HASZARD'S GAZETTE.

FARMERS' JOURNAL, AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

Established 1823. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Tuesday, February 8, 1853. New Series. No. 6.

Haszard's Gazette.

GEORGE T. HASZARD, Proprietor and Publisher.
R. B. IRVING, Editor.

Published every Tuesday evening, (and, after the 1st Feb. will be published every Tuesday evening and Saturday morning.) Office, South side Queen Square, P. E. Island.

TERMS—Annual Subscription, 15s. Discount for cash in advance.

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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

CHAP. V.

Showing the Feelings of Living Property on Changing owners.—Pecuniary Difficulties.—An interresting Conversation.—An Unsuspected Listener.—A Mother's Anguish.—Eliza's Flight.

MR. and Mrs. Shelby had retired to their apartment for the night. He was lounging in a large easy chair, looking over some letters that had come in the afternoon mail, and she was standing before her mirror, brushing out the complicated braids and curls in which Eliza had arranged her hair; for, noticing her pale cheeks and haggard eyes, she had excused her attendance that night, and ordered her to bed. The employment, naturally enough, suggested her conversation with the girl in the morning; and turning to her husband, she said, carelessly,—

"By-the-bye, Arthur, who was that low-bred fellow that you lugged in to our dinner-table to day!"

"Haley is his name," said Shelby, turning himself rather uneasily in his chair, and continuing with his eyes fixed on a letter.

"Haley! Who is he, and what may be his business here, pray?"

"Well, he's a man that I transacted some business with last time I was at Natchez," said Mr. Shelby.

"And he presumed on it to make himself quite at home, and call and dine here, eh!"

"Why, I invited him; I had some accounts with him," said Shelby.

"Is he a negro-trader?" said Mrs. Shelby, noticing a certain embarrassment in her husband's manner.

"Why, my dear, what put that into your head?" said Shelby, looking up.

"Nothing—only Eliza came in here, after dinner, in a great worry, crying and taking on, and said you were talking with a trader, and that she heard him make an offer for her boy—the ridiculous little goose!"

"She did, eh!" said Mr. Shelby, returning to his paper, which he seemed for a few moments quite intent upon, not perceiving that he was holding it bottom upwards.

"It will have to come out," said he mentally; "as well now as ever."

"I told Eliza," said Mrs. Shelby, as she continued brushing her hair, "that she was a little fool for her pains, and that you never had anything to do with that sort of persons. Of course, I knew you never meant to sell any of our people—least of all, to such a fellow."

"Well, Emily," said her husband, "so I have always felt and said; but the fact is, that my business lies so, that I cannot get on without. I shall have to sell some of my hands."

"To that creature? Impossible! Mr. Shelby, you cannot be serious."

"I am sorry to say that I am," said Mr. Shelby. "I've agreed to sell Tom."

"What! our Tom?—that good, faithful creature!—been your faithful servant from a boy! Oh Mr. Shelby!—and you have promised him his freedom, too—you and I have spoken to him a hundred times of it. Well, I can believe anything now, I can believe *now* that you could sell little Harry, poor Eliza's only child!" said Mrs. Shelby, in a tone between grief and indignation.

"Well, since you must know all, it is so. I have agreed to sell Tom and Harry both; and I don't know why I am to be rated, as if I were a monster for doing what every one does every day."

"But why, of all others, choose these?" said Mrs Shelby. "Why sell them of all on the place, if you must sell at all?"

"Because they will bring the highest sum of any—that's why. I could choose another, if you say so. The fellow made me a high bid on Eliza, if that would suit you any better," said Mr. Shelby.

"The wretch!" said Mrs. Shelby, vehemently.

"Well, I didn't listen to it a moment—out of regard to your feelings, I wouldn't; so give me some credit."

"My dear," said Mrs. Shelby, recollecting herself, "forgive me. I have been hasty. I was surprised, and entirely unprepared for this; but surely you will allow me to intercede for these poor creatures. Tom is a noble-hearted, faithful fellow, if he is black. I do believe, Mr. Shelby, that if he were put to it, he would lay down his life for you."

