KIRKCONNEL.

A Strange but True Romance.

In the south of Scotland, about eight miles north from Annan, is a graveyard called Kirkconnel, a lovely but most sequestered spot. Of all the cemeteries of graveyards which I have seen in any country, to me this is the most attractive. There is a weird, inexpressible look about the place so much in keeping with a graveyard. It may be a feeling of my own, but I never did like a large cemetery, such as you may see at Cincinnati or Brooklyn. In a large family, a large church or city, there is of necessity a certain amount of estrangement. The same is always true of a graveyard. The sleepers seem to be more peaceful when they have had some acquaintance with each other. The mingling of dust makes us long to lie where we have been known; and where we know some at least of those who intend to lie beside us. Kirkconnel is just such a place as this. A little over half an acre of ground, a family graveyard it seems. Yet from the beginning of the fifteenth century, men and women have been said to sleep in that quiet little place. And connecting the past with the present, the last time I was there—some three years ago—a bed had just been made for one of my school fellows; and he too sleeps sweetly in Kirkconnel, among those who have slept for centuries.

Before narrating the touching tale which has made Kirkconnel famous, let us visit the place. It lies on the left bank of the river Kirtle—this was designated a river before the Hudson, Niagara or Mississippi were heard of—which rises far away among those hills to the north, in Esdalemoor, and falls into the Solway Firth. Short as its journey may be, the scenery along its course compares well with anything which I have seen in all my travels. We enter at the porter's gate, and pass along the winding path which overlooks the stream. That grand residence to the right, with its red granite-like appearance, is called Springkell, and belongs to Sir John Heron Maxwell, a foolish kind of man to be a baronet, but his princely income is sufficient to keep him. What a magnificent appearance his house makes. The situation is the most enchanting which the mind of the poet could wish, or of which the artist could dream. Following up the bed of the river for about a mile, we come to a beautiful meadow, studded here and there with old oak and chestnut trees. In the distance the ground rises abruptly, still green, beautifully rounded, adorned with trees which now stand between you and the sky; while in the fertile meadow cattle are feeding, as fat and fair looking as those seen by Pharoah in his dream. On the other side of the stream the bank rises high, and is covered with trees and shrubs, all clad in their summer vestments.

And now we have come to the little graveyard, carefully fenced all around; the tombstones are scarcely seen; no one desecrates the place by cutting the grass and giving it to the cattle. It grows in the spring time, keeps the ground cool all summer, and when winter comes down the valley it keeps the sleepers warm. The trees stand around in silence watching, casting their melancholy shade on the couch of the silent sleepers. The bed of the river is more rocky there than elsewhere, yet the bubbling is not so loud; its voice seems hushed, and the stream steals past on tip-toe, lest it should break the slumbers of the dead. Even the thoughtless living who visit the place have a feeling of awe creep over them, such as we have when visiting any old dimly lighted cathedral, when the organ peals forth its unutterable sounds. But how can I describe Kirkconnel? Imagination dare not play hide-and-seek there; you must visit it yourself if you would see the picture. What a sweet place to lie down when our day's work is over; nothing to break the slumbers till the trumpet sounds, and the din and bustle of business will not prevent its first distant peals from being distinctly heard.

On the north side of the graveyard are the ruins of an old Roman Catholic chapel, all overhung with ivy. The family of Springkell use this old sanctuary as a mausoleum; and by peering through the iron grating, or climbing up that crumbling corner, you can see how little difference there is between democratic and aristocratic dust. Walking among the tombstones you see very strange devices. The skull and cross bones have been in great repute long ago. There is another old stone with what might be called a wood cut of Adam and Eve. There is another stone on which is carved the figure of a female lacing herself so tightly that her eyes protrude as "the eyes of a toad," and under her a man is driving like "Jehu the son of Nimshi" for a doctor; but it is all in vain; he is too late, for she died and sleeps now in common dust. Then there are such quaint inscriptions: some in Latin, which are read only now and then. These we suppose mark where the neighboring schoolmasters have been laid to rest. Some in home made poetry which limp as they go. There are some sentences in prose, which flatter the dead, but no one knows whether justly or unjustly; and indeed no one seems to care. Some passage of Scripture tells that the sleeper once had a hope of a better future. Some you can tell only the year in which they died; in others that even is effaced, and nothing now is known save that some one slumbers there in peace. How unassuming these quiet country graveyards of Scotland; how full of associations. What lonesome places they were wont to be. Haunted with dead lights, strange dismal sounds, until your spirit was so overcome with fear that you could scarcely hold it in the tabernacle.

