

No paper will be discontinued until all arrears are paid, except at the option of the editors.

CLUBBING.—Six copies will be mailed to one Post Office for \$10; and ten copies for \$15. All payments invariably in advance.

Any person procuring five new subscribers and remitting Ten Dollars, will be entitled to a sixth copy gratis.

SELECT TALE.

From the Olive Branch.

LINKS OF MYSTERY;

OR—

THE WILMOT FAMILY.

BY L. STEPHENSON.

Author of "Circumstantial Evidence," "The Old Block-House," "The Power of Prejudice," &c.

[CONCLUDED.]

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT TO THE STATE PRISON.

After Ellen had so unexpectedly met with Nabby in court, at the trial of Wilmot, alias Jackson, she sought the first opportunity to have an interview with her.

Nabby gave her a particular account of the manner in which Wilmot carried her off, the way she contrived to keep him away from her the first week, his breaking in the stateroom door, his attempt to shoot her, her escape and punishment, her being set on shore, and finally, of the visit from Wilmot at St. George, and the disappointment he experienced when on going to the rock with her, no money or will could be found.

And as painful as some of the circumstances detailed must be, the whole story afforded Miss Ellen much merriment, and her "silvery laugh," as Charles had called it, often echoed through the room.

"How did you like being Miss Ellen?" she asked.

"O, finely," replied Nabby.

"And how did you like fishing for sharks?"

"O, horrible! The thought is dreadful."

"Well, Nabby, I am glad you are safe at last. And now I want to tell father all about it, and away she ran to find him. The result of which was, a few more hearty peals from the Esq.

The Wilsons remained in Bangor a week after the trial of Jackson. One day as Mr. Wilson was sitting with the ladies, Mr. Charles Wilmot was announced. As he entered, they all rose to meet him, and welcomed him with the most cordial greeting. After which, Mr. Wilson asked,

"What brought you here, Wilmot?"

"The letter which you wrote me, informing me that the will was in the hands of a person who called himself Edward Wilmot, but who was an impostor. I felt so strong an inclination to know what it all meant, that I have come in in haste to satisfy myself."

"Well, I am glad to see you. But you cannot learn much more than I wrote you. The man, however, has been tried, found guilty and sentenced to the state prison for a term of five years."

"Are you sure it was not Edward?"

"Certainly, I am."

"It was not Edward," added Ellen, "I know him too well to be mistaken."

"Still, from all the facts you state, I am persuaded you are all mistaken," said Charles. "How could any one else have that will? I feel so positive that the individual must be Edward, that I propose to visit the prison at Thomaston, to see for myself."

"But that will do no good, for the prisoner, whoever he was, escaped from the officer on the way to prison, and has not been recaptured, I believe. Besides, Nabby knew the man, and says his name is Jackson."

"I cannot believe it. And I wish I had some way of satisfying myself. But where is the will?"

"It is left with the sheriff till claimed by some one who has a right to do so. By the way, I think you, as one of the heirs, have that right. I should like to see the sheriff."

"Well, let us walk to his office, it is near here. They proceeded to the office of the sheriff, and found him engaged in reading a note from the officer, stating that he had succeeded in retaking the convict, and had delivered him to the warden of the prison. The sheriff stated the fact, and added,

"I am glad of it, for he was a bad fellow."

Charles sighed, for he still felt that it was his brother. The sheriff then complied with his request, and delivered to him the will in the very case so often mentioned.

After they had left the office, Charles remarked,

"This case had money in it, sometimes."

"It had when it was stolen from your father."

"How did you learn that fact?"

"From the lips of your father just before he was killed. And that capital aided the pretended Edward Wilmot in commencing his speculations."

"You mean the real Edward Wilmot, for I am now more than ever satisfied that the convict is he."

"Then let us go, and see, for we can now find him."

"Shall we take the ladies with us?"

"Yes, we may need their aid for something."

The ladies were accordingly informed of the arrangement, and all started for Thomaston prison. When they arrived there, the gentlemen left the ladies at the tavern directly opposite the prison, while they went over to see the convict. The warden politely admitted them and also allowed them to go round upon the walk which overlooked the yard where the

# THE PEOPLE'S PRESS.

Devoted to Politics, Foreign and Domestic News, Agriculture, the Markets, and General Information.

VOL. V.

SALEM, N. C., SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1855.