"I know it—I dare say; but what's the use of all this? I can't help myself."

"Why not make a pecuniary sacrifice? I'm willing to bear my part of the inconvenience. Oh Mr. Shelby, I have tried—tried most faithfully, as a Christian woman should—to do my duty to these poor, simple, dependent creatures. I have cared for them, instructed them, watched over them, and known all their little cares and joys, for years; and how can I ever hold up my head again among them, if, for the sake of a little paltry gain, we sell such a faithful, excellent, confiding creature as poor Tom, and tear from him in a moment all we have taught him to love and value I have taught them the duties of the family, of parent and child, and husband and wife; and how can I bear to have this open acknowledgement that we care for no tie, no duty, no relation, however sacred, compared with money? I have talked with Eliza about her boy—her duty to him as a Christian mother, to watch over him, pray for him, and bring him up in a Christian way; and now what can I say, if you tear him away, and sell him, soul and body, to a profane, unprincipled man, just to save a little money? I have told her that one soul is worth more than all the money in the world; and how will she believe me, when she sees us turn round and sell her child?—sell him, perhaps, to certain ruin of body and soul!"

"I'm sorry you feel so about it, Emily—indeed I am," said Mr. Shelby; "and I respect your feelings, too, though I don't pretend to share them to their full extent; but I tell you now solemnly, it's of no use—I can't help myself. I didn't mean to tell you this, Emily; but in plain words, there is no choice between selling these two and selling everything. Either they must go or *all* must. Haley has come into possession of a mortgage, which, if I don't clear off with him directly, will take everything before it. I've raked, and scraped, and borrowed, and all but begged, and the price of these two was needed to make up the balance, and I had to give them up. Haley fancied the child; he agreed to settle the matter that way, and no other. I was in his power, and *had* to do it. If you feel so to have them sold, would it be any better to have *all* sold?"

Mrs. Shelby stood like one stricken. Finally, turning to her toilet, she rested her face in her hands, and gave a sort of groan.

"This is God's curse on slavery!—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing!—a curse to the master, and a curse to the slave! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours; I always felt it was—I always thought so, when I was a girl—I thought so still more after I joined the church; but I thought I could gild it over. I thought, by kindness and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom. Fool that I was!"

"Why, wife, you are getting to be an Abolitionist, quite."

"Abolutionist! If they knew all I know about slavery, they *might* talk! We don't need them to tell us; you know I never thought that slavery was right—never felt willing to own slaves."

"Well, therein you differ from many wise and pious men," said Mr. Shelby. "You remember Mr. B.'s sermon the other Sunday?"

"I don't want to hear such sermons; I never wish to hear Mr. B. in our church again. Ministers can't help the evil, perhaps—can't cure it, any more than we can—but defend it! It always went against my common sense. And I think you didn't think much of that sermon, either."

"Well," said Shelby, "I must say these ministers sometimes carry matters further than we poor sinners would exactly dare to do. We men of the world must wink pretty hard at various things, and get used to a deal that isn't the exact thing. But we don't quite fancy when women and ministers come out broad and square, and go beyond us in matters of either modesty or morals, that's a fact. But now, my dear, I trust you see the necessity of the thing, and you see that I have done the very best that circumstances would allow."

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Mrs. Shelby, hurriedly and abstractedly fingering her gold watch. "I haven't any jewellery of any amount," she added, thoughtfully, "but would not this watch do something?—it was an expensive one when it was bought. If I could only at least save Eliza's child, I would sacrifice anything I have."

"I'm sorry, very sorry, Emily," said Mr. Shelby; "I'm sorry this takes hold of you so; but it will do no good. The fact is, Emily, the thing's done; the bills of sale are already signed, and in Haley's hands; and you must be thankful it is no worse. That man has had it in his power to ruin us all, and now he is fairly off. If you knew the man as I do, you'd think that we had had a narrow escape."