"Here solemn Silence sits enthroned,
And sacred Awe confounds."

But let me now return to my story This is the grave of "Fair Helen of Kirkconnel." The two lovers rest under this flag of "old red sandstone." On the stone we see the rude outline of a sword, a carabine and a cross. All that remains of the Latin epitaph is—*Hic jacet Adamus Fleeming*—here lies Adam Fleeming. And the touching story that tradition has handed down is something like the following:

A fair young lady named Helen Maxwell was heiress of Kirkconnell, now Springkell. She was very beautiful; of a tall, slender form. She had dark flowing hair, and eyes of the same color, which lent to her complexion a wonderful charm. Her movements were all characterized by the utmost ease and majesty. Her physical graces were intensified by the purity and sweetness of her mind. She was loved by every one who knew her. Two young men in the immediate vicinity loved her more than all others: one was named Bell of Blacket House, two miles down the river; the other named Fleeming of Mosskowe, about eight miles further down. Tradition has it that a few years later the Fleemings were burnt in their tower rather than surrender themselves to their enemies. This incident originated, part at least, of the name of the parish where this occurred, Kirkpatrick Fleeming.

Of the two rivals for the heart of Helen Maxwell, Fleeming was victorious. His gallantry and noble bearing won the heart of "Fair Helen" in spite of his opponent. Bell was favored by her parents, however, who openly objected to Fleeming's visits, causing these to be less frequent and comparatively in secret. Bell saw that he was no longer received by Helen as in former days; her lustrous eye gleamed no more with love for him. The music of her voice was no longer his. He knew that she loved Adam Fleeming, who was oftener in her company. Brooding over his loss, he determined to be revenged for the insult and wrong he had received at the hand of Fleeming. Several times he sought an opportunity to take his life; he waylaid him between Mosskowe and Springkell; and though urged on by desperation, he was afraid to meet his antagonist in open fight. Then he would wander about the woods near Springkell, catching sight now and then of Helen, sometimes accompanied by his mortal foe. He learned from some of the servants whom he had bribed for the purpose that the two lovers sometimes met in the twilight at this sequestered place—the old graveyard—strange that lovers should walk there. Day after day he concealed himself among the bushes on the other side of the Kirtle, waiting like a lion for his prey. Still the lovers were happy in each other's worth, looking forward to years of joy. We can almost see them late in the afternoon of that sad day, emerging from the wood beyond the meadow. Slowly they approach the old graveyard, she leaning on his arm, listening to the warbling of birds which seem to join with them in their love. The setting sun is shining full in their faces; she stoops to pluck some wild gowans from the grass. Now he whispers in her ear some accents of manly love, while she speaks the language of her heart, by her downcast eyes and drooping head.

They have now reached the graveyard, and are just passing through that clump of trees, about to gaze into the river; perhaps sit down on the bank, and dream about the stream of life flowing on and on. She is still leaning on his arm; they have now reached the place where that old cross so roughly carved stands, and has stood since then; when she, ever quick to think of evil, hears some one among the bushes on the other side of the stream. They look again, and Bell steps from his hiding place with a look of wild determination, a carabine in his hand, which is instantly leveled at Fleeming. She throws herself into Fleeming's arms, thinking that Bell's love for her will save her lover. But it is too late; the fatal trigger has been drawn, and she receives in her snowy bosom the bullet intended for another. She dies in the embrace of Adam Fleeming. Tenderly her lover laid her down on the grass, while the warm blood was still flowing from her heart; crossed the stream with a single bound, pursued her murderer and overtook him. A desperate battle ensued, in which Bell was slain on the spot. Slowly and sadly Fleeming returned to the lonely churchyard, where he had left the lifeless form of his lovely Helen. He now lifted her, carried her in his arms to the old family mansion, and told the sad story of her death and his vengeance. His grief was uncontrollable. At last she was buried in the old churchyard, and this is her grave. That old cross which you see was erected on the spot where she fell. An iron plate has at one time been inserted, which has long since been lost, doubtless bearing the inscription of "Fair Helen's" sad death. People in the neighborhood will not soon forget the touching tradition which has been handed down through so many generations.