NO. 1.

prisoners were at work, digging lime rock. As soon as the one of whom they were in pursuit was pointed out to them, Charles exclaimed,

"It is Edward, and I knew it must be." "That is indeed Edward, but it is not the man who was lately tried at Bangor," said Mr. Wilson, in astonishment. "What can it mean?" The warden replied that the prisoner had repeatedly declared that he was not guilty, but that was not an uncommon thing with prisoners. But what did appear strange, he said, was that the prisoner also declared that he had never been tried.

"There is something strange about this, and it must be looked into," said Mr. Wilson. Here they were interrupted by a messenger who came to inform the warden that the sheriff of Penobscot County wished to speak with him.

On returning to the office of the prison, they found the sheriff and another prisoner—the very one who had been tried as Edward Wilmot. He had been retaken and identified in Castine about the same time that Edward was taken in St. George.

Of course, the first error being apparent to all, Edward Wilmot was immediately released from prison. He joined his friends at the tavern, humbled and mortified in the extreme.

Here, to the inquiries of Edward, who was wholly ignorant of all the facts connected with the trial of Jackson—as he had been at sea from the time he left South Carolina, till two days before his arrest—he was informed of all.

"The rascal," said he, "I thought he was drowned with all the rest of the Scabird's crew."

"It seems that such is not the fact, however," said Mr. Wilson.

"It does truly," replied Edward. "But where are the money and the will?"

"The money he spent. The will I have," answered Charles.

"But the will belongs to me," said Edward.

"True," answered Charles, "but I think I had better keep it."

"No, I choose to have it," said Edward, with some warmth.

Mr. Wilson whispered a few words in the ear of Charles, who immediately turned to Edward, and said,

"Here, take the will, and make a good use of it."

As Edward took the document, a smile could easily be seen playing about his mouth. And leaving the room, he replied,

"I will make a good use of it."

A new scene was being acted in the next room where Mrs. Wilson and Ellen were. Mr. Wilson on entering the room found his wife locked in the arms of another lady, quite plainly dressed, and to him a perfect stranger. The suddenness and novelty of the discovery caused him to raise both hands and exclaim,

"What in the world of wonders has happened now?"

But to let the reader know the answer which he received, we must go back a little in the story. That part of St. George where Simon Watts was quite away from any village; there were no stores or shops for trading, and consequently, he and his neighbors were in the habit of going to Thomaston when they had shopping to do. As Mrs. Watts wanted a number of articles for family wear, John obtained a horse and wagon of a neighbor, and took his mother to Thomaston, to make the necessary purchases. When this had been attended to, John remarked that he should like to hear from Wilmot, as they were so near the prison.

"Well," replied she, "so should I. And if you will go to the prison and inquire about him, I will step into the tavern and wait till you come."

John then left her and she went into the tavern and took a seat. But the instant she entered, Mrs. Wilson was struck with her features, they so strongly resembled a sister of hers from whom she had never heard since she was married, and whether she was dead or alive, was wholly unknown to her. Mrs. Watts also saw something in the other that completely engaged her attention. At last Mrs. Wilson rose, and approaching Mrs. Watts, said,

"I hope you will pardon me, madam, I am not in the habit of addressing strangers; but there is something in your looks that so strongly resembles a sister which I once had, that I wished to speak to you."

"It is all very well," replied Mrs. Watts, "and I was thinking just the same of you. But what may I call your name, if you please, ma'am?"

"My name is Wilson now, it was formerly Ellen Webster. But what is your name, if you will allow me to ask?"

"My name is Watts, once it was Anna Webster."

It was enough; the two sisters were in each other's arms; and at this moment Mr. Wilson entered, as we have stated, and the strange scene was soon explained.

These sisters had been separated in the following manner. Samuel Webster resided in Burlington, Vt., with his two daughters, Anna and Ellen. A young man by the name of Simon Watts loved Anna, and she returned his affection. But Webster opposed their marriage, and because he could not prevent it, he disinherited her, and forbid her his house. Watts then moved away without letting any one know where he had gone. The next year Ellen married and went South, but Mrs. Watts had never heard whom she had married, nor where she lived.

But they were now thrown together, and the meeting was a happy one to both sisters. A thousand things were talked over in a few minutes, and the result was, after John had returned, and the two cousins had been introduced, that Mrs. Watts insisted on a visit from all the party. She said there was nothing inviting in St. George, but her sister must go home with her and see her whole family; and so it was finally settled.

