

Literature.

TILL DEATH DO US PART CHAPTER I.

Maggie Denne was standing on the terrace in the Rectory garden at Witleighgazing over the lovely bay when a young man came close and gently placed his hands over her blue eyes.

'Why, Algy, is it you? How did you get here? I thought you were at Mokenham. This is a surprise!' she added, 'papa will be so glad, and Frank too.'

'And you, Maggie?' said Algy, as he shook hands with her warmly, venturing upon a gentle pressure of her taper fingers.

'Of course I am delighted, particularly as Jessie Hamblin is coming to-day. You recollect her?'

'Oh! perfectly; she used to be my ideal of beauty until—'

'Until that terrible attack cost her her eyesight, you mean. Yes, indeed, she was a lovely girl. I admire your taste Algy.'

'I did not exactly mean that, he replied; 'I meant—'

'Never mind just now; but tell me, like a good fellow, is that the smoke of the steamer over there? If so, I must go, and tell Robert to get the pony-chaise ready.'

'This way, dear.' 'Ally, you and I must follow as we cannot lead,' said Frank, as he took his friend's arm. 'I say, he whispered, 'what a beautiful voice she has got, hasn't she? You'll be falling in love, old fellow oh?'

'Not I!' replied his friend, 'I'm not equal to a goddess like Miss Hamblin. Besides you know—'

'He stopped suddenly, remembering Maggie's caution.' 'Well, Frank, what don't you mind me, said Frank.

'Oh, dear no! the fact is, I'm rather sweet on some one else; you see she has delighted with those roses, I can tell you. What a thoughtful fellow you are! I never saw do those pretty things.'

'Then, friend Algy, take a lesson now, and a rose next time.'

'They all drove rapidly back to the Rectory. Mr. Denne met them on the steps. 'Welcome to Witleighg,' he exclaimed, in his cheery voice. 'Jessie, my dear, I am delighted to see you. Come in.'

'And, pressing a fatherly kiss on the wide forehead, he led his beautiful visitor into the drawing-room.'

'Luncheon is ready, he said, 'so when you young ladies have exchanged confidences we will sit down. Do not be too long, dear,' he added to his daughter.

'My own, my darling!' was all he said. 'A sharp peal of thunder passed away unheeded as he spoke. After a pause he resumed—'

'So you do love me, Jessie! I never thought you would care for me, dear.'

'Indeed I do,' she whispered; 'why should I not? But I oftentimes wondered that you selected me as your companion, all these weeks, for I am so unfortunate.'

'Why, my darling, how are you unfortunate?' and he passed his arm around her taper waist.

'Because—because—I cannot bear to mention it, though I do not mind now a word, but nearly so much.'

'But what is this terrible reason why I should not love you, Jessie? Tell me, dearest.'

'Oh, Frank! that is like your kind guess. It is because I am blind, you know!'

Frank recoiled as if he had been stung, a choking gasp escaped him, and he could not speak for a moment.

'Blind!' he repeated at length, as if in a dream; 'blind! Oh, Jessie! So am I! It was too true. Blind from his birth.'

Frank Caron had never dreamed that Jessie was afflicted like himself. Maggie had never told him this, and the terrible fact was now revealed to the lovers for the first time.

Frank's knowledge of the ground and neighborhood in which he had lived for years had enabled him to keep Jessie in ignorance of his infirmity, which she of course fancied he was aware of.

And had it come to this, after all? Jessie gazed his hand.

'Oh, do not tell me that I am blind, dear Frank, say you can see me! Have you never seen me, never at all?'

'This death did them part! Was this to be their parting, on the threshold of their lives?'

'Penal after peal of thunder rattled overhead, the lightning flashed around them, the rain poured down in torrents, and there they lay unconscious of the elemental war—sleep!'

'Merciful Heaven, have pity on them! It was the rector who spoke, as he and some others of the party came suddenly upon the senseless forms beneath the trees.

'The bodies were borne to a cottage close by; the light clasp of the fingers was unloosed at length. Jessie, who had been pale as death, was now flushed with joy, and she held Frank's hand, as if it were the only thing that remained to her of the world that was.

'Maggie, dearest!' 'Maggie, full of joy, hastened to the bed. There was Jessie of Hamblin, indeed—but it was the Jessie of old. Her eyes were open wide, and full of life!'

