

# CASS COUNTY TIMES.

DEVOTED TO NEWS, POLITICS, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, LITERATURE, MORALITY & AMUSEMENT.

JUSTICE AND TRUTH OUR GUIDE—THE PUBLIC GOOD OUR AIM—WILLING TO PRAISE, WHEN PRAISE IS DUE, BUT NOT AFRAID TO BLAME.

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## Miscellaneous.

From the New York Mirror.

### THE STRANGER.

A TALE FOUND ON FACT.

BY HENRY G. BELL.

HODNET is a village in Shropshire. Like all other villages in Shropshire, or any where else, it consists principally of one long Street, with a good number of detached houses scattered here and there in its vicinity, on the sunny side of what in england they call a hill. It contains the shops of three butchers, five grocers, two bakers, and one apothecary. On the right hand as you go south, is that very excellent inn, the Blue Boar; and on the left, nearly opposite, is the public hall, in which all sorts of meetings are held, and which is alternately converted into a dancing-school, a theatre, a chapel, a ball-room, an exhibition-room, or any other kind of room that may be wanted. The church is a little farther off, and the parsonage is, as usual a white house, surrounded with trees at one end of the village.— Hodnet, is, moreover, the market-town of the shire, and stands in rather a populous district; so that, though of small dimensions itself, it is the rallying-place, on any extraordinary occasion, of a pretty numerous population.

One evening in February, the mail from London stopped at the Blue Boar, and a gentleman wrapped in a travelling cloak came out. The guard handed him a small portmanteau, and the mail drove on. The stranger entered the inn, was shown into a parlor, and desired that the landlord and a bottle of wine should be sent to him. The order was speedily obeyed, the wine was set upon the table, and Gilbert Cherryripe himself was the person who set it there. Gilbert next proceeded to rouse the slumbering fire, remarking, with sort of comfortable look and tone, that it was a cold, raw night. His guest assented with a nod.

"You call this village Hodnet, do you not?" said he, inquiringly.

"Yes, sir, this is the town of Hodnet." (Mr. Cherryripe did not like the term "village.") "And a prettier little place is not to be found in England."

"So I have heard; and as you are not upon any of the great roads, I believe you have the reputation of being a primitive and unsophisticated race."

"Primitive and sofisicated, did you say sir? Why, as to that, I cannot exactly speak; but if there is no harm in it I dare say we are. But you see, sir, I am a virtuer, and dont trouble my head about these matters."

"So much the better," said the stranger, smiling. "You and I shall become better friends. I may stay with you for some weeks, perhaps months. In the meantime get me something comfortable for supper, and desire your wife to look after my bedroom."

Mr. Cherryripe made one of his profoundest bows, and descended to the kitchen, inspired with the deepest respect for his unexpected guest.

Next day was Sunday. The bells of the village church had just finished ringing, when the stranger walked up the aisle, and entered as if at random, a pew which happened to be vacant. Instantly every eye was turned towards him, for a new face was to important an object in Hodnet to be left unnoticed.

"Who is he?"

"When did he come?"

"With whom does he stay?"

"How long will he be here?"

"How old may he be?"

"Do you think he is handsome?"

These and a thousand other questions flew about in whispers from tongue to tongue, whilst the unconscious object of all this interest cast his eyes calmly, and yet penetratingly over the congregation.

Miss Bluchite was said to have property to the amount of seventy pounds per annum, and, no doubt, concluded even to have seen them home, or at least known him again among a hundred."

tion among the good people of Hodnet, that she was herself the leading object for he was not the kind of person whom one meets with every day.— It been so, he must have been a bold adventurer indeed.

There was something both in his face and figure that distinguished him from the crowd. You could not look upon him once and then turn away with indifference. His high Roman nose, his noble brow, his almost feminine lips, and beautifully regular teeth—his pale but not delicate cheek, his profusion of dark and curling hair, his black bright eyes, whose glance, without being keen, was intense—all, taken together, produced an effect which might have excited attention on a wider stage than that of Hodnet. In stature he was considerably above the middle Light; and there was a something in his air which they who were not accustomed to it did not understand, and which some called grace, others dignity and other shauder. When the service was over, our hero walked out alone, and shut himself up for the rest of the day in his parlor at the Blue Boar. But speculation was busily at work, and at more than one tea-table that evening in Hodnet, conjectures were poured out with the tea, and swallowed with the toast.