But Charles Wilmot concluded that his business would not suffer him to remain. He therefore parted from them, for home, and the Wilsons went to St. George. They remained there more than a week, greatly enjoying the common fare, and the rough scenery of the place. Everything was pleasant between the two families, and Ellen and Alice became so attached to each other, that Ellen insisted on taking Alice home with them to the South; and when it was proposed, Alice did not say as she did when Edward Wilmot asked her,—I cannot leave my parents. She did not wish to leave her father, but she would go for a short time, for the sake of seeing more of her cousin Ellen.

The family felt unwilling to have her leave them, even for a short time; and John decidedly opposed it. But at last it was agreed all round that she should go for a few months; and then quite a stir was made to fit her out, notwithstanding the Wilsons told them, that they would see that Alice should lack for nothing.—The fact was, they preferred to have the dressing of her, for reasons which will occur to the reader.

The next week they started, and we will now leave them to pursue their journey.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIAL FOR A NEW OFFENCE.

As soon as Esq. Wilson and family were known to have arrived home, Charles Wilmot paid them a visit, for he had become exceedingly interested in them, particularly in Ellen, with whom he was always pleased to converse. But now he found a new charm in Alice Watts, her cousin. No one could form an acquaintance with Alice without loving her. It was not therefore strange that Charles should find her society entertaining.

He often visited them, and sometimes the cousins, with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, visited him at his mansion. On one of these occasions, Charles said to Mr. Wilson—

"Where do you think Edward is?"

"That does seem to be a little mysterious; but I think you will hear from him before long," replied the Esq.

"Do you think he will attempt to do anything with the Will?"

"I do."

"What will he do?"

"He will try to get possession of the property."

"And if he goes to law he will of course succeed, will he not?"

"I think not."

"I have no wish to cheat him out of his rights; but it really seems hard, after I have always labored on the plantation, how to be deprived of all my father's wealth, except five hundred dollars."

"It would be hard indeed, and we must contrive to prevent it in some way."

"But how can it be done?"

"Leave that to me if occasion require, and I will find out a way. Never fear," replied Wilson, laughing.

The Esquire's prediction was right, for the very next day Edward Wilmot made his appearance, and demanded the whole property in question. His first words on seeing Charles were—

"I have come, in accordance with your advice, to make a good use of the Will."

"What use do you intend to make of it?"

"None except to obtain the property which it conveys to me."

"Do you really intend, Edward, to take all the property except the five hundred dollars?"

"I do, most certainly. My father knew, of course, who ought to have the property, and his Will must be respected."

"I will divide, half and half with you."

"No, never! I shall take the whole; so be quick and deliver it up, or the law shall take it for me."

"Then proceed to the law, and I must abide by its decisions."

With this, Edward left in a rage.

Charles went immediately and informed Mr. Wilson of what had occurred. But the only answer that gentleman returned was,

"Let him proceed, we will be ready for him."

Edward, however, was determined to carry out his threat; and accordingly he sued for possession without delay. As soon as Esq. Wilson was informed of this fact, he wrote to the attorney whom Edward had employed, desiring an interview, which was granted. In this interview Wilson showed him the last Will of Mr. Wilmot, legally executed, but one hour before his death.

The result was, that Edward's counsel wrote to Wilson the same day, informing him that the suit was withdrawn. Charles was informed by Wilson accordingly. As this was quite unexpected, he went to see Mr. Wilson, to see how it was accomplished. Mr. Wilson laughed and said it was the easiest thing imaginable.

"Will he make another attempt?"

"I think not, by law."

"But how did you defeat him?"

"I will tell you if you will follow my advice

in regard to the disposition of the property so far as Edward is concerned."

"I will do it."

"I will give him five thousand dollars, and keep the rest."

"But he must have one half as a joint heir."

"Not one cent on that account."

"What do you mean?"

"I will look at this document," said he, handing him a paper, which he took from a drawer.

"This is a will signed by my father."

"It is dated the very day on which he died!"

"It conveys all his property to me!"

"Does it mean?"

"I mean that this—that after your father died, that his favorite son, Edward Wilmot, bequeathed a new Will, bequeathing his property to one whom he found deserving it."

"I will not keep all the property."

"I must, all but the five thousand named, which with the twenty thousand he stole, would make quite as much as he deserves, and more than he can use to advantage."

"Suppose, then, I must do as you say."

"A few days afterwards, Mr. Wilson received by mail the following letter:—

LAGRANGE, — 1836.