"Is he so hard, then?"

"Why, not a cruel man, exactly, but a man of leather—a man alive to nothing but trade and profit; cool, and unhesitating, and unrelenting as death and the grave. He'd sell his own mother at a good per centage—not wishing the old woman any harm either."

"And this wretch owns that good, faithful Tom, and Eliza's child?"

"Well, my dear, the fact is, that this goes rather hard with me—it's a thing I hate to think of: Haley wants to drive matters, and take possession to-morrow. I'm going to get out my horse bright and early, and be off. I can't see Tom, that's a fact; and you had better arrange a drive somewhere, and carry Eliza off. Let the thing be done when she is out of sight."

"No, no," said Mrs. Shelby; "I'll be in no sense accomplice or help in this cruel business. I'll go and see poor old Tom—God help him in his distress! They shall see, at any rate, that their mistress can feel for and with them. As to Eliza, I dare not think about it. The Lord forgive us! What have we done, that this cruel necessity should come on us?"

There was one listener to this conversation, whom Mr. and Mrs. Shelby little suspected.

Communicating with their apartment was a large closet, opening by a door into the outer passage. When Mrs. Shelby had dismissed Eliza for the night, her feverish and excited mind had suggested the idea of this closet; and she had hidden herself there, and, with her ear pressed close against the crack of the door, had lost not a word of the conversation.

When the voices died into silence, she rose, and crept stealthily away. Pale, shivering, with rigid features and compressed lips, she looked an entirely altered being from the soft and timid creature she had been hitherto. She moved cautiously along the entry, paused one moment at her mistress's door, and raised her hands in mute appeal to Heaven, and then turned and glided into her own room. It was a quiet, neat apartment, on the same floor with her mistress's. There was a pleasant, sunny window, where she had often sat singing at her sewing; there, a little case of books, and various little fancy articles ranged by them, the gifts of Christmas holidays; there was her simple wardrobe, in the closet and in the drawers; here was, in short, her home, and, on the whole, a happy one it had been to her. But there, on the bed, lay her slumbering boy, his long curls falling negligently around his unconscious face, his rosy mouth half open, his little fat hands thrown out over the bed-clothes, and a smile spread like a sunbeam over his whole face.

"Poor boy! poor fellow!" said Eliza; "they have sold you! but your mother will save you yet!"

No tear dropped over that pillow. In such straits as these the heart has no tears to give; it drops only blood, bleeding itself away in silence. She took a piece of paper and a pencil, and wrote hastily:—

"Oh, missis! dear missis! don't think me ungrateful—don't think hard of me, any way;—I heard all you and master said to-night. I am going to try to save my boy—you will not blame me! God bless and reward you for all your kindness!"

Hastily folding and directing this, she went to a drawer and made up a little package of clothing for her boy, which she tied with a handkerchief firmly round her waist; and so fond is a mother's remembrance, that, even in the terrors of that hour, she did not forget to put in the little package one or two of his favourite toys, reserving a gaily-painted parrot to amuse him when she should be called on to awaken him. It was some trouble to arouse the little sleeper; but, after some effort, he sat up, and was playing with his bird, while his mother was putting on her bonnet and shawl.

"Where are you going, mother?" said he, as she drew near the bed with his little coat and cap.

His mother drew near, and looked so earnestly into his eyes, that he at once divined that something unusual was the matter.

"Hush, Harry," she said; "mustn't speak loud, or they will hear us. A wicked man was coming to take little Harry away from his mother, and carry him 'way off in the dark; but mother won't let him—she's going to put on her little boy's cap and coat, and run off with him, so the ugly man can't catch him."

Saying these words, she had tied and buttoned on the child's simple outfit, and, taking him in her arms, she whispered to him to be very still; and, opening a door in her room which led into the outer verandah, she glided noiselessly out.