GOOD NATURE.—B. good-natured if you can, for there is no attraction so great, no charm so admirable. A face that is full of expression of amiability is always beautiful. It needs no paint and no powders. Cosmetics are superfluous for it. Rouge cannot improve its cheeks, nor lily-white mend its complexion. Its loveliness lies beyond all this. It is not the beauty of the face, but the nobility of the woman, it is not the shape of the features that you really see, nor yet the tint of the cheek, the hue of the lip, or the brilliancy of the eye; you see the unalloyed something which animates all these, and leaves for your instinct a sense of grateful fascination; you see an indescribable embodiment of a heartfelt goodness within, which wins your regard in spite of external appearance. Cultivate good nature, therefore. It is better than 'apples of gold set in silver;' for gold will take its wonted wings and fly away, silver will tarnish in time, and both, when abundant, lose their comparative value; but good nature never—never deteriorates in worth—never abandons its possessor to the mental poverty of the malicious—never loses its hold upon the esteem of the world. It is always in fashion and always in season. Everybody admires it. Everybody praises it. Everybody is in love with it. It never grows stale. It costs little to acquire, and nothing to keep. Yet it is beyond diamonds, in its worth to its owners, and can neither be stolen, nor lost, however neglected. Surely this is a jewel that merits a search, and found, merits protection.

METHOD OF RISING.—Who does not luxuriate in the dozy naps stolen in a morning, just when incitation steals five minutes from duty, and the eyes gently close for "only a minute" longer? Almost every one, we fancy; or Dr. Hall would scarcely have troubled himself to openly justify this invidious way of waking. He says he does not approve of the old doctrine instilled into the minds of the majority of us when we were children—that it is the correct thing to spring out of bed the instant we awake in the morning. On the contrary, it is a very great mistake for persons, old or young—especially children, and feeble or sedentary persons—to bounce out of bed the moment they wake up; all our instincts shrink from it, and fiercely kick against it. Fifteen or twenty minutes spent in gradually waking up, after the eyes are opened, and in turning over and stretching the limbs, do as much good as sound sleep, because the operations of the blood in circulation by degrees, tending to equalize the circulation for during sleep the blood tends to stagnate, the heart beats feebly and slow, and to shock the system by bending up in an instant, and sending the blood in overwhelming quantities to the heart, causing it to assume a gallop, where the instant before it was in a creep, is the greatest absurdity. This instantaneously bouncing out of bed as soon as the eyes are open will be followed by weariness long before night.

A CHEERFUL CONTENTMENT.—We once heard a young lady say to another, 'Your contentment, to me, is like the shining of the sun, for it always gladdens me with a cheerful look.'

The industrious man does not complain that there are so many poisonous flowers and thorny branches in his road, but buzzes on, gathering the honey where he can find it, and passing quietly by the places where it is not. There is enough in this world to complain about, and find fault with; if we have the disposition.—We travel often in a hard and uneven road; but, with a cheerful spirit, and a heart to praise Heaven for its mercies, we may walk through dark comfort, and come to the end of our journey in peace.