"The course you have pursued in relation to my father's property is of a nature to require punishment; and I shall see that you have your reward. Yours, EDWARD WILMOT."

Wilson, Esq.

"I am glad Mr. Wilson concluded to take no notice of this threat; but afterwards when he learned that Edward was seen in the neighborhood, he decided to prevent any mischief which he might design."

"It was not long before an officer clapped his hands upon the shoulder of Edward Wilmot, and said—

"You will please go with me, sir."

"What?" asked Wilmot in surprise.

"Because you are under arrest."

"What?"

"For kidnapping Nabby, the girl of Ellen Wilmot, and carrying her from the State."

"I have a warrant for arrest at the instance of her father?"

"No, sir."

"The old rascal," he muttered, and followed the officer.

The case came regularly before the county court, in a presentation from the Grand Jury, and Wilmot was tried and found guilty. The fact was proved, not by Cato, who by the laws of the State was not allowed to testify in the case of a white man, but by Mr. Wilson's brother and another person, who witnessed the abduction of Nabby.

The offence must be punished, according to the laws of Carolina; that time, by imprisonment for a term of not less than five years in the State Prison. Edward Wilmot was sentenced to imprisonment for that time. He was immediately conveyed to prison. But he was soon out again, for the next morning after his arrest he was found dead in his cell. He had hung himself by fastening his handkerchief to the bars of the window.

He ended the career of the favorite son.

Mr. Wilson was not actuated by any bad motives in having him arrested for carrying off his niece. It was done solely for the protection of his own family, and that of Charles Wilmot. The end, of course, he could not see.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW WONDERS—CONCLUSION.

Several months now passed away, much of them in sadness by the two families, at the recollection of what had happened. Charles continued to visit Mr. Wilson's, and Ellen and Alice with their wit and spirit did much towards relieving him of his wonted cheerfulness.

One day as they sat conversing, Alice marked the eye of Wilmot fixed on her very intently every few minutes, and then turned to something in his hand. This so excited her curiosity, that she finally asked,

"What are you doing, Mr. Wilmot?"

"I am thinking how much you look like my mother," he replied.

"How do you make the comparison, for I understand your mother has been dead ever since you were an infant."

"That is true. But I have in my hand a miniature likeness of her, which I this day found among my father's papers. On the reverse is another likeness, it is that of my father."

"I will let me see them," said Ellen, "I never saw your mother, nor her picture." After taking it she continued, "It does indeed resemble Alice."

"I should think it was taken for her."

"I will see it," asked Alice.

Which Ellen handed it to her she exclaimed, "Where did you get this? Did mother give it to you?"

"She did not. Why do you ask that?"

"I am strange it is! Mother has in her drawer some another double locket just like this. The same faces exactly! and as I live, the same name, under each! Under the man is Jefferson and under the lady Alice! It was that name on the locket, mother said, that induced her to call it Alice. What a coincidence!"

"Yes, Wilmot," said Ellen, "what else is your mother's name?"

"O, Ellen, I am not sick, but I am surprised

ed, and my thoughts are oppressive." He then continued, addressing Alice, "Where did your mother get that locket?"

"I do not exactly know; I think, however, that she said it was found on the neck of a lady who was found on the beach, dead."

"It was she! it was she!" he cried.

"Who? who, Mr. Wilmot?"

"My own dear mother. I found in the packet with this miniature, a paper in my father's hand writing, in which he says, that in 1817 he and his dear wife Alice were in England. That imperative business called him home immediately, but as his wife's health was such that she could not then accompany him, he left her to come the next month, accompanied by a brother or her's. That the ship in which they were, passage was never heard from, after she called, O, how I wish I could see her!"

"Such," continued Charles, "is the account of my father, concerning my mother's death. But on another slip of paper, he had written these words: 'Before I left her, I had double miniatures taken for both of us. This is one of them.' Now, can I doubt that the body found was that of my mother. Oh, how I wish I had gone to visit Mrs. Watts, when in Maine."

"You are right, Mr. Wilmot, it must have been she," said Ellen, sympathizing with his feelings.

"Indeed it must," said Alice, "but how strange?"

While Ellen went to inform her father and mother of the new discovery, Charles Wilmot returned home and wrote the following letter to Mrs. Watts:—

Rosewood, — county, N. C. — 1836.