The woe-worn young man was now in a sad condition. The Bells sought for vengeance, he flung away his sword that was now of no more use to him. He left his native country, wandered over the Continent of Europe seeking for what he had lost, and lost never more to find. He sought in vain to banish from his mind the image of "Fair Helen." She whom he loved so passionately in life, he could never forget. In his sleep he would seek to soothe his dying bride, to stem the blood which was gushing from her heart. Anon, he would lay her tenderly down, and with muttered vengeance pursue her murderer. Then he would awake far, far away from the place where all this had transpired, with a heart so cold and empty.

At last he returned to his native land; and hurrying back to Kirkconnel, traversed all the scene of this narrative again. Then with the wildest sorrow, he stretched himself upon his lover's grave—died—and was buried by her side.

"Soon shall we meet no more to part,
In climes of bliss!" he cried,
Then on his much-loved Helen's tomb,
He laid him down and died.

There are two versions of the old ballad entitled "Fair Helen," and as both are good and comparatively unknown, I may be allowed to quote them here.

FIRST VERSION.

O sweetest sweet, and fairest fair,
Of truth and worth beyond compare,
Thou art the cause of my care,
Since first I loved thee!

Yet God hath given to me a mind,
The which to thee shall prove as kind,
As any one that thou shalt find,
Of high or low degree.

The shallowest water makes maist din;
The deepest pool the deepest linn;
The richest man least truth within,
Though he preferred be.

Yet nevertheless I am content,
And never a whit my love repent,
But think the time be a' weel spent,
Though I disdained be.

O, Helen sweet and maist complete,
My captive spirit's at thy feet;
Think thou still fit thus for to treat
Thy captive cruelly?

O, Helen brave, but this I crave,
Some pity have of thy poor slave,
And do him save that's near his grave,
And dies for love of thee.

SECOND VERSION.

I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnel lee.

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
Where in my arms burd* Helen dropt,
And died to succor me.

O think ye na my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spake nae mair!
There did did she swoon wi' muckle care,
On fair Kirkconnel lee.

As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirkconnel lee.

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I hacked him in pieces sma',
I hacked him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O, Helen fair, beyond compare,
I'll weave a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart forever mair,
Until the day I dee!

O, that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries:
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Say, "Haste and come to me!"

O, Helen fair! O, Helen chaste!
Were I with thee I would be blest,
Where thou lies now and takes rest,
On fair Kirkconnel lee.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding sheet drawn o'er my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirkconnel lee.

I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries,
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me.

*Maid Helen.

Why She Stopped Her Paper.

Brooklyn *Argus:* She came bouncing through the sanctum door like a cannon ball, and without pausing to say "How d'ye do?" she brought her umbrella down on the table with a mighty crash, and shouted:

"I want to stop my paper."

"All right, madam."

"Stop it right off, too," she persisted, whacking the table again, "for I waited long enough for you to do the square thing."

She quieted down for a moment, as we ran our fingers down the list of names, and when we reached hers and scratched it out, she said:

"There; now meblse you'll do [illegible] ought to after this, and not [illegible] woman jest cause she's poor. If [illegible] rich folks happen to have [illegible]headed, bandy-legged, sq[illegible]ed, wheezy squaller born to them, you puff it to the skies and make it out an angel; but when poor people have a baby you don't say a word about it, even if it is the squarest-toed, blackest-haired, biggest-headed, noblest little kid that ever kept a woman awake at nights. That's what's the matter, and that's why I stopped my paper."

And she dashed out as rapidly as she came.

Ohio's Newly Elected Governor.

General Rutherford B. Hayes, who has been elected Governor of Ohio, after an exciting contest, in which the personality of the candidates seem to have been forgotten, was born in Delaware county, Ohio, October 4, 1822. He graduated at Kenyon College in 1842, and studied law at Cambridge. He practiced his profession in Cincinnati until the outbreak of the war, when he entered the service as Major of the 23d Ohio regiment. He served with distinction, and at the close of the war was Brigadier General, with the brevet rank of Major General. In 1864 he was elected a Representative in Congress from Cincinnati, being re-elected in 1866, but resigned his seat in 1867, when he was elected Governor of Ohio. He was re-elected Governor in 1869. In 1872 he was a candidate for Congress, but was defeated by Hon. Henry B. Banning, the candidate of the "Liberal Republicans." Governor Allen, who was defeated at the late election, appointed General Hayes one of the Commissioners to represent Ohio at the Centennial.