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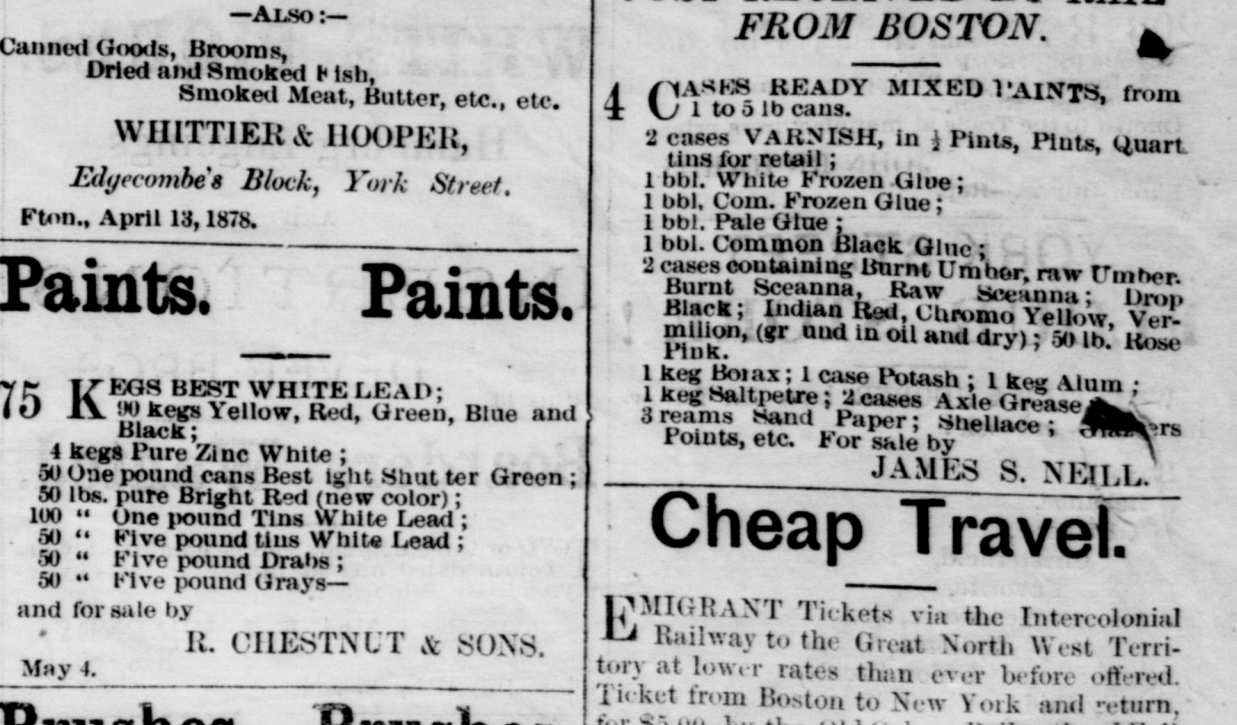
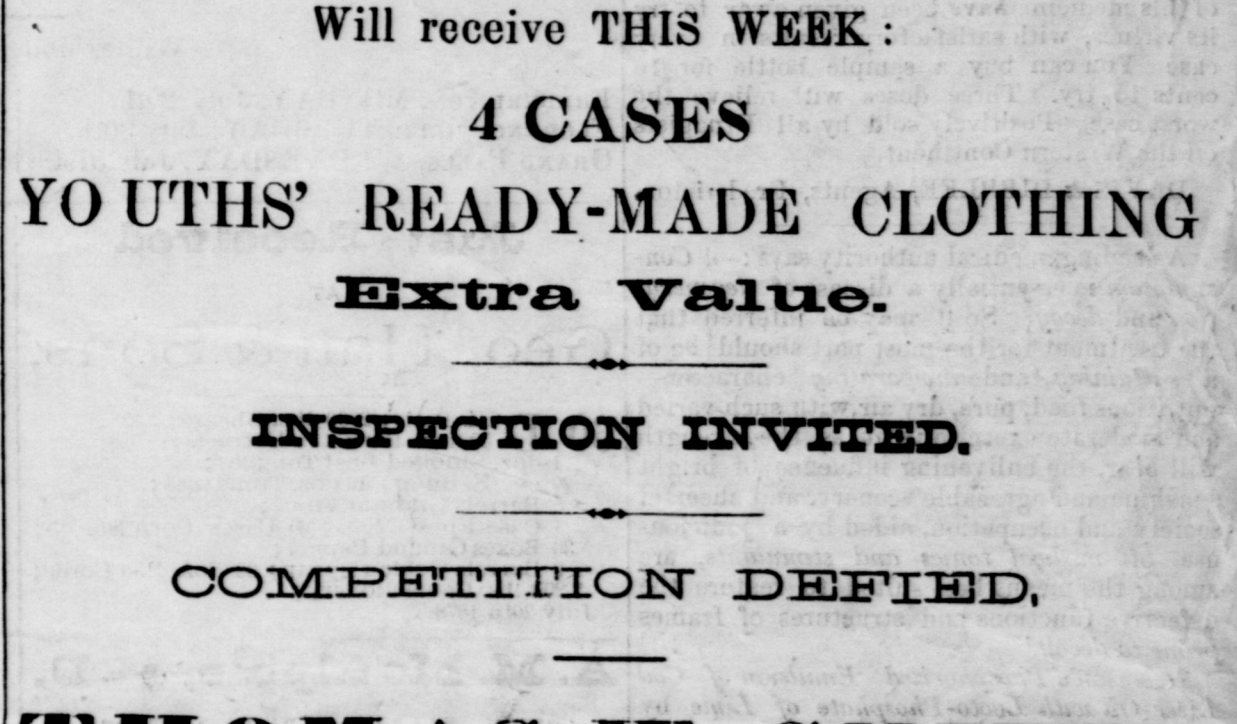