It was a sparkling, frosty, starlight night, and the mother wrapped the shawl close round her child, as, perfectly quiet with vague terror, he clung round her neck.

Old Bruno, a great Newfoundland, who slept at the end of the porch, rose, with a low growl, as she came near. She gently spoke his name, and the animal, an old pet and playmate of hers, instantly wagging his tail, prepared to follow her, though apparently revolving much in his simple dog's head what such an indiscreet midnight promenade might mean. Some dim ideas of imprudence or impropriety in the measure seemed to embarrass him considerably; for he often stopped, as Eliza glided forward, and looked wistfully, first at her and then at the house, and then, as if reassured by reflection, he patted along after her again. A few minutes brought them to the window of Uncle Tom's cottage, and Eliza, stopping, tapped lightly on the window-pane.

The prayer meeting at Uncle Tom's had, in the order of hymn-singing, been protracted to a very late hour, and as Uncle Tom had indulged himself in a few lengthy solos afterwards, the consequence was, that, although it was now between twelve and one o'clock, he and his worthy helpmate were not yet asleep.

"Good Lord! what's that!" said Aunt Chloe, starting up, and hastily drawing the curtain. "My sakes alive if it aint Lizzy! Get on your clothes, ole man, quick! There's ole Bruno, too, a-pawin' round—wat on airth! I'm gwine to open the door."

And, suiting the action of the word, the door flew open, and the light of the tallow candle, which Tom had hastily lighted, fell on the haggard face and dark wild eyes of the fugitive.

"Lord bless you! I'm skeered to look at ye, Lizzy! Are ye tuck sick, or what's come over ye?"

"I'm running away, Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe—Carrying off my child. Master's sold him!"

"Sold him!" echoed both, lifting up their hands in dismay.

"Yes, sold him!" said Eliza, firmly; "I crept into the closet by mistress's door to-night, and I heard master tell missis that he had sold my Harry and you, Uncle Tom, both to a trader, and that he was going off this morning on his horse, and that the man was to take possession to-day."

Tom had stood during this speech with his hands raised, and his eyes dilated, like a man in a dream. Slowly and gradually, as its meaning came over him, he collapsed, rather than seated himself, on his old chair, and sunk his head down upon his knees.

"The good Lord have pity on us!" said Aunt Chloe. "Oh, it don't seem as if it was true! What has he done, that mas'r should sell *him?*"

"He hasn't done anything—it isn't for that. Master don't want to sell, and missis—she's always good—I heard her plead and beg for us; but he told her 'twas no use—that he was in this man's debt, and that this man had got the power over him—and that if he didn't pay him off clear, it would end in his having to sell the place and all the people, and move off. Yes, I heard him say, there was no choice between selling these two and selling all, the man was driving them so hard. Master said he was sorry; but oh, missis! you ought to have heard her talk! If she an't a Christian and an angel, there never was one. I'm a wicked girl to leave her so; but then I can't help it. She said herself one soul was worth more than the world; and this boy has a soul, and, if I let him be carried off, who knows what'll become of it! It must be right; but if it an't right, the Lord forgive me, for I can't help doing it!"

"Well, ole man!" said Aunt Chloe, "why don't you go too? Will you wait to be toted down the river, where they kill niggers with hard work and starving? I'd a heap rather die than go there, any day! There's time for ye; be off with Lizzy—you've got a pass to come and go anytime. Come, bustle up, and I'll get your things together."

