THE

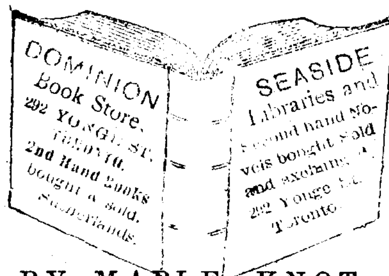
LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

SIMON SEEK;

OR,

CANADA IN ALL SHAPES.



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THE

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CHAPTER I.

LOST.

London!—the Great Highway, and the Emporium for all that is good, and great, and wise; the asylum of vice, and fraud, and depravity; the cradle of the sage; the rendezvous of the criminal; the Babel of Babels, big with the confusion of every creed, and fashion, and tongue; the everlasting Enigma,—the great anomaly and complication of contradictions. There, in his typhus-tainted corner, the gaunt spectre of Poverty surveys, with glaring eye and gnashing teeth, the pampered puppet of Wealth as he stalks away on the other side; there, neglected Genius sits brooding in his smoke-dried attic, and wondering why the crowds of mediocrity that rumble to and fro, regard not his pale, wan visage, as he pines away in his solitary cell; here, the children of rags and of misery huzza as the gilded equipage of Pomp rolls triumphantly before them, and they sigh when it is passed, that the very beasts that drag it on seem to glory in their dazzling attire and shake their heads with very pride, while they are fain to hide themselves in the dark corners and unfrequented haunts that their rags may escape the ridicule of the crowd. Here, Virtue and Love and Beauty vie with each other to charm us with their purity and grace and goodness, and there the dark goblins of Vice and Fraud and Depravity prowl abroad in their blackest garb; here, Truth and Justice are struggling amongst the crowd for their daily bread, while Avarice and Fraud are revelling in luxury and ease; the wise, the great, and the wealthy declaim in the senate-house, while the widow, the orphan, and the outcast petition in the streets; the law-giver and the judge dispense justice from their thrones of power, while Crime stalks out at midnight with "Tarquin's ravishing strides"; the physician, the sage, and the philosopher barter their wisdom for gold, while disease and ignorance and death are bearing away their thousands to the grave! —but still and for ever a clamourous throng moves on.

As night advances upon a city, so does its interest, to all but the watchman, the burglar, and the novelist, decrease. Dreary, dark, and melancholy its deserted streets begin to appear, as the shops close one by one, and their weary owners bolt up their doors for the night, and retire to unknown regions, whence the din of the outer Babel is excluded for the time, to improve their successes or to brood over their misfortunes unrecked-of and alone. The flickering lights in the upper stories appear and disappear in rapid succession, carrying with them every sign of life and comfort into oblivion; the lazy street-lamps commence winking and blinking, as if half inclined to follow their example and fall off into a general doze for the night; the solitary cabs that jostle along the street have their windows all closed, and their drivers muffled up, and they hurry along as though a goblin were behind them: everybody is hurrying homeward, everything is lonely, and desolate and melancholy, and seems to remind us that ghostly midnight is on our heels, and to admonish us that "night is the time for rest."

It was a cold, dark, inhospitable night in the month of November. A bleak "November wind" was howling through the solitary streets, —rumbling in and out of doorways, knocking down dilapidated shutters, rattling fearfully at ricketty old casements, hiding away and mumbling mysteriously to itself in dark corners, and subterranean haunts, and then rushing off, with a howl and a scream, to brood over some lonely old ruin, or to play the ghost in

some deserted tenement, sighing and moaning all the time as if *it* too, in common with humanity, found melancholy in solitude; a thick, intolerable sleet was flying about and dashing into the eyes and ears, and cutting the face, and penetrating the garments, to the utter discomforture of the few pedestrians who were unfortunate enough to be exposed to its attacks; the solemn dong of St. Paul's had just tolled the hour *one*, and, as the mournful din was borne away upon the wind, the neighbouring towers replied one after another, in a melancholy cadence, *one;* when a solitary figure—alas! that it should have belonged to the fairer portion of God's creation!—might have been seen gliding through the back ways and unfrequented lanes of the city, running parallel with the river. She was scantily clothed for such a night, and, while some portions of her dress bore unmistakable marks of expense and luxury, it was altogether unsuited to the season of the year, and was partially torn and disarranged. She appeared to have walked some considerable distance before reaching the city; the whole of her dress was completely saturated with the sleet and rain, and hung in heavy, wet folds about her feet. She moved on hurriedly, raising her head at intervals and casting a feverish glance about her, through street after street, until she emerged into Thames Street; when she slackened her pace, and proceeded with her eyes fixed thoughtfully on the pavement until she reached the flight of steps ascending to London Bridge. Here she stopped, and, looking wildly round, ascended the steps to the first angle in the stone-work; where she at once seated herself, totally regardless of the streams of water which were pouring incessantly down the steps from the pavement above. Now, for the first time, as she removed a portion of the scanty shawl with which she had hitherto concealed it from view and shielded it from the bitterness of the night, it became evident that she carried an infant in her arms. She placed it gently upon her knees, and, as it slumbered in sweet unconsciousness of the terrible scene, in which its innocent smile seemed a ghastly mockery of the decrees of Fate, she bent her head mournfully over it; and, as her slender body rocked mechanically to and fro, the half-stifled sobs, and the half-articulate exclamations that escaped her, told something of the anguish that preyed upon her heart. Every now and then, in the vehemence of her grief, she wrung her skinny hands in a pitiful manner, and darting her burning eyes towards heaven, as though she would pierce the blackness that brooded over her misery, exclaimed.

"O God! must it be! what have I done? He drove me from his door—*he!* O God!"

Again she bent her head over her child; the wind howled more savagely than before; the rain and the sleet beat more cruelly about her, and she returned to her silent grief. As she raised her head, and the faint light from an opposite lamp was reflected from her pale and emaciated countenance, it might have made the heart of the sternest stoic to bleed, to trace the outlines of blighted youth, of surpassing beauty, that despite the grief, the misery, and the despair that spoke through every feature, was yet stamped upon her brow by the indelible seal of Heaven.

O thou luckless child!—thou more than infant in the midst of a stern and iron world! why wert thou moulded in so comely and fair a fashion?—as if thy days were to be dreamed away in the Elysium of Love! Why are thy virtue and thy innocence cast in wax, to withstand the ordeal of the hot furnace of temptation and fraud, that surrounds thee in thy uncertain wanderings in thy wilderness home? Thou mayest have sinned,—a luckless hour may have hurled thee into the dark vortex of vice; or thou mayest still be as pure as the babe that nestles in thy sorrowful embrace; but what recks the slumbering world around thee?—pity, and sympathy, and charity are slumbering with it, and, when it wakes, thy voice will not be known amidst the confusion of tongues that shall prevail in that mighty Babel.

She had been seated here some minutes, when the figure of a man, closely enveloped in a long cloth cloak,—such as were in fashion at the time,—darted suddenly across the opening, at the foot of the steps, and, casting a hurried glance n the direction of the unfortunate girl, disappeared under the archway of the bridge. The reflection of the shadow upon the wet steps, attracted her attention just in time to enable her to catch a glimpse of the figure as its head was turned towards her. The effect was like that of a flash of lightning. She started to her feet, rushed precipitately down the steps, and seemed to fly in the direction taken by the stranger, while her shrill voice rang through the solitude exclaiming:

"Good Heavens!—it is he! Edward—dear Edward, I am here! do not leave me! I am all alone. O mercy, mercy!"