A few days elapsed, and the stranger was almost forgotten; for there was to be a subscription assembly in Hodnet, which engrossed entirely the minds of men. It was one of the most important events that had happened for at least a century. Such doings had never been known before. There was never such a demand for milliners since the days of Ariadne, the first milliner of whom history speaks. Needles worked unremittingly from morning to night, and from night to morning. Fiddles were scraped on in private, and stepped danced before looking glasses. All the preparations which Captain Party made for going to the North pole were a mere joke to the preparations made by those who intended to go to the Hodnet assembly. At length the great, the important night arrived, "big with the fate" of many a rustic belle. The three professional fiddlers of the village were elevated on a table at one end of the hall, and every body pronounced it the very model of an orchestra. The candles (neither the oil nor the coal gas company had as yet penetrated so far as Hodnet) were tastefully arranged, and regularly snuffed. The floor was admirably chalked by a travelling sign-painter, engaged for the purpose; and the refreshments in an adjoining room, consisting of negus, apples, oranges, cold roast-beef, porter, and biscuits, were under the immediate superintendence of our very excellent friend, Mr. Gilbert Cherryripe. At nine o'clock, which was considered a fashionable hour, the hall was nearly full, and the first country dance (quadrilles had not poisoned the peace, and stirred up all the bad passions, at Hodnet) was commenced by the eldest son and presumptive heir of old Squire Thoroughbred, who conducted gracefully through its mazes the chosen divinity of his heart, Miss Wilhelmina Bouncer, only daughter of Tobias, Esq. justice of peace in the county of Shropshire.

Enjoyment was at this height, and the three professional fiddlers had put a spirit of life into all things, when suddenly one might perceive that the merriest was for a moment checked, whilst a more than usual bustle pervaded the room. The stranger had entered it; and there was something so different in his looks and manner from those of any of the other male creatures, that every body surveyed him with renewed curiosity, which was at first slightly tintured with awe.

"Who can he be?" was the question that instantaneously started up like a crocus in many a throbbing bosom.

"He knows nobody, and nobody knows him; surely he will never think of asking any body to dance?"

"Dance!" said Miss Coffin, the apothecary's daughter, I wonder who would dance with him? a being whom we know no more about than we do of the man in the moon. Papa says he looks for all the world like a quack doctor."

"I rather suspect," said Miss Bluchite, a starch spinster of fifty, who was considered the Madame de Staél of the village—"I rather suspect that he is an Irish-fortune-hunter, come for the express purpose of running away with some of us. We ought to be upon our guard, I assure you."

Miss Bluchite was said to have property to the amount of seventy pounds per annum, and, no doubt, concluded even to have seen them home, or at least known him again among a hundred."

to have left the assembly along with them. We make no doubt that all this chit-chat was very interesting to the parties engaged in it; but as we have not talents either of a Richardson or a Boswell, we shall not attempt to enter into its details, especially as our attention is more particularly devoted to the "old-looking man" already spoken of.

For a long time the stranger stood aloof from the dancers in a corner by himself, and people were almost beginning to forget his presence. But he was not idle, he was observing attentively every group, and every individual, that passed before him. Judging by the various expressions that came over his countenance, one would have thought that he could read a character in a single glance—that his perceptions were similar to institutions. Truth obliges me to confess that it was not with a very favorable eye that he regarded the greater majority of the inhabitants of Hodnet and its neighborhood. Probably they did not exactly come up to his expectations; but what these expectations were, it is difficult to conceive.

At length, however, something like a change seemed to come over the spirit of his dreams. He told on Emily Sommers, and appealed to her where it fell with no small pleasure. No wonder; Emily was generally styled beautiful; there was a sweetness, a modesty, a gentleness about her, that charmed the more the longer it was observed. She was the only child of a widowed mother. Her father had died many years ago in battle; and the personal an officer's widow was all the fortune he had left them.