Tom slowly raised his head, and looked sorrowfully but quietly around, and said:—

"No, no; I an't going. Let Eliza go—it's her right. I wouldn't be the one to say no. 'Tan't in *natur* for her to stay; but you heard what she said! If I must be sold, or all the people on the place, and everything go to rack, why, let me be sold. I 'spose I can b'ar it as well as any on 'em," he added, while something like a sob and a sigh shook his broad, rough chest convulsively. "Mas'r always found me on the spot—he always will. I never have broke trust, nor used my pass noways contrary to my word, and I never will. It's better for me alone to go than to break up the place and sell all. Mas'r an't to blame, Chloe; and he'll take care of you and the poor——"

Here he turned to the rough trundle-bed full of little woolly heads, and broke fairly down; he leaned over the back of the chair, and covered his face with his large hands. Sobs, heavy, hoarse, and loud, shook the chair, and great tears fell through his fingers on the floor—just such tears, sir, as you dropped into the coffin where lay your first born-son; such tears, woman, as you shed when you heard the cries of your dying babe—for, sir, he was a man, and you are but another man. And, woman, though dressed in silks and jewels, you are but a woman!

"And now," said Eliza, as she stood in the door, "I saw my husband only this afternoon, and I little knew then what was to come. They have pushed him to the very last standing-place, and he told me to-day that he was going to run away. Do try, if you can, to get word to him. Tell him how I went, and why I went; and tell him I'm going to try to find Canada. You must give my love to him, and tell him, if I never see him again,"—she turned away, and stood with her back to them for a moment, and then added, in a husky voice, "tell him to be as good as he can, and try and meet me in the kingdom of heaven."

"Call Bruno in there," she added. "Shut the door on him, poor beast! He mustn't go with me."

A few last words and tears, a few simple adieus and blessings, and clasping her wondering and affrighted child in her arms, she glided noiselessly away.

From late English Papers.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

(From the News of the World.)

Much dissatisfaction has always prevailed as to the manner in which controverted elections are dealt with by the House. It has been thought, and not without reason, that the proper mode of dealing with the allegations set forth in petitions, complaining of undue returns of members to Parliament, would be to refer them to the ordinary courts of justice, or else to establish a special tribunal of a judicial character, perfectly independent of the House itself for the express purpose of trying them. This would unquestionably be infinitely the more satisfactory course to the nation. Notwithstanding the present improved mode of constituting the election committees of the House of Commons, it is impossible to dissociate from them the idea that they are not impartial tribunals, and that their decisions are apt to be governed not so much by the actual merits of the case under their investigation as by the political tendencies of the majority of the members of which the committee may be composed. This is a vice inseperable from tribunals constituted of men necessarily possessing a greater or a lesser amount of personal feeling, and perhaps of personal interest, in the matter upon which they are required to adjudicate. As long, therefore, as the House insists on retaining its privilege of being the sole judge in matters pertaining to its own constitution, so long its decisions will be open to controversy and its justice be subject to suspicion. Hitherto, however, the House has braved all objection upon that score, and has stoutly stood upon its privilege in defiance of every argument and of every remonstrance that could be urged against it. But then nobody expected that upwards of a hundred petitions would ever be lying upon the table of the House at the same moment, all calling for immediate investigation and prompt judgment. Possibly, after the experience of the present year, the House will see the expediency of abating somewhat of its high sense of privilege, and of establishing a tribunal for the trials of controverted elections, which shall at once relieve it from the labour and the odium of adjudicating upon matters in which its impartiality can never go unquestioned, at the same time provide a forum before which electioneering iniquity shall tremble to present itself.

MORAL EVILS OF A GENERAL ELECTION.

(From The London Watchman.)

