



WILLIAM M. PORTER, Editor. R. COOPER, Proprietor.

CARLISLE, PA., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1859.

50 per annum in advance. \$2 00 if not paid in advance.

NO. 93

TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

The CARLISLE HERALD is published weekly on a large sheet containing twenty-eight columns, and furnished to subscribers at \$1.50 per annum in advance...

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POETICAL.

For the Herald.

Teach me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is!

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A DEAD MAN'S REVENGE.

How it worked and how it ended.

CHAPTER I.—THE REVENGE.

"Open the window, wife, and let in some air. This place is enough to choke one."

"It was a close, sickening atmosphere truly. The chamber was dark and low, and on the old tester-bed hung round with check curtains, lay something covered with a ragged counterpane."

"The speaker approached the bed, drew aside the ragged counterpane, and started back as he beheld a ghastly face, with eyes unclosed, and a rigid jaw."

"Come here, Hannah—come here. Uncle Zeb's dead!" The man spoke in a low, hoarse, and tremulous voice, and looked at his wife with a wild, staring gaze.

"She was a neat and slender-looking woman; in a fine, broad shawl, and a cap of black silk, she looked like a woman of the world."

"Oh, Richard!" The woman's face and voice expressed her horror at the sight before her. It was death in its most repulsive form. An old man with pinched and withered features, with beard unshaven and eyes unclosed, lay on the stretch-bed, staring upward, as though, hovering over his couch, he still beheld the awful presence that announced his doom."

"It was Zeb's dead!" said the man, who lay there stark and dead; and the man in a stone-mason's dress, standing by the bedside, was Richard Mallet, his nephew, a working man."

"I had a mercy on him," said the man, after a long pause, "during which he and his wife stood gazing with awe on the face of the dead. 'He'll need it, poor soul!' He hadn't much to say for himself."

"Through the open window came a murmur of voices from the court below, then there was a noise of footsteps on the stairs."

"Here are the neighbors, Hannah. Come, look up your things. There's late to be done."

"Richard Mallet threw the sheet over the face of the dead, and went to the door to meet the newcomers. There was a goodly troop, principally women. 'Curiosity was written on every face. Peck's Court had been in a state of excitement for some hours."

"For two days past the old miser's house had been shut up, and nobody had seen anything of its owner. At first it was supposed to be one of Daddy Peck's whims and his eccentricities, being well-known, no one troubled themselves about the matter. The next day it was reported, early in the morning, that the old miser had had a fit; by noon it was said that he had hung himself in his garrets from the rafters; and, finally, towards evening, it was asserted that he had been murdered by thieves, who had plundered the house, and escaped over the back wall."

"Whereupon a consultation was convened at the pump, by the matrons of the neighborhood, who, after discussing the circumstances, and various resolutions were proposed. One lady proposed the effects of a witchman's rattle, and a cry of 'Fire!' under the window, another advocated a long ladder, and a descent through the garret; a third was for having a policeman sent for, and breaking open the front door with the strong arm of the law; while a fourth, an old-fashioned washerwoman, old Peck's nephew and nearest relative. This bright idea carried the day, and a fleet messenger was sent to a carpenter, and a descent was made at a very late hour, and no further would be nothing but a coroner's inquest after all. However, with this to look forward to, and the question of the night's work, it had gained nothing, and so the court recovered its equanimity."

"'He's gone, then, at last!' 'Well, we're all mortal, you see?' 'His money's no use him now, it's all his own, and he's not to be troubled by the by-standers, as they crowded round his bed."

"'Let's hope his money will go into better hands, my dear,' addressing herself to Mrs. Mallet. 'You mustn't fret, it's the way of Providence, an' all for the best you know.'"

"Saying this, Mrs. Mallet had never spoken to the deceased, and she had not seen him for twelve years of her married life. It required no great amount of resignation on her part not to fret. She was only pale and frightened."

"'I can't say I regretted her husband, but 'ill to see things, and get these people about!' 'Don't tell Jess.'"

"Richard came before long. The hearth was warm, the supper ready, and the old miser, the late Peck, sitting on the stool by the fire. The man hung up his hat and coat behind the kitchen door, and then, the time and manner from his usual, and then, a clean, intelligent-looking man, came and sat down to his supper."

"'Oho, here Jessie,' said he, when the meal was finished."

"'The child's in him on her crutch.' 'You remember Uncle Zeb, don't you? The old man we went to see once, oh!' (Richard kissed the child's forehead.)"

"'Yes, better so, perhaps—better do, Mr. Mallet, said the lawyer. 'But I must remind you that—the property of the deceased is in the hands of trustees, you know. Therefore, renounce what is not your own. However, we'll talk matters over together to-morrow, at my office.'"

"Richard regarded the words as solemnly as though they had been a proper legal oath of renunciation, and then, with a look of relief, got up and kissed his wife. 'Don't cry, my dear, it's all over now. You'll see me again in ten days work before going to my lawyer's office.'"

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THE SKATER'S DREAM.

An Extract from a Letter to Miss N.—By H.

'Twas a cold, frosty day in the year '50, I had a vision of my skates with the elegant design of inscribing a syllable in the slippery snow. I was sitting on the top of the nearest of trees, little she should attempt the double device of gliding through snow and over the ice. Her nose I approached, when a pair of dark eyes sent a spark through my heart like a flash from the sun. Her eyes like twin and exquisite moulds. Her nose, I declare, per value to gold. Her dress was of plain the brightest of blue. Her hair, I saw, was of the most delicate shade, like a bird's nest, and so delicately grown, 'twas just such a spot as the writer would own. She sat on the top of her head was a hat of blue silk, with a bow of the same color. All around her neck and shoulders was a white and blue shawl, and her eyes were fixed on me with a look of intense interest. I was so struck by her beauty, that I forgot my own name, and I said no word, but I could not help mother to see, or get your tea ready then."

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