But nature had bestowed riches of a

more valuable kind than those which fortune had denied. I wish I could de-

scribe Emily Sommers; but I shall not attempt it. She was one of those whose

virtues are lost from the blaze of the

world, only to be more appreciated by those who can understand them.—

She was one of those who are seldom

missed in the hour of festive gaiety, who

pass unnoticed in the midst of glare

and bustle, and whose names are but al-

ready heard beyond the limits of their

own immediate circle. Entangled with

that circle; leave the busy world behind

you, and enter within its circumscribed

and domestic sphere, and then you will

discover the value of a being like to her

of whom I speak. Without her, the

winter fireside, or the summer evening

walk, is destitute of pleasure. Her win-

ning smile, her unclouded temper, her

affectionate gentleness, must throw

their hallowed influence over the scenes

where her spirit presides, unconscious

of its power, else they become uninter-

esting and desolate. I have said that

she is not missed in the hour of festive

gaiety; but when she is at length remov-

ed from among us, when the place that

knew her knows her no more, she leaves,

"A void & silent place in some sweet home,"

and a "long remembered grief" throws

its shadowy gloom over a few fond

hearts.

It was to Emily Sommers that the

stranger first spoke. He walked right

across the room, and asked her to dance

with him. Emily had never seen him

before; but concluding that he had come

there with some of her friends, and little

acquainted with the rules of etiquette,

she immediately, with a frank artless-

ness, smiled and accepted of his request.

Just at that moment young Squire Tho-

roughbred came bustling towards her;

but observing her hand already in that

of the stranger, he looked somewhat

wrathfully at the unknown, and said,

with much dignity, "I, sir, intended to

have been Miss Sommers' partner."

The stranger fixed his dark eye upon

the squire, a slight smile curled on his

lip, and without answering, he passed on

with his partner, and took his place in

the dance. The squire stood stock still

for a moment, feeling as if he had just

experienced a slight shock of electricity.

When he recovered, he walked quietly

away in search of Wilhelmina Bouncer.

It was the custom in Hodnet for the

gentlemen to employ the morning of the

succeeding day in paying their respects

to the ladies with whom they had danc-

ed on the previous evening. At these

visits all the remarkable events of the

ball were of course talked over. Criti-

cisms were made upon the different

dresses; commentaries were offered on

the various modes of dancing; doubts

were suggested regarding the beauty of

Miss A.; suspicions were hinted as to

the gentility of Miss B.; Mr. C. was sev-

erely blamed for dancing thrice with

Miss D.; mutual inquiries were made

concerning the old-looking man, who in-

duced himself so boldly to Mrs. and

Miss Sommers, and who was reported

to have seen them home, or at least

known him again among a hundred."

"Indeed!" said the stranger almost startling: "you must have loved him very much, and very constantly too."

"O yes! I loved him as a brother." Burleigh breathed more easily. "I am sure you will love him too," Emily added.

"Every body whom you love, and who loves you, I also must love Miss Sommers. But your cousin I shall not at present see. I must leave Hodnet to-morrow."

"To morrow! leave Hodnet to-morrow?" Emily grew very pale, and leaned for support upon a sun-dial, near which they were standing.

"Good heavens! that emotion—can it be possible!—Miss Sommers—Emily—is it for me you are thus grieved?"

"It is so sudden," said Emily, "so unexpected:—are you never to return again—are we never to see you more?"

"Do you wish my return, do you wish to see me again?"

"Oh how can you ask it?"

"Emily, I have been known to you only under a cloud of mystery—a solitary being without a friend or acquaintance in the world—an outcast apparently from society—either shunned against or shunned—without fortune, without pretensions;—and with all these disadvantages to contend with; how can I suppose that I am indebted to any thing but your pity for the kindness which you have shown to me?"

"Pity! pity you! O Frederick! do not wrong yourself thus. Not though you were a thousand times less worthy than I know you are, I should not pity, I should—"

She stooped confused, a deep blush spread over her face, she burst into tears and would have sunk to the ground had not her lover caught her in his arms.

"Think of me thus," he whispered, "till we meet again, and we may both be happy."