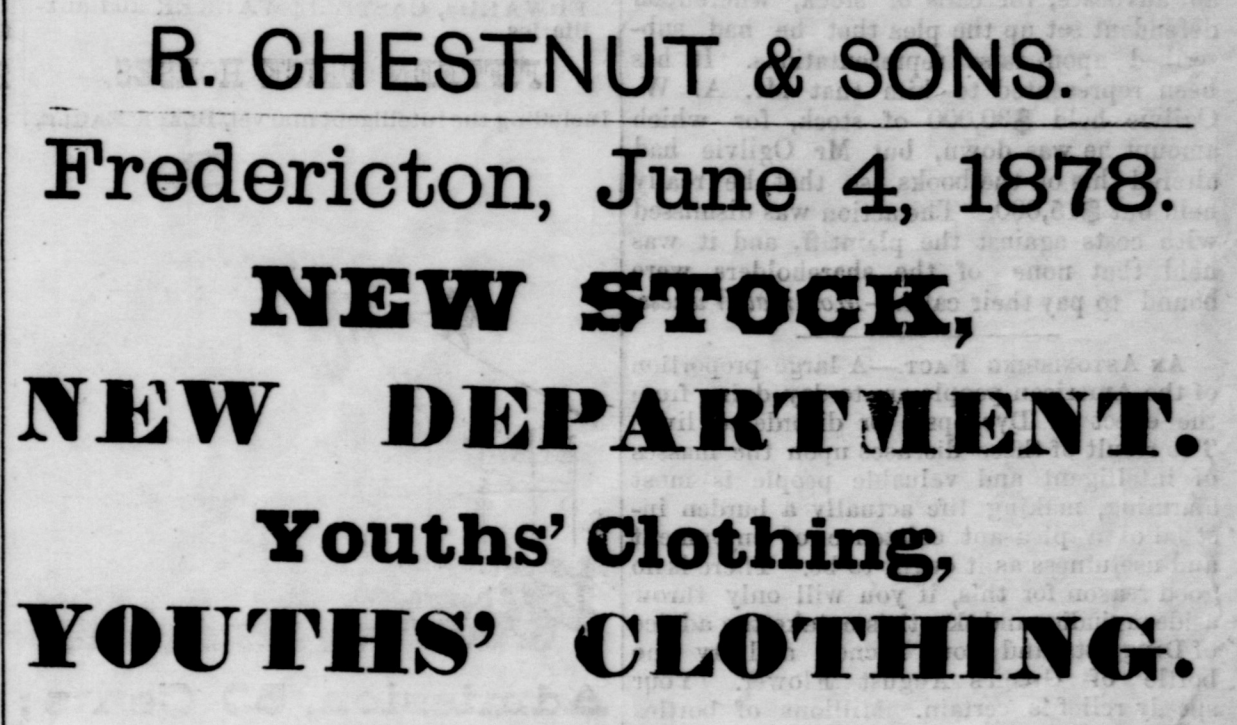
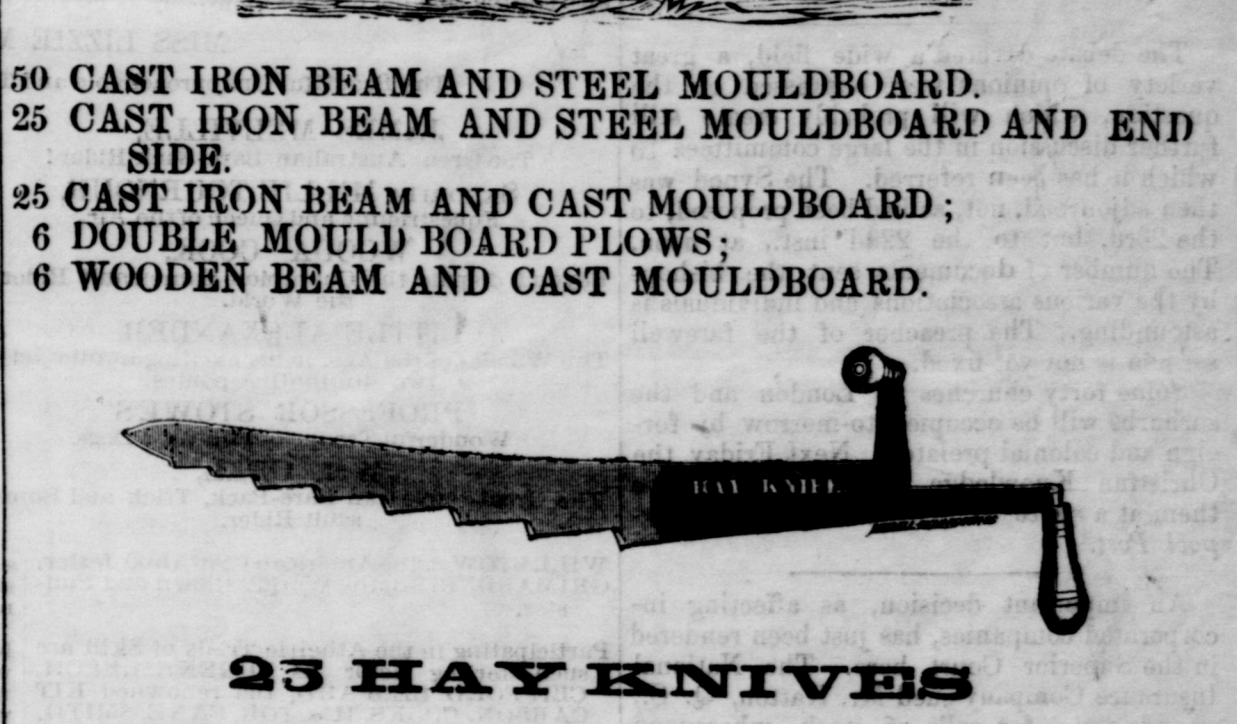
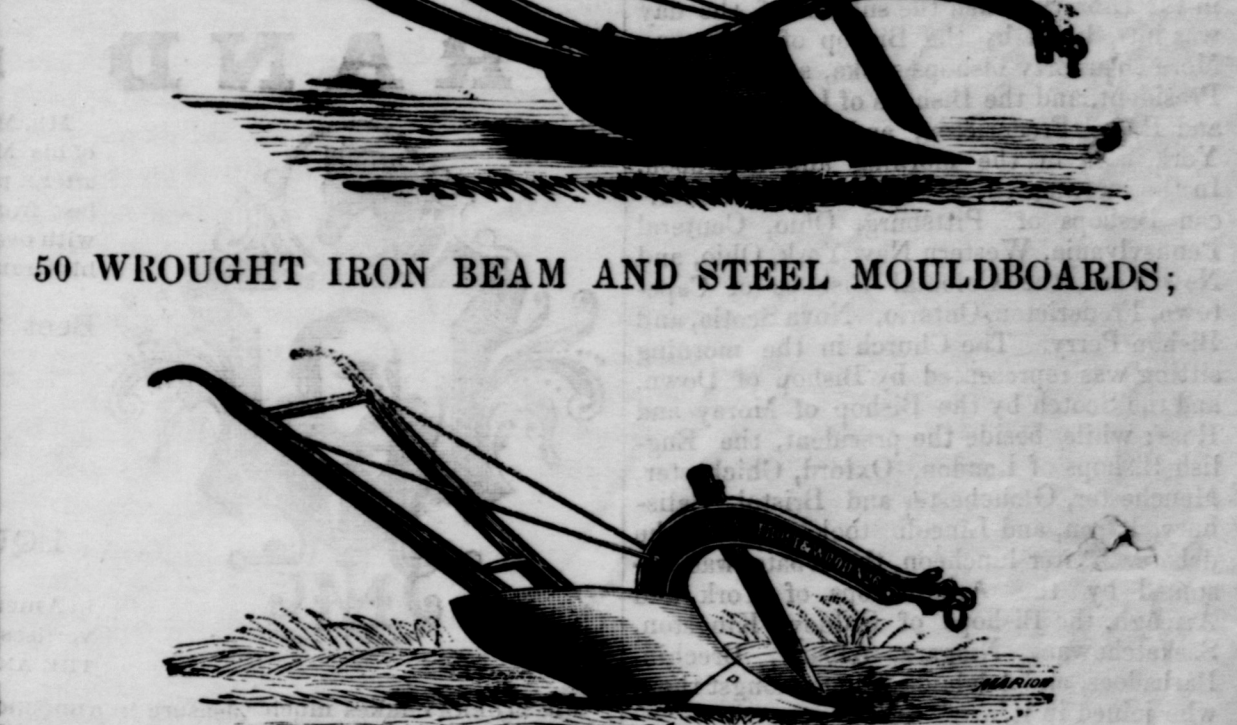