The moaning of the wind, and the melancholy

echo of her own voice, were all that answered. She rushed wildly to and fro, peering into every corner and crevice in which the figure might have been concealed, but she could see nothing.

"O God! am I mad?" she exclaimed, stopping suddenly, and clasping her bony hand to her forehead; and then bending her eyes down upon her helpless little burden, she continued,—the tears coursing down her once beautiful cheeks: "No, no, my child—it was not *he*. God will find you another father—and another—yes, yes my child—my darling boy,—another mother. There is no hope my child—none, none. It must be so. No hope, no hope, my child."

Who can count the pangs of them that are without the pale of Hope—that stand upon that fearful bourn dividing Life and Death, and know not which to choose? Without hope! Why, at the very sound the soul seems to shrink within itself, the heart involuntarily sickens and becomes sad, the eyes grow dim with pain, and horrid visions of untold miseries, of griefs which may not be comforted, the lunatic, the murderer, and the suicide, steal in upon the senses like the frightful goblins of a frightful dream. Without hope! Why, the mind involuntarily hurries away to the wretched haunts, the pestiferous dens where penury and crime run wild, and misery stalks abroad in its blackest garb, and dark despair keeps watch, and fearful, struggling hopeless death is the only outlet!

She stood perfectly motionless, with her head bent over her still slumbering child for some minutes; and then rousing herself suddenly, she darted back again, and, ascending the steps, proceeded with a hurried and feverish step, to cross the Bridge to the Borough side. Reaching the other side, she turned mechanically into the recess communicating with the steps leading down to the river. Here she stopped, and, selecting a sheltered angle in the wall, which was partially dry, she removed the shawl from about her shoulders, wrapped a scrap of paper, which she produced from her pocket, in one corner, and enveloped her unconscious little burden carefully in it. Placing another portion of her dress on the ground, in the most sheltered corner, she deposited her child upon it; and, falling upon her knees beside it, the heavy sobs and half-articulate sounds that escaped her broken and desolate heart, told that she was praying—praying for her child, yea for the child she was about to desert for ever—*she*, already a suicide in heart. And oh, if words and heart and soul can pray with fervour, her prayer was fervent, it was deep, it was pure. Yea, it is a strange anomaly to you that have glided through the sunny path of life, that have never felt the promptings of despair; but the soul of the outcast, the deserter, and the suicide there poured out its anguish and its supplication to Heaven: and who shall say that its portals were barred against them?

Starting again to her feet, she took from her pocket a small hand-bell which she attached by a string to the iron railings by the side of the angle, and then moved slowly down the steps towards the water. But when she had reached about half way, she stopped, clasped both her hands upon her forehead, and, rushing back again, fell once more upon her knees beside her child, and again poured out the agonies of her soul in sighs and sobs that seemed each to burst a new chasm in her already crushed and broken heart.

Again she takes a farewell embrace, and, rising gently to her feet, again descends the steps, but very carefully—so carefully that she seems almost fearful of making a noise with her feet; she places her hands upon her head and smoothes her disordered hair almost playfully over her forehead; she examines her fingers and seems particular that a ring which is on the left hand shall be in a certain position; and now she stands upon the water's edge, but is very careful that her feet shall not touch the water, which is washing irregularly on the steps.

The howling of the night-wind is hushed—it appears to be all hiding away under the dark arches of the Bridge, whence it moans and moans and moans a long, dreary, melancholy dirge; the rain and the sleet have ceased to beat—nature has forgotten to be angry, and remembers only to mourn and to weep; and she!—she glances a moment at the dark waters that mumble and whisper and wail so mysteriously at her feet; she raises her skinny hands and burning eyes a moment heavenward; a gentle murmer, a splash, a struggle, meets the ear; a deep, deep sigh is borne away upon the wind—and a hapless soul has left the world.

The wind rushes out with a terrible howl, and hurries to and fro, and screams and moans, and screams again; now it hovers over the cold and glassy grave, as it closes upon its victim, and now, like a thing frantic with despair, it rushes furiously away, and jingles the little bell that hangs over the head of the motherless babe, and the ding, ding, ding, sounds like a mimic knell tolling for the dead. And now, O thou hapless innocent! thy soul is again awake, and

the wail of thy puny lungs is added to the lamentations. Thou art rousing from a luckless slumber,—thy cries have a twofold theme,—thy own helpless little body, and thy mother's soul.

The sound of the closing waters had scarcely died away upon the ear, when the figure that had so excited the attention of the unfortunate girl on the opposite side of the Bridge, emerged stealthily from behind a cover in the stonework, which must have concealed him during the whole of the foregoing scene. Moving cautiously towards the angle in which the child was exposed, he snatched the bell from the rail, and stooped down, apparently with the view of taking up the child; but after glancing at it for a moment, he rose to his feet again without doing so. He then moved to the edge of the steps and examined the nature of the descent into the river, and, returning again, commenced deliberately dragging the child towards the steps with his foot, evidently for the purpose of precipitating it into the water. But he had scarcely removed it out of the recess, when, starting and uttering a low exclamation, he darted from the spot, and hastily concealed himself behind the abutment from which he had first emerged, without waiting to ascertain the cause of the interruption.

Who art thou that carriest so black a soul? whose heart is not crushed to sorrow by the death-wail of so fair a victim? What art thou, thou blasted figure, whose form is yet erect, where the fiends of darkness might bow their heads in pity?—whose iron nature is not softened by the supplications of a motherless and friendless babe! What art thou more than the base mockery of a man? for where is thy charm against the spell that the wail of her parting voice has left upon thy soul? Hark! it is even now returning upon the night wind; and behold thy iron nature, thy sturdy soul already trembles and quails before the whisperings of a goblin of air. Fly from it, and it shall pursue thee, till it chase thee to thy grave. In thy wanderings at home and in foreign climes, in the city and in the forest, it shall follow thee; time, nor ocean, nor day, nor night shall stand between, until it mingle in thy dying groans, and lend its horrors to fright thy naked soul away from earth.

CHAPTER II.

FOUND.

In order to account satisfactorily for the precipitate retreat of the Unknown, whom the close of the last chapter has established in life and provided for, according to his several deserts, it will be necessary to retrace our steps across the Bridge a few minutes previous to that memorable event—memorable, inasmuch as these Adventures would certainly never have reached the light, had the little stranger been allowed to reach the water, which another moment would in all probability have decided. Being there, at that precise time, we should have seen —that is, under all ordinary circumstances—a small scrap of humanity, about four feet six inches in height, and something less in breadth, fitted up in an ample fustian jacket, ditto continuations, and a primitive sort of head-dress, which looked like a clever compromise between a hat and a hood, and evinced no partiality for any particular portion of the head—who was moving along the pavement—we say moving, because the precise definition of the movement is involved in doubt, inasmuch as it oscillated between a short walk, a lazy trot, and the St. Vitus' dance, forming in the aggregate an easy style of ocomotion, which however carried him along amazingly. When this collective arrangement had proceeded to somewhat the Borough side of the centre of the Bridge he made a sudden halt, raised his forefinger, and planted himself in the conventional attitude of a person catching at a sound in the distance. He evidently heard something; and whatever that something really was, it at once decided him on a peculiar and somewhat eccentric course of action. Giving emphatic expression to the monosyllable "cats," and winking three distinct times on vacancy for that party's peculiar edification, he forthwith plunged into the road, and groped about for several seconds, now in the gutter, now in the centre of the road, until he had succeeded in arming himself with one or two sharp-edged pieces of granite of about the size of an ordinary cat's head; when he instantly regained the pavement, and proceeded under the shadow of the wall in a stealthy manner, raising his foot—the better to guard against any unnecessary noise proceeding from that member—to a considerable height in the air at every step, after the prescribed manner of stage robbers when in the full discharge of their unconstitutional functions,—from which practice it is