"Dear Mrs. Watts. We have just made a most important discovery, and in which I feel very deeply. I have found a double miniature among my father's papers. It contains the likeness of my father and mother, and their names beneath. Alice tells me you have one exactly like it on which are the same names—'Jefferson' and 'Alice.' My mother is supposed to have been lost at sea, in 1817. Will you inform me of all you know concerning the locket and the owner? With the kindest regards. Your friend, CHARLES WILMOT."

In a short time as mail could bring it, Charles received two letters, one from Mrs. Watts, to himself, and the other enclosed, from John to Alice. The one from Mrs. Watts was as follows:—

St. George, Maine, — 1836.

"Dear Mr. Wilmot. In respect to the subject on which you wrote, I would say that I have such a locket as you describe. It was found on the neck of a lady. She and two men were found dead in a boat, on the morning after a storm. As there were no evidences of wreck it is probable that the ship foundered at sea, and these persons took to the boat. We supposed they were dead before the boat grounded.— This was in 1817, and from your account we have no doubt the lady was your mother. We had her decently interred; and a small stone marks her grave."

I must now, my dear sir, unfold to you another living babe. On the breast of the lady was a living babe. This babe we took to our house and adopted as our own, and so it was always understood to be, even by our other children who were then too small to know the difference. In fact, our neighbors all supposed that it was ours. We always treated her as one of our children, and she supposed she was really so.— That dear child is Alice, who is now with Mr. Wilson. O, how can I think that Alice is not our child! But I suppose we must give her up. If I must do it, however, I am happy in giving her to you as a sister. But we shall always cherish for her the deepest affection, and hope you will let her come and see us again. Mr. Watts and the boys have always loved her, and John has actually made her his idol. Wishing you and Alice every blessing, I remain yours, ANNA WATTS."

CHARLES WILMOT, ESQ.

If Charles was amazed at what he had learned concerning his mother, he was actually overwhelmed in finding that Alice was his own sister. He hastened, therefore, to see her, and inform her of what he had learned from Mrs. Watts, and to give her the letter from John.

Alice was as much confounded as Charles had been, and such were her conflicting emotions, that she could not utter a word. She was willing to be a sister to Charles; but it seemed hard to be no longer a child of Mr. and Mrs. Watts, and especially not to be a sister of John, whom she loved most dearly. Thinking of John, brought his letter to her thoughts. On opening it, she read as follows:—

ST. GEORGE, — 1836.

"Dear Sister:—No, that ain't right—dear Miss Wilson—O what a change—I wish I could see you just to see if you look as you did when you was a sister to John Watts the fisherman.— How lonesome I have been ever since you left here! Everything is in mourning, and I have no heart even to throw a line. The fish do not play as they used to, nor do the birds sing as they did when you were here. O, come back again, and be Alice Watts. Never mind the plantations and negroes; and throw the name of Wilmot to the winds and waves where once an individual by that name was found. By the way, I once feared he would carry off my sister; but now I shall not be much afraid to carry off his if I could get a chance. But, there, I can't write as I could talk if I could only get where you are once more. I want to say a thousand things, and some things in particular. How would you like to see John Watts, Alice?—or Miss Wilmot—hang the name. O, don't wish you were here to answer. Forever yours, JOHN WATTS."

It was hard to see, while Alice was reading this warm hearted letter, by the change in her

TERMS OF ADVERTISING:

One square, (fifteen lines or less,) first insertion One Dollar, and twenty-five cents for every subsequent insertion. Deductions made in favor of standing advertisements, for a square, as follows:

For three months,	83 50
For six months,	85 50
For twelve months,	88 00

Professional or Business Cards, not exceeding five lines in length, Five Dollars a year,—longer ones in proportion.

To insure proper attention, all communications and letters on business must be addressed to the Editor, post paid.

countenance, that she had some feelings for John, a little warmer than sisters generally have for brothers. When she had read the letter, she blushed and handed it to Charles.

When he had perused it, he said to himself, "there is love between them, and it shall be encouraged." He then laid his plan. He wrote the next day to John, desiring him to come and bring the locket. He also inclosed money to bear the necessary expenses, and a handsome sum as a present to each member of the Watts family.

John did not need a second invitation, and in one month from that time he was in Rosewood, dressed as handsomely as a Down Easter on Sunday. Charles met him at the door and shook him a hearty welcome. Alice who was at home, threw her arms around his neck, just as a sister might do, and received in return what she doubtless liked just as well as if he had been her brother.

After John had been there some two or three weeks, and Charles saw plainly how matters stood between him and Alice, he said one day, "John, I am going to be married next week."