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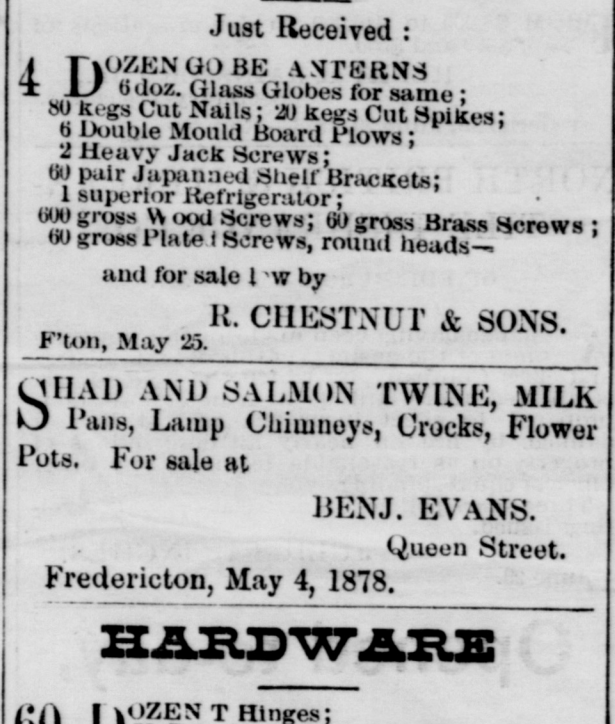