inferred that, in opposition to the laws of gravitation relating to matter generally, the higher the foot *ascends* the lighter and gentler it *descends*. Reaching the further extremity of the Bridge, he made another halt, threw another confidential wink at the lamp-post with the view to impart his conviction that it was "all right," and then waving one of the stones carefully up and down in his hand, as if he were making an estimate of the force with which a given momentum would carry it against an object at the required distance, he made a desperate plunge round the corner, selected his object, let fly the missile, and struck the Unknown in the centre of the left leg. But what with the great amount of physical force exerted, the ardent zeal with which the performance was conducted, the slipperiness of the pavement, and an unexpected step immediately round the corner, the equilibrium of the feline hero was irretrievably lost, and, in something less than a twinkling, the hero's head had straightway proceeded to take the place of his heels, which, being supported in the air by the assistance of the step, appeared ambitious of arriving at the loftier distinction. It was this accident that afforded the Unknown time to escape and conceal himself as we have already witnessed.

The child, who had been screaming lustily up to this moment—an unusual sound, which the hero had very naturally ascribed to feline lungs, (we say naturally, because we believe it to be a standing popular delusion,) appeared to be terrified by the sudden apparition, and instantly reduced its expressions of grief to half-stifled sobs and other small but unmistakable indications of its nobler origin; until the hero had sufficiently recovered the fragments of his scattered senses to roll over to a copious pool of water, provided by a hollow in the pavement, and seat himself therein. Whether the child saw him through the darkness in this attitude, and thought it was something human to which it might appeal in its distress, or whether it was merely the re-action following the fright, certain it is that no sooner had the hero made himself comfortable in that position, than it commenced an astonishing display from its embryo lungs, to the utter confusion and bewilderment of the hero's already scattered senses. He stared vacantly about him, scratched his head violently on one side, whistled two or three semibreves in a breath, and, in the spirit of contradiction not unfrequently indulged in on such occasions, exclaimed: "Well, I'm blest!" adding, after another semibreve, "this aint much of a go, this aint. A reg'lar full-grown kid voice and all, and a pretty lusty one, they've bin and left him, that's reg'lar plain. Blest if I didn't think if them was cats, as they was a comin' the nat'ral rather strong—blest if I didn't. Well, this is what I calls a go, and that's speakin' plain."

So saying he made a shift to leave his uncomfortable bath and crawl over to the little stranger.

"Well, s'pose we has a look at yer," he said, raising the little creature in his arms and resting it on one knee. "Well," he continued, "you're in luck—you are. Where's yer mother? I s'pose yer father aint nowhere."

The little creature, who had stifled its sobs as soon as it felt the arms of a human being about it again, started off at this juncture with renewed vigour, until the hero was reduced to that state of inward emotion, popularly and laconically conveyed in the word "touched"—

"Well, well," he said, in a voice which he no doubt regarded as affection's own, "I didn't go for to hurt yer sens'tive little feelins. Nosy, wosy, of course I didn't! S'pose yer father have deserted yer; aint I a goin to be a father to yer —and a mother too, if that's all? Why o' course I am."

With this affectionate assurance he regained his feet, and was about to move off, child and all, when it seemed to occur to him that a little consideration would be advisable with respect to his destination. "Let's see," he said, looking down upon his adopted son; "where shall we walk yer off to, eh? Station house? No; let's see. Workus I s'pose. Or shall we chance it, and—well, we'll just turn that round as we goes along. But stop," he continued with another jerk backwards, "s'pose we jest see as all's reg'lar;" and so saying he planted himself in a firm position on the pavement, put one hand to his mouth, and, drawing a long breath, bellowed forth, in a voice that echoed through the dark arches of the bridge, right away to the opposite banks of the river, and, knocking against the lofty wharves, came echoing back again, much to his apparent admiration and delight.

"Hallo!" he cried, "is there any one here as owns a child? Has any one lost a kid?"

Receiving no answer further than the echo of his own voice, he turned round and limped away down the Boro'. When about half way between the point of starting and the Westminster Road, he came to a full stop, and addressed

himself to his companion in arms to the following effect:

"Toby or not Toby? that's the question, as Hicks says in the play. The public lodgins I knows pretty well, (leastwise I ought to, thanks to fortin and no mother,) and I can't recommend 'em—not by no means. Bad board, wus lodgin', and no respect paid to the feelins of a gentl'm'n. Then the Gov'nor's. It's hard to say. No kids of their own, at present. But then the Victim. She's dead agen it right off, that's what she is. Well," he continued dropping on one knee in order to rest his burden on the other, while he thrust his left hand into his breeches pocket; "there's on'y one way to decide it rig'lar, so here goes." He produced a small coin from his pocket, spat upon it with great earnestness, and, then spinning it up in the air, caught it, and smacked it into the palm of the other hand, crying,

"Heads gov'nors, tails workus! Well, can't be helped," he continued, examining the coin, "heads has it, and so home we goes."

With this he hurried on, until he ultimately stopped before a small semi-detached cottage in the Westminster Road. Over the side-entrance appertaining to this abode was a signboard setting forth, in an elaborate variety of gilt, blue and red letters, the name and occupation of the owner—to wit: "George Plumley, Plumber, Painter, Glazier, and Paper-hanger. Estimates given for general repairs."

"Now for it," said the hero, giving a desperate tug at the bell-handle. "In for a penny, in for a pound. Don't touch 'em yet," he said, returning from a survey of the windows from the opposite side of the road; and with that he gave the handle another tug, which must have sent the bell—or rather sound—flying and spinning through the house in a perfect paroxysm. This soon produced an effect, but to all appearances not precisely the effect desired. The second floor-window made a sudden dash upwards, which was instantly followed by a stream of water which made a sudden dash downwards, causing the hero to retreat beneath the shadow of the doorway with surprising alacrity, observing in a suppressed tone:

"The Victim, by George!"

The water was followed by a small head, enveloped in a large night cap, which was instantly seized with a violent fit of trembling, while a shrill soprano voice, very much cracked and jagged about the edges, issued from under it.

"O, I see you, you good for nothing fellow you!" said the voice. "O you lost, depraved young man! Do you think no one's got any refined feelings, but what they're to be made a constant victim of your low, vulgar, work'ouse pripensities? Here's a time of night! Oh goodness gracious, to think that respectable people should be made such a victim. Don't think you're coming in here at what time *you* please. Not if I can help it. So just go back to your low, vulgar click as soon as you please. If some people aint got any regard for their position in society, and their feelings and their edyercation, that aint to say that other people's to be made a victim of," and here the cap flew into a perfect delirium. "No, you good for nothing, low-minded fellow, you. Go and make victims of them you've left; dont come here. There you are, and there I hope you'll remain, and I hope it'll do you good."

The head disappeared, and the window came down with the same velocity that had marked its ascent. As the second floor closed, the first floor gradually opened; and presently the small end of a large Turkish night-cap made its appearance, being followed in due course of time by a round, plump countenance, turning round mechanically as it came out, apparently with the view of ascertaining the position of affairs at the window above; which done, the head gave a jerk, and round came the countenance.