The Dubuque papers say that the epizootic is spreading in that city, and that there are many cases of the disease in the livery stables, but in a milder form than heretofore.

Central Iowa District Fair—Articles Worthy of Mention.

One thing that particularly attracted our attention was a BALING PRESS, for hay, broom corn, husks, rags, etc., built C. A. A. Arnold, of 110 Court Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa. It is at once exceedingly *efficient* and *portable*. Bales of hay made by it weigh 200 lbs. each, and two men (with no other power) will make from 40 to 50 bales per day of 10 hours. It can be taken to pieces and loaded on a wagon in ten minutes, and put up again ready for work as easily. It is undoubtedly the most *rapid* and *efficient* hand press of which we have any knowledge. The complete machine weighs about 1100 lbs. Just in this connection we would speak of a little matter that seems not to be understood by men generally who deal in "flour and feed," viz.: that wherever that business is remunerative, it will pay to handle baled hay.

One of the most attractive machines exhibited on the fair grounds was a steam hammer invented and patented by Wilson & Stein, and manufactured by Brooks, Wilson & Stein of Des Moines. It is under perfect control of the hammerman, when working at full speed, to strike a blow from one pound to five thousand pounds, just as he wishes for the work he is doing. They have patterns and are now prepared to supply any one wishing a hammer on short notice. Any firm manufacturing anything in the iron line should have one. The hammer is complete itself; all that is necessary is to place it on a good foundation of timber, attach a steam pipe to the boiler and, lo! we are ready for work. They are offering these hammers very cheap compared with hammers made by others; they are even cheaper than the ordinary trip hammer and far superior. For further information address Brooks, Wilson & Stein, box 710, Des Moines, Iowa.

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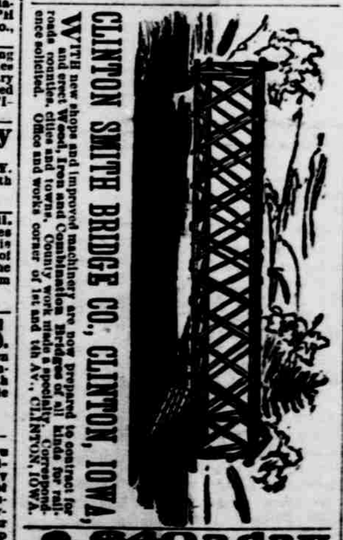

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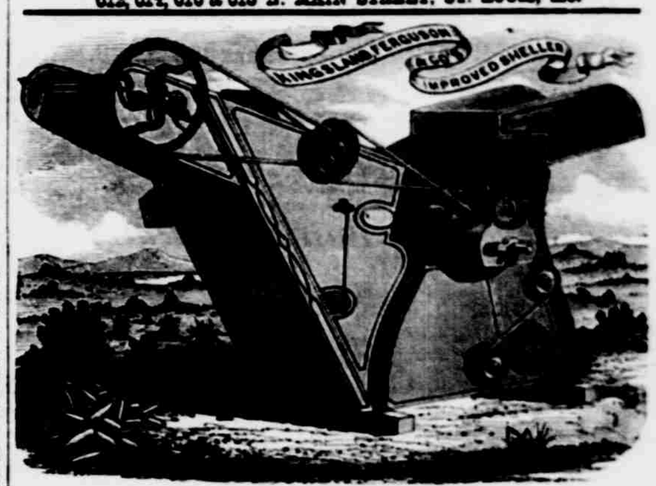

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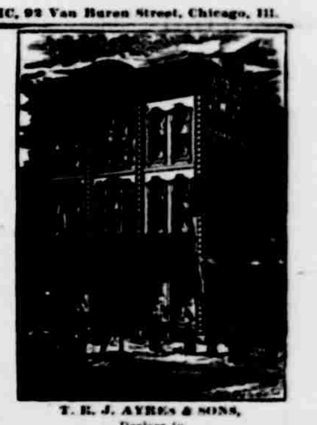

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