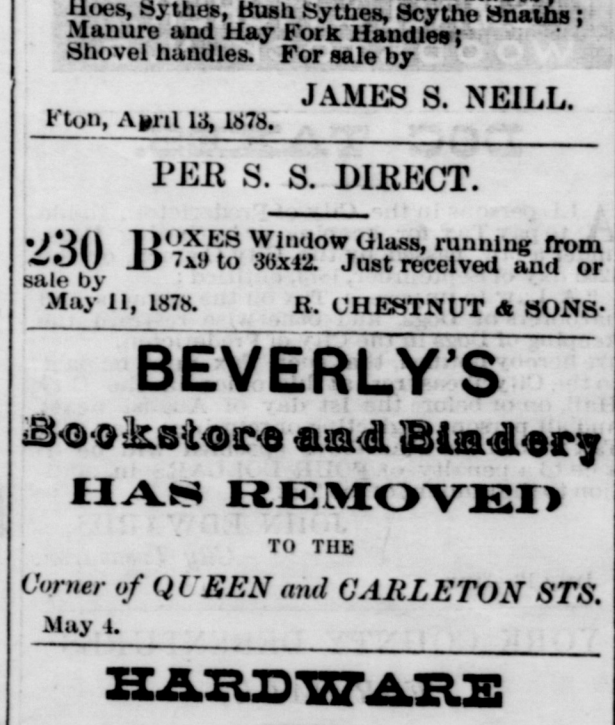
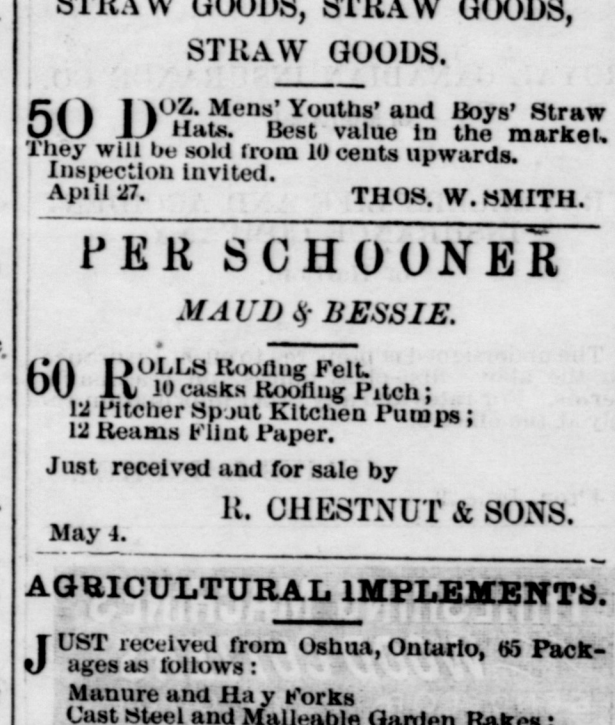
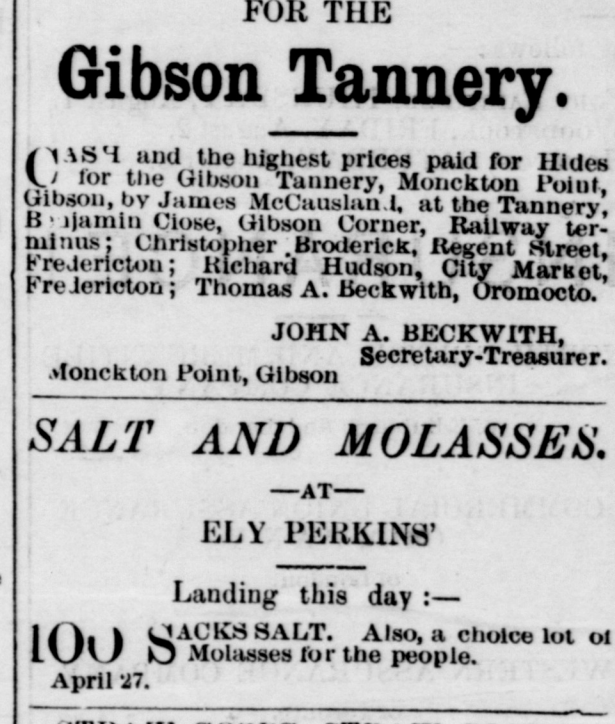