"Timothy, by George, is that you, sir?" enquired a voice, which, if it was intended to convey an idea of anything like severity, was a palpable failure.

"Yes," replied the hero; "sorry to say it is sir. But if you please, sir——"

"That'll do, that'll do," replied the voice, and the window began gradually to descend.

Timothy straightway indulged in a short pantomimic display indicative of delight, and whispered in the ear of his companion—who by the by, was, fast asleep—his unqualified conviction that it was "all right," but nevertheless admonished him to "say nothing" and "look out for squalls."

In another moment the door opened, and, as the moving medium kept carefully sheltered behind it, Timothy sidled in, concealing his burden as much as possible, while the first floor voice proceeded from behind the door:

"You're a pretty sort of a fellow, aint you?"

Timothy seemed doubtful on the point, and made no reply.

"This is giving you a holiday—this is."

Timothy couldn't deny it.

"By George, I'm a good mind to say it shall be the last, that's what I have," continued the

voice, following him into a small general apartment at the back of the house.

"Well sir, I'm very sorry sir," faltered Timothy, "but they would go for to make me stay sir; and it's so long since my sister and me was——"

"Well, well, never mind," rejoined the voice, "How *is* your sister?"

"Thank yer sir, she's middlin sir."

Now at about this time Timothy felt his heart beat—in fact it might almost be said to have knocked a complete Belgravian rat, tat, tat, against his ribs. What was to be done? He would have given anything if his young friend would have come to the rescue at that moment, and have notified his presence on his own account; if he would only have broken the ice with a cough, or a whine, or something of that sort. But no; he evidently had no such intention. Should he pinch him? His manhood revolted at the thought. But there was no time to be lost; his master was leaving the room; and he therefore drew in a long supply of breath, wheeled round, so as to bring the object of his anxiety in full view, and, fixing his eyes immovably on the left leg of a small stool that lay upside down upon the floor, he delivered himself in the following lucid manner:

"If—if—you please sir—look here sir, I—I, I'm 'fraid sir I've bin and gone and done reg'lar wrong, sir—but I thought as I couldn't go for to leave it out in the cold all night, sir—and it was cryin' so affectin', sir, down there by London Bridge, sir, where I found it, sir, all alone, sir, so I hope I've not bin and gone and made a mess, Mr. Plumley, sir."

During this unsophisticated statement Mr. Plumley, sir, had stood gazing on the child, perfectly motionless, and with his mouth on the jar.

"On London Bridge—by George—in the open air," said Mr. Plumley abstractedly.

"With the rain a peltin' on him dreadful," added Timothy.

Mr. Plumley said no more; but, wheeling round sharply on his heel, darted out of the room, and made a precipitate retreat up stairs.

Timothy immediately deposited his burden on the table, whistled a few soft semibreves in his ear, and concluded a compound demonstration of delight with an energetic movement from the sailor's hornpipe.

Mr. Plumley was a young man, rather above the middle height, with a full red face, glowing with good nature and whiskers; it also appeared to be the conviction of his friends and acquaintances generally, that, as a whole, he was correctly and symetrically put together, inasmuch as it was a common remark amongst them that "Plumley carried his heart in the right place."

He had not been absent many seconds when he returned with five pillows, two blankets, and a counterpane in one arm, and a large wicker cradle in the other. The latter necessary to domestic happiness, had been purchased with the rest of the furniture at the time of Mr. Plumley's nuptials two years previously: as it is presumed, in the hopeful anticipation of an event which, however, had not yet transpired.

"She'll be down directly," said Mr. Plumley, depositing his load in a corner close to the fire place. "Why, Tim, I thought you'd have had the fire agoing. Look alive! If it aint froze, its much to me."

And Tim *did* look alive. Out went the ashes, and in went the wood, and off went the fire, blazing away, as Timothy observed, in something less than no time; which was about the time his master took to make up a snug bed in the cradle, remove the shawl from about the small guest, pour forth a small volume of eulogiums on its eyes and limbs and appurtenances generally, and deposit it under a large pile of blanket and counterpane, which rendered its ultimate escape with the smallest portion of breath in its precious little body—as Mrs. Plumley emphatically observed,—the merest miracle as ever was.

These arrangements were just completed, and Mr. Plumley had seated himself with his chin in one hand, his eye contemplating the gasping little object under the blankets, and his foot energetically rocking the cradle to and fro (although his precise motive for doing so did not appear, since the child was fast asleep and of course perfectly quiet); when Mrs. Plumley—a lively, merry-looking, round faced, neatly formed little body, with a great collection of very pretty brown hair hanging in very interesting disorder about her shoulders, and a very small, innocent little curl-paper on each temple, and a very red spot in the centre of each cheek, which made her look all the prettier—came tripping into the room, with a variety of mysterious little fabrics, all lily white, in one hand, and a very curiously shaped bottle in the other.

"O Tim," said Mrs. Plumley, in a very pretty little voice that was meant to be severe but took the wrong road in coming out, at the same time making a bound towards the cradle;

"O Tim, you naughty young man! What have you been and done now?"

"Very sorry to disturb yer, mum," said Tim; "but here's rather a huncommon go here, mum, along o' this here hinfant, mum."

"O goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Plumley, who had evidently heard nothing of Timothy's apology. "O goodness gracious, what beautiful eyes! O George, dear, do look. Did you ever see such lovely, lovely, lovely!"

George dear did look, but George dear was otherwise engaged. It had occurred to him that the child must be hungry—it might be famished; and accordingly, with the view of providing effectually against the evil, he had already placed upon the table, the cold remains of a sirloin of beef, half a leg of boiled pork, two quartern loaves, and three or four bottles of beer—and had in fact transplanted the whole of the contents of the whole of the cupboards to the table: a mistake, however, in which he was soon set right by Mrs. Plumley, who reserved to herself the exclusive right to superintend the mysteries of that department. But Mr. P. couldn't very well be made to understand that he had been led into making such a display for no tangible object whatever; and he therefore proposed, after a little reflection, that, as the "little one" was quiet, and looked tolerably comfortable, they should sit down and take a "snack" while they talked the matter over.

Mrs. Plumley was however too much excited to eat—in fact, too much transported, she said, with the dear little angel's physumology, to do anything at all.

If it might be presumed that there had entered into the ingredients of Mrs Plumley's constitution any thing bearing the semblance of a fault, it was certainly that not very uncommon one on the fair side of humanity, of being too enthusiastic. She had a natural nack of falling head and ears in love with everything and every body at the first sight. Hence, according to her own confession, within the space of twelve calendar months, she had been on the very point of breaking her heart no less than fifteen different times for fifteen different young plumbers, who had been brought within the precincts of her maternal abode for the purpose of repairing the water-pipe that always would be bursting somewhere or other, and to repair which they always would send a different young plumber on every occasion, and who was so "conversional" and so obliging, and so delightful, that she couldn't help falling head and ears in love with him, there and then—no, not if she were to die for it. And then he never came again, until the pipe sprung another leak some how or other, and then came another young plumber, who drove away all the beauties of the other young plumber, until Mr. Plumley himself came and drove them all away together. After which the weakness took a new channel, and turned more especially upon inanimate objects, such as bonnets and shawls and ribbons and trinkets, until Mr. P. used to remark, by way of a good joke, that he would any time undertake to paint, inside and out, in "three coats of oil," any three shops in the Westminster Road, while Mrs. P. could pass any one of them at her quickest pace; and when Mrs. P. laughed and said, "Stuff and nonsense," he generally followed it up by enquiring if she had got that bonnet into shape yet; which was a gentle allusion to her having so hugged and caressed a certain beautiful, new-fashioned bonnet which he had unexpectedly presented to her, that she was never able to bring it into anything like wearable shape afterwards.

