again.

Poor old Steffie! a little while, a very little while, and he too will seek a resting place where Nellie is sleeping in the churchyard and there will be but that cross and this simple record to tell of the stranger's grave.

OIL CITY, January, 1874.

One Patterson, of Michigan, was a soldier during the late war, and was so unfortunate as to get into Libby prison, and while there was beaten and bayoneted by one Maj. Cady, a rebel officer. The other day Patterson met Cady in Monroe, Michigan, and reminded him of the beating, told him the time had come to square accounts, and immediately proceeded to do that very thing. He gave Cady a terrible flogging using no bayonet, however, in the operation. And then Patterson was arrested and fined \$25, and his friends paid the fine.

"Do bats fly in the daytime?" asked a teacher of his class in natural history.

"Yes, sir," said the boys confidently. "What kind of bats," asked the astonished teacher.

"Brick bats!" yelled the triumphant boys.

A Lisbon correspondent, writing of the king of Portugal, and not wishing to spoil him by flattery, says that he is an ugly likeness of a chunk of beeswax.

A witness in an assault and battery case at Maysville, Kentucky, swore that Parsons didn't get mad until he had been called a "liar" eighty-one times.

Two horns will last an ox a lifetime, but many a man wants that number every morning before breakfast.