In the last *Edinburgh Review* there are some remarks on the moral evils of a general election as votes are now taken. The Reviewer differs from Mr. Macaulay, in declining the ready specific of the Ballot; and with good reason, for the adoption of secret voting is not logically indicated by the abuses of open voting, and would not, even though it had become the process of an universal sufferage, necessarily abate the evils of corruption and intimidation, as America and France have testified. The Reviewer proposes that votes should be taken on the plan that is now practised at the election of Boards of Guardians, and in other parochial contests. This plan consists simply "in taking the polling-booth to every elector, instead of, as now carrying each elector to the polling booth. Two days before the one appointed for the election, a voting paper, with the names of all the candidates and simple direction as to the mode of filling up the paper, is left at the house of every rate-payer, and after the lapse of one clear day, the paper is called for by the appointed parish officer." He proposes, therefore, that "immediately after the nomination the (publicity of which will secure all the popular excitement constitutionally desirable) a paper containing the names of the candidates and accompanied with the addresses they have put forth, be left at the house of every elector by a sworn and appointed officer, who shall call again for the same on the next day, or the day but one after, as may be determined on. He shall receive the papers into a sealed box, or bag, and shall deliver them to the returning officer. On this plan, each elector, when he returns home at night, finds the important document awaiting him; he considers the merits of the candidates; he reads their addresses; perhaps he consults his wife and family or his neighbours; and then he places his name opposite to that of the man or men of his choice, and folds up the paper ready for delivery to the collector." The advantages of such a plan are that, were it in operation, we should have no more riots at elections, though probably a much greater number of votes, and those of a more valuable class, would record their suffrages, that it would reduce the cost of elections, by rendering it unnecessary to bring the voters up in cabs and carriages, and to entertain them at public houses, that there would be no more timid men frightened from the poll," "no more broken heads, no more interference of the military, no more Six-mile Bridge affairs." Intimidation at elections is of two sorts—that which is produced by the apprehension of the enmity of employers, customers, or landlords; and this, it is confessed, would not be much affected by the plan proposed, and must still be left to public opinion; but the kind of intimidation which influences so many Irish and not a few English elections, threatening present violence to voters on their way to the polling booths, would be entirely done away. The plan would enormously diminish bribery, for this offence characterises chiefly close contests; and is committed most recklessly in the last few hours of the day of election. "If, therefore, a candidate were disposed to bribe, he must do so a couple of days beforehand, when he would be very much in the dark as to whether he was not throwing away both his money and his conscience gratuitously or ineffectually." We are not advocating the adoption of the exact plan proposed in the *Edinburgh Review*, but we hail it as an expedient ingeniously contrived and honourably intended to relieve our representation from the disgrace of such proceedings as those which have recently taken place at Sudbury, St. Albans, and Derby, and as further designed to protect the country from revolutionary proposals, for which those proceedings will doubtless be made an occasion and argument.

SALE OF SHIPS IN LIVERPOOL, IN 1852.

In conformity with our usual custom at this season, we have the pleasure to hand you our annual statement of the business done in the sale of ships at this port for the year past, and on no occasion have we been able to report so favourably, both of the amount of tonnage sold, and the prices that have been obtained. In one of our recent reports we stated that a period of unusual prosperity in the shipping interest of this country might shortly be looked for, and most fully have our anticipations been realised; prices of colonial ships having advanced fully 17 per cent. since then, and with a continuing tendency upwards, while stocks have been reduced to 48 sail against 76 in 1852, and 82 in 1851, without any immediate supplies being expected. We have great pleasure in noticing a marked improvement both in the model, material, and finish of Canadian ships, the majority of which have been constructed to class six or seven years, and to which a decided preference is given by buyers over the spruce ships, or those classing but four or five years, even at a very increased price. Among those that have arrived within the last eight months will be found some as fine models of naval architecture as ever have been produced, combining in reality (from having great length of floor and fine ends) both carrying and sailing qualities of no ordinary kind. This advance in prices we do not mean to apply so much to British-built vessels, for though a larger business has been done in them this year than last, we cannot advise much, if any, increase in price. Our quotations for 1852, therefore, remains unaltered. New colonial ships, to class 7 years A 1, must be quoted at £6 15s to £8 10s per ton; those classing 6 years A 1 at £6 to £7 10s; 5 years, £5 10s to £7. St. John's, Miramichi, and Quebec build, to class 4 years, are worth £5 to £6 per ton; those built at the Lower Ports of same class are worth from £4 10s to £5 10s per ton. Large second-hand ships with, or without class have also been in much demand, in anticipation of an advance in Cotton and Timber freights. The enormous emigration to Australia has mainly contributed to this advance, besids which freights generally are