Timothy having told his tale, and replied to a great deal of cross-questioning with respect to the precise spot, and time, and manner in which the child was found, the conclusion was unanimously arrived at, that the circumstances altogether involved a mystery; and when Mrs. Plumley had examined the shawl and pronounced it to be the remains of some very expensive fabric—in fact, that when new it must have been a perfect love of a shawl; and when a scrap of paper was found wrapped in the corner, with these words written in a neat lady's hand, "Take care of him, and God will bless you. A. B." it was definitely decided that a mystery hung about the whole affair.

This conclusion had just been arrived at, when the equanimity of the company was suddenly overthrown to a remarkable extent, by the appearance at the doorway, of a ghostly looking figure, enveloped in a long whitey-brown robe, surmounted by the very identical night-cap that had followed the water out of the second-floor front.

"O George," exclaimed the cracked voice with the ragged edges; "for shame! To think that you should delight in making a person such a victim! When you know I aint been used to it, and I never was made to be used to it. My nature aint like some natures; and if I am delicate and sensitive it aint my fault, and if my edyercation is different from some people's (meaning, it is presumed, Mrs. Plum-

ley's), that's no reason why I should be made a constant victim. Why don't you let me go into service, George? and there'll be an end of it. I can't last long—I know that—I'm too delicate—I know I am. Then why *don't* you let me go into service, George, if you want to get rid of me? If I am to be a victim, let me be a victim, and there'll be an end of it."

This pathetic outburst was delivered with much feeling and pathos, and involved an energetic application of a large handful of cambric with which she had come duly prepared.

Mr. Plumley made no reply. He appeared to have become suddenly absorbed in the study of anatomy off the sirloin; Mrs. P. had plunged deep into the contemplation of the contents of the cradle; while Timothy was sedulously testing the quality of the table-cloth by pricking it up with a fork. There was a dead calm; which seemed to render the following emphatic enquiry from the cracked voice somewhat paradoxical.

"Is Bedlam broke loose? What is it all about?" said the voice. "George, why *don't* you speak?"

Well, well, my good girl," said Mrs. Plumley, "There's nothing amiss. Lizzy girl, just tell Selina—"

Selina! stop! Just one word on that euphonious appendage. O ye doating fathers, and tender-hearted mothers, if ye want an affected, weak-minded, melancholy, sickly sentimental piece of wax-work for a daughter, lay the foundation by christening her *Selina!* Heaven preserve us from a Selina! Mary, Jane, Peggy, or even Betsey, or any thing you will—but not Selina, or any of its sentimental companions.

Selina Plumley, eldest sister of Mr. George Plumley, was no exception to the Selina rule (exceptions of course there are, and among them as a matter of course, are all the Selinas that shall do us the honor to travel through these Adventures). No; she was rather a perfect embodiment of it. She was fast verging into the solitary bourn of a doubtful age, and there is every reason to suppose that she knew it and felt it. Added to this, the circumstances which had controlled her movements through life, had been, in one sense, to say the least, unfortunate, inasmuch as they had tended to raise her, in feelings and acquirements, above and beyond the sphere in which she was, however, compelled to move. In her early youth she had, by some means or other, obtained access to an old one-stringed harpsichord—she called it a piano—and had become proficient in that instrument to the extent of three tunes with one hand, including "The last rose of summer," and "The light of other days," and the first part of three others, which she had been heard to execute with marked success—not to say brilliantly—with both hands. She had moreover studied, and learned by heart, three whole and complete pages of "French without a Master," besides, becoming complete master—or rather mistress, of no less than twenty-three whole and distinct words from the vocabulary therein contained. In virtue of these and other similar accomplishments, it is not surprising to find her inspired with the idea that her constitution was based upon extremely refined and delicate principles, and that, in being compelled, as it were, to crush both her feelings and her prospects in the midst of a sphere from which she was, obviously, alieniated by nature, she was, in every sense of the word, and to say the very least of it—a victim.

Well, we left Mr. Plumley requesting his wife to give Miss Selina an explanation.

"Oh, let Tim; he knows most about it," said Mrs. Plumley, who evidently didn't approve of the office.

"Hem! what, me mum?" said Tim.

Mrs. Plumley nodded, and winked, and made a grimace, as much as to say, exactly so; and Timothy proceeded,

"If you please, mum, you see, I—I've bin and found a child—and—and it was reg'lar pouring o' rain,—and so I brought him home, mum."

"Oh mercy," screamed the Victim, falling flop into a chair. "Oh mercy!" gasped the Victim, casting her eyes upward, bowing her body to and fro, and doing the usual symptoms. "Oh mercy!" she gasped a third time, and was just on the point of giving way to the full force of her feelings, when the child, who had been startled by the first shriek for mercy, started off at the very top of its pulmonary powers. Singularly enough, this checked the symptoms at once. A few spasmodic gasps at certain small atoms of air that seemed to be floating away in the distance, a little gentle rocking to and fro, and Miss Selina was herself again.

Timothy felt called upon for an apology.

"I beg your pardon, mum," if I—"

"Beg my pardon," cried Miss Selina with all her wonted energy. "Beg my pardon! How dare you talk to me in that manner, you impident, low-minded fellow you!"

"Well, I'm sorry, mum, if—"

"Sorry! Don't you attempt to insult me in that way, sir. I'll *not* be insulted by you, sir. Oh mercy, to think that a person's to be insulted

to her very face by a low, work'ouse creature!" exclaimed Miss Selina.

"Well," pleaded Timothy, "I'm sure I didn't go for to—"

"Oh goodness gracious!" cried Miss Selina, going off into a paroxysm; "was ever any one made such a victim! and as to you, George, you aint got a sparkle of feeling—that you aint; to stand by and hear a sister insulted to her very face. It aint like a brother—that it aint. If I'm in the way, George, why don't you let me go into service? I will go into service, George, and there'll be an end of it."

This latter appalling resolution was rendered with remarkable emphasis and point—in fact it had been produced with about the same emphasis and point, three times a day, at a minimum estimate, for the last two years: while it was remarkable that the only attempt on the part of Miss Selina to carry it into effect, had been made on one, and only one remarkable occasion, when, in a fit of despair, she had made a rush to the grocer's at the corner, and enquired if they knew of an opening for a governess; but, on being straightway referred to a family in the next square, she declined to proceed further in the matter, alleging as the ground-work of her objection, that, from her own private knowledge of the family in question, she felt convinced that both their moral and religious character was involved in doubt, irrespective of the fact that they seemed to aspire to a proficiency in Italian and singing to which she could scarcely lay claim.