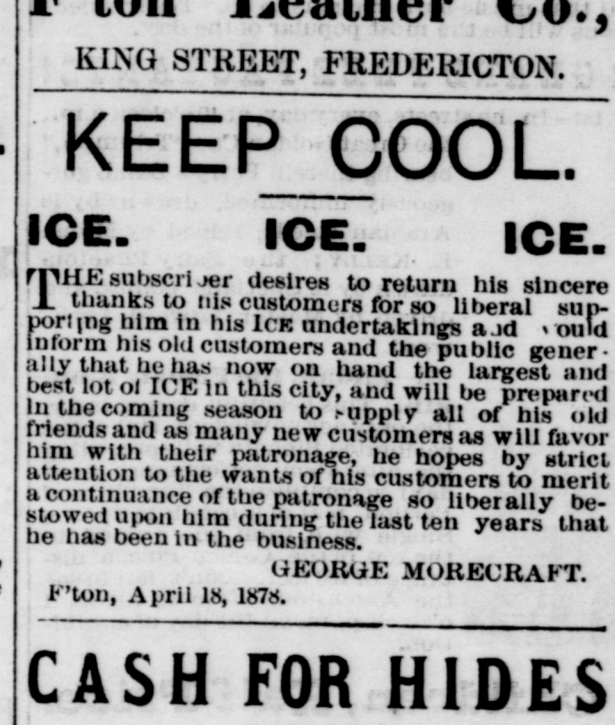
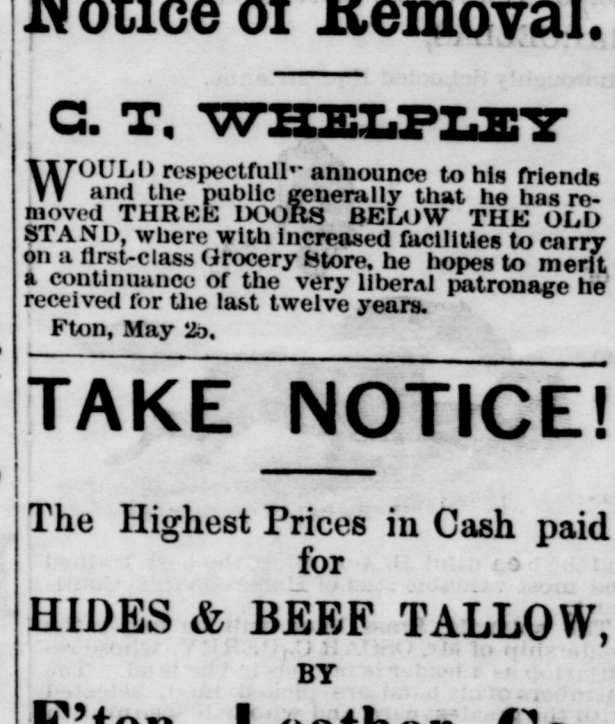
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