Having in due course of time recovered from her splenetic attack, Miss Selina became uneasy. Yes; there is every reason for the belief, that Miss Selina was extremely uneasy. There was a new-born infant in the cradle, not three yards removed from the very seat on which she sat, and yet she couldn't see, under all the circumstances, how she could very well catch so much as a glimpse of that intensely interesting object, without compromising her dignity. No; and yet, could it be resisted? Well, as far as our own opinion is concerned, we doubt if all the dignity, all the fortitude, all the stoicism of the most stoical of women, would be sufficient to resist a temptation of such unqualified magnitude. No; on mature reflection; we are of opinion that it couldn't be done. Miss Selina was of that opinion too, and therefore she didn't attempt it. She rose indignantly from her chair, and declaring that she found it impossible to credit the evidence of her own senses, took three indignant strides across the room, and threw a long indignant glance into the cradle; from which she left it to be inferred that her sole object was to annihilate the insolent little intruder there and then upon the spot.

"Now aint he a little cherub?" said Mr. Plumley, who thought this a good opportunity for appealing to the affections.

"Oh stuff!" returned his sister.

"By George," said Mr. Plumley, (it is presumed that this referred to the celebrated saint, and not to himself,) suddenly emerging from his abstraction and dealing the table three distinct blows with his hand, while at the same time he strained all the surplus blood into his face, until it passed from a pale amber to a deep brown. "By George, if I thought, Selina, that you had the 'art—if I could be made to believe that a sister of mine had the 'art to-to—by George, if I wouldn't—why—why—by George—but there, it's all nonsense; you didn't mean it. You've got a 'art as tender and sens'tive as what the best of us has—that's what you've got; so it's no use talking. By George," said Mr. Plumley, pointing his finger with an impressive jerk towards the cradle, "who could have the 'art to leave a hinnocent little creature like that there to the mercy of the heliments such a night as this. There, I don't believe it's in the 'art o' man to do it—that's what I don't—by George!"

Miss Selina didn't mean to say it was. After the graceful compliment her brother had thought proper to pay to the constitution of her nature generally, (which was his usual mode of bringing about a reconciliation in cases of this sort,) Miss Selina didn't mean to say anything of the kind. In fact, after a great deal of coaxing from both Mr. and Mrs. Plumley, and after her opinion had been specially consulted on the texture of the shawl, and the probable amount of education and refinement displayed in the hand-writing on the scrap of paper, Miss Selina herself concurred in the general opinion, that the matter involved a mystery; and, ultimately, went so far as to give her valuable support to the motion, moved by Mrs. Plumley and seconded by Mr. Plumley, to the effect, that a nurse should be immediately found, and engaged for the requisite period, and that the little stranger should forthwith be admitted to all the rights and privileges of a ligitimate member of the Plumley family—so remaining until such time as he would be enabled, by the force of circumstances or the interpostion of Providence, to emerge from the shroud of mystery that at present enveloped him.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIETY VERSUS POVERTY.

TIME is a great magician, the world is the stage on which he displays his enchantments, and its inhabitants are the implements of jugglery with which he performs his illusions and transfigurations. Ovid may boast of his startling metamorphoses, his Atlas, his Daphne, and his Perimell, but the great magician of the Abyss only smiles at his wizards for street-strolling jugglers, and passes his wand over their trickeries and they vanish before his power. He is the first and legitimate metamorphoser, and the sovereign wizard of the world. He passes his hand over the forest and the waste, and their inhabitants disappear, the majestic oak and the pine hide their heads, the earth moulds into shape, and cities and kingdoms appear in view, and seem to flourish by the power of a great enchantment. Again his hand passes over the cities, the Babels, and the glories of the world, and their temples, their monuments, their fanes tumble down, their power is no more —their beauties have dissolved and passed away like a dream: the gloomy forest appears again, and again the howling wind is sweeping over a desolate bourn. Now he illuminates his pavilion with his magic lights, and the bright luminaries of art and science and civilization shed their lustre through the world, and encompass its multitudes with their splendour; again he passes his wand over the scene, it retires before his power, and the whole is again wrapt in impenetrable darkness. Neither is he confined to the great and the lofty, but, while he balances the world and holds the destinies of kingdoms in his hand, he also condescends to deal out to individuals from his inexhaustible bottle, and to dangle the strings of a Fantoccini.

Now, after this small but brilliant ebulition of creative fancy, it is presumed, my dear reader, that you are perfectly prepared for a change; a great change—in fact, a wholesale metamorphosis in some shape or other; and that therefore you will not be in the smallest degree surprised at being called upon to leave the incidents recorded in the foregoing chapters behind you—far behind you in the hazy regions of the past, and to make a running leap over the whirling vortex of time to the extent of ten whole years.

It was on the tenth anniversary, then, of the day on which those incidents occurred,—a dreary, uncomfortable, disaffected sort of a day, at about 5 p.m., that two small representatives of the lower orders were established on their knees beside the pavement, in the very recess at the end of London Bridge in which the child had been deserted and found. A small wooden box, surmounted by a somewhat inartistic representation of a man's foot with the sole uppermost, stood before them, and, with a tall Day and Martin blacking-pot, and three questionable brushes, constituted their coat of arms, proclaiming to the world generally, and to all well-regulated pedestrians in particular, that they stood, or rather knelt there in the honorable position of members of the useful and ornamental profession of London Shoe-blacks. The senior of the pair was a small piece of human architecture—although apparently full grown,—with a curiously comical countenance, prominent in which was the mouth, which, in addition to an extremely ludicrous twist in the left-hand corner, appeared to be restricted to no particular locality, but left at liberty to wander over the whole extent of the countenance at pleasure. His companion was a mere child, slimly made, with bright, cheerful, regular features, and a lively manner. Every now and then he saluted the passengers in a small soprano voice, with "Clean your boots, sir?" which was followed up in a cracked and dilapidated tenor from his companion, with "Polish your boots, sir?" while the individual himself made a sort of spasmodic clutch at every boot that passed along the pavement. They were both poorly dressed, and neither of them appeared to have any connection with the red-jacket, ragged-school urchins, who compose the great corps of London Shoe-blacks. The elder kept every now and then admonishing his shivering little comrade to beat his arms round his body, in a manner of which he gave him a highly spirited example.

"It *is* cold, Tim, aint it?" said the child, rubbing his hands together.

"Cold," replied Tim, for of course Tim it was; "it's what I call a reg'lar double-em-up sort of day, and no mistake. It don't perpetrate to the bones at all, does it? which is seen by my arms: reg'lar black and blue where I've bin a beatin' of em. Look out, Simy, here they come, both ways. Pol'sh your boots, sir? Shall I put the pols'h on, sir? only a penny, sir, can't break you, sir? No luck, Simmy," said Tim,

as the whole flock of boots disappeared in all directions. "You may depend 'pon it," added Tim, "the repressed state of the money market is a knockin' our business to shiverines, Simy."

"Yes," replied the child shoeblack. "But aint it capital, Tim, that we're able to earn what we are, now Mr. Plumley's so poor? He's had a great deal of trouble, aint he, Tim?"

"Trouble!" cried Tim, flinging the word out as though it were too contemptible to bring into contact with such a subject. "Trouble! why, if it aint a mercy that he's not gone reg'lar nun cumpus, I should jist like this indivij'al in the white choke as is cummin up here, and o' course dont want the pol'sh put on, to tell us what a mercy is. (Pol'sh yer boots, sir?) To go for to think that arter that there illness, (and if that was a trifle, why, all I can say is, trifles is lookin' up,) six months on it, (Pol'sh your boots, sir?) as if that was'nt enough, but what he must go to wanderin' about for six or seven months (Pol'sh your boots, sir?) out of work. Not so much as a busted water-pipe has come for'ard to give him a lift to get a crust out on—and then this is a free country! And aint he tried? aint he bin out night and day, hail, rain, blow and snow, and every thing else? And what's the consikence? why starvation's the consikence! and if we was'nt jist able to lay hold of a copper or two in this line (Pol'sh 'em off, sir?) why the work'us' 'ud be the consikence; and if that aint summut for a man to come to, why some un 'ud better tell me as I never was there. What's your takins to-day, Simy?"

"One and three-pence is all I've taken to-day," replied Simy.

"And rather fust rate too, for a indivigual of about your size and ce'cumfrence, I shud think," returned Tim. "Well, it's gettin' late for our prefession, Simy, so I think we'll toddle."

"Very well, Tim," said Simy, "if you think we shall get no more."

"No; I think we've got about the last. You see, ours bein' a hornimental prefession, people dont like to pay for it unless they can see the beauties on it; and yer see its beginnin' to get a little dusky like, so that it'll soon be a matter of about nowhere whether the polish's off or on. So hand me over yer box, and away we goes—no, stop a bit; here's this codger in the cloak; he's bin by once, and now he's comin back agin. Look, he's eyin' you dreadful. Dont you trouble, I'll take the job. Pol'sh 'em off, sir?"

Taking no notice of the solicitations of Mr. Shoeblack the elder, the individual alluded to passed on, keeping his eyes fixed on the child until he found it inconvenient to look back. After walking forward a few paces he again returned, keeping his eyes still fixed on the boy. Having proceeded a few paces in the opposite direction, he turned again, and came and planted his foot upon the boy's box. The child set to work upon the boot, and the stranger watched him in silence for some time. At length he enquired,

"What is your name, boy?"

"Simon Seek, sir."

"Is that your father's name?" said the stranger.

"I haven't got a real father," replied the boy.

"How old are you?" pursued the stranger.

"Ten years, sir," replied the boy.

At this moment the man's head became suddenly turned towards the river. The boy felt his foot tremble on the box, and looked up in his face. He was evidently laboring under some violent emotion. His features were gradually becoming distorted, his eyes glared and rolled about, his mouth was strangely twisted on one side, and his whole countenance was white as marble. The boy instinctively shrunk from his post to the side of his companion, who, thinking the man was in a fit, was about to call to some of the passers by for assistance; when he suddenly dashed his foot off the box, threw his arms in the air, and clapping his hands violently to his ears, darted off at a rapid pace across the bridge.

"Well," said Timothy, as soon as he had disappeared, "there aint much of the crazy about him, cert'ny I say, what a partic'lar sort of 'ffection he seemed to have to'ard you, though. He aint one of your rich relations turned up on a sudden and gone off in a fit of estacy at the sight of yer, is he? But howsumever I dont think he could a bin very much delighted. It did'nt seem to take that turn. Well, at any rate we shall know him agen, and when we see him I think we'll jest p'litely ask him for the odd copper for that there polish as he's bin and walked off with without payin for."

"I was very glad to get rid of him at that price," said Simon. "I didn't like the look of him."

"Well, if you did," replied Tim, "I cert'ny couldn't ingratulate you on your depreciation of beauty. But now, after that, give me yer box and off we goes to the busum of our perspective families. Good bye to the old corner once more. I never looks at it, Simy, but

what I remembers that night. There's where you lay, right up in that corner, like a reg'lar bundle of nothin', as I may say. Ah, that was a night, that was!"

Timothy was one of those curious specimens of a curious race—about one specimen of which is generally to be found in every parish—who seem to have entered into a compact with nature, by which it is stipulated, that, in consideration of their never looking young, they shall, on the other hand, never look particularly old; and hence at any given period of their existence, they naturally stand good for any age varying from sixteen to sixty; and at all times entirely defy conjecture to fix anything like a definite term to their past existence among sublunary things. The Timothy of to-day was essentially the Timothy of ten years ago; and nothing short of the strong logical reason that existed for the belief that he was really and *bona fide* ten years advanced towards the grave, could have made any one credit for a moment, that so much as a day had passed over his tight little head.

The reader will possibly have observed that the same, or indeed any portion thereof, could not be said of the weasen little atom of mortality which he bore away in his arms on that memorable night. Time and care, with a little appropriate assistance on the part of nature, had transformed the helpless little parcel of embryo organic substances, that could be wrapped in a shawl and dropped in a corner, or smothered in a cradle, or hugged to death, or dropped in a pond, at the will and mercy and caprice of the world generally, into a smart, well-shaped, intelligent little reality, in the midst of a stern and busy world, who could come to the rescue of his friends and benefactors, and assist to drive the spectre Poverty—the champion foe of the race—from the door, where the strength, the sinews, the intelligence of a score more years had failed. Such are the strange anomalies of this strange world.

Reaching the Black Friar's Road, they turned into the New Cut, and thence into a narrow, dark, dilapidated street, reeking with filth and misery, and swarming with the squalid representatives of the next generation. The door of the house at which they brought up was open, and a motley collection of rags, and bones, and skin, and dirt, and incipient depravity, forming in the aggregate, the important personages just alluded to, and each of whom counted *one* in the census of the Christian world—were tumbling up and down the stairs, trampling on each other's fingers, tugging at each other's hair, thumping lustily at each other's face, lisping blasphemy they couldn't comprehend, stammering at half-acquired oaths, and crying and screaming, and hooting,—by way of a little innocent and child-like amusement.

Mr. Plumley's misfortunes had compelled him to take refuge amongst this class of Christians (your Christian philanthropists and your Christian legislators will have them all Christians,) much against his inclination. But for all classes of Christians society has its allotted localities, and its own peculiar and benevolent provisions. For your lordly Christian with the lordly patrimony, that would make ten thousand starving Christians very comfortable Christians indeed, who orders John the Christian flunkey to kick the Christian beggar off the door-step,—society's provisions are the most approved, in fact there is nothing in society's opinion too good for this most exemplary class of Christians. For your swindling Christians, who do business in a proper systematic manner, and prey upon the innocence, and credulity, and helplessness, of poor, honest, inoffensive Christians, and bring them in a proper systematic manner to beggary and starvation,—society has most wise and benevolent provisions—the gilded equipage, the marble mansion, and the "supple knee." For your low-minded, illiterate, vagabond, thievish Christian, who robs a solitary, unwary Christian of his purse, society has admirable provisions too—a case-hardening discipline and a blasted name, no refuge, and option's choice of a profession. But for your poor and unfortunate Christian—your large family Christian, who has been foolish enough to fall ill and out of work, and finds himself, as our Yankee Christians say, unable to "pay up"—society has *the* most wise and benevolent provisions. There is the typhus-tainted alley and the haunts of vice for his home and charnel-house, the free-school of vice and crime and misery for his babes, and the kicks and scoffs of all respectable and well-to-do Christians to assist him to withstand the temptations that surround him; all of which, having taken their natural Christianising effect, there is yet the gaol and the scaffold to complete the process for himself and his little ones.

Mr. Plumley's apartments were at the top of the house, and the contrast between them and and the neat little cottage in the Westminster Road was certainly melancholy enough. The furniture was old and rickety and dilapidated; and although it was arranged in the best pos-

sible order, and every thing was clean and "tidy," yet the very atmosphere was poverty; the cleanliness itself spoke poverty; the ghastly mockery of order proclaimed poverty; the rickety remains of old comforts stared you in the face and said, poverty,—there was a deep, satirical grin peering through all the cracks and rents that leered, poverty.

When Simon, with his friend, entered, Mrs. Plumley, who was engaged in some sort of needle-work, at once received him in her arms, and kissed and caressed him with all the affection of a mother.

The brightness of her smile had worn away, and she was much thinner in appearance, but in other respects she was the same lively, good-tempered, affectionate little creature as ever. Mr. Plumley was from home; but Miss Plumley—yes, alas! the Victim! there she sat, with her elbows on her knees, her chin in her hands, her eyes upon the fire, and melancholy in her heart. If the shadowy outline of three well-proportioned wrinkles on the forehead, an alarming retreat of the organs of vision towards the interior, hollow cheeks and prominent eyebrows, could say anything towards making up the sum of ten years' wear and tear, Miss Selina was most unquestionably ten years older, if a day.

But, seated beside Mrs. Plumley, on a little stool—or rather a wooden box, that served the purpose—was a third party. It was a little girl, apparently about eight years old. A beautiful child, with Mr. Plumley's eyes, Mrs. Plumley's hair—and beautiful hair it was, there can't be the least mistake about that—Mr. Plumley's nose, and all the sprightliness and goodness of both. She called Mrs. Plumley mother; and there is no doubt whatever, that Mrs. Plumley was proud to know that she was not called out of her name.

"Now, my darling," said Mrs. Plumley to Simon, as soon as she had kissed him and stroked his hair, and kissed him again; "sit down by the fire, by the side of Sissy, while I get the tea; for you must be perished, I'm sure you must. And so must you, Tim. Come up to the fire. Father will be home directly, and then we'll have some tea. You're a very good, dear, fellow, Tim," said Mrs. Plumley, turning her bright eyes kindly upon him; "and if it was'nt for you and my dear little darling boy, I'm sure I don't know—"

"I beg your pardon, mum," said Tim, modestly interposing; "but a fellow like me, as can't earn his own livin', which I aint done—not—not—well, I'm afeared to say how long—aint a hobject to be praised, mum. Simy—as I alus said, mum, I know, is a—a—why, a brick aint no name for him, mum, that's what it aint. But, as for me, why, I knows very well if I was to go back agen to the work'us', where I came from, why, I should be a doin' you a service; but still, I might be o' some good one day, mum, and as long as you'll allow me to remain——"

"Nonsense, Tim," said Mrs. Plumley. "How can you talk so, when you know that you and Simy have brought in all the money we've had to live upon, for the last six or seven months."

Miss Selina emitted a small sigh and shifted her position.

"Hark! there's father," cried little Sissy, darting to the door. Simon was at her heels in an instant, and they both met Mr. Plumley on the landing.

He was not the red-faced, robust, hearty young plumber, who had rocked the cradle, and danced to and fro, and thumped the table in the little back-parlor in his own cottage ten years before. No; time and poverty and care had indeed used him cruelly. There was the good-natured, manly countenance still, but it was gaunt, and pale, and haggard, and full to the brim of silent grief. His body was bent forward, and he limped along with the assistance of a stick, like an enfeebled old man.

"By George, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley, as his little daughter clung affectionately to his arm, "these children 'll do for me. Flesh and blood can't stand it. Why did'nt I have two ungain ones, that I could'nt go for to love? Then I could a stood it. But," he added, with a hand resting affectionately on the head of each, and the tears standing in his eyes. "But look here; here's children! By George, Lizy," he said, bursting fairly into tears, "*here's* children! It's too much, Lizy, that's what it is." So saying, he folded them in his arms, and covered them with kisses.

Mrs. Plumley went forward and put her arms tenderly round his neck, and, imprinting a kiss on his manly cheek, led him to the table like a child.

"Timothy," said Mr. Plumley, after he had a little composed himself, "you're a fine fellow, Tim. No one ever asked you to go and do it, but you did it of your own accord, that's what you did; and if we don't live to repay you for it, why—why—by George, it'll go hard with us."

Timothy was about to say something in deprecation of such expressions of feeling on the part of his master, but a sharp knuckle rap at the door interrupted him. The rap was fol-

lowed by the appearance of a chubby little countenance, mounting a chubby little pair of whiskers, a pair of quick-rolling eyes, an obtrusive little nose, and an unobtrusive little chin; which kept smiling and nodding upon the company in the most facetious manner, at an elevation of about five feet six inches from the ground.

"Oh its Mr. Albosh. Come in Mr. Albosh," said Mr. Plumley.

The remainder of Mr. Albosh, which at once followed the head into the room, comprised a very slender little body, two very slender little legs, and an unusual amount of mechanical action. He was mounted in a light, short crop coat, ditto vest, nankeens and white neckcloth; and, in the faint light of the candle on the table, looked a very fair specimen of midsummer respectability. But, although Mr. Albosh had emerged from what was essentially a "nipping and an eager air," he didn't look cold. No; from his general effect, any one would have said that Mr. Albosh was not cold.

"Just stepped in to say, how d'ye do," said Mr. Albosh. "Anything turned up, Plumley?"

"Nothing, I'm sorry to say," replied Mr. Plumley. "Wont you take a seat, Mr. Albosh?"

"No, no, no, thank you. Dont disturb—pray dont," said Mr. Albosh, waving a small hand in deprecation of the general movement. "No; can't stop—can't indeed," added Mr. Albosh, while at the same time he seated himself in the chair just vacated by Timothy, drew his left foot over his right knee, held on firmly with both hands, and proceeded to smile benignly round upon things generally.

"I'm sorry we've nothing better to offer you, Mr. Albosh," said Mr. Plumley; "but if you'll take a cup of tea with us, as it is, I'm sure we shall all be—"

"No, no, no; not at all, my dear friend. You're very kind, but can't stop—can't indeed," interposed Mr. Albosh, with another wave of the hand, and a more direct concentration of the smile.

"Oh do, Mr. Albosh," urged Mrs. Plumley. "Lizy, dear, get a cup for Mr. Albosh."

"Now really, Mrs. Plumley, I beg you wont," said Mr. Albosh, "I do indeed," added Mr. Albosh, making a move towards the table, with the sweetest of sublunary smiles. "Positively now I entreat," said Mr. Albosh, drawing close to the table, "I entreat that you wont. I assure you, Mrs. Plumley, I ought not, I ought not indeed," added Mr. Albosh, taking the tea, and helping himself to bread and butter, with unaffected grace. "Business—business, Mrs. Plumley, before pleasure. Miss Plumley, I beg your pardon, I hope you are quite well?"

"Not very well, I thank you," returned Miss Plumley, blandly. "What with the weather, and the cirkimstances, it's not seprising that a person naturally delicate and sensitive should be a victim to ill health. This is not what I've been used to, Mr. Albosh."

Now it was easy to perceive that the entrance of Mr. Albosh had not been without its effect upon the sensitive susceptibilities of the victimised spinster. At the first appearance of the head from behind the door-jamb, she had passed straightway from a state of blank *de*pression to a state of lively *ex*pression. She had arranged both her collar and her choler, smoothed down her hair, straightened her waist, stiffened her back, and called up a smile.

"My dear Miss Plumley," said Mr. Albosh, trying to banish the smile under an appropriate cloud of grief, "it touches me to the quick, to see and to know the melancholy circumstances in which you are placed. That your noble-hearted brother should be placed in such a lamentable position, is most melancholy to contemplate. If it had been at any other time, I might have rendered him a little assistance; but really, the very peculiar position of my affairs, at the present moment, entirely precludes the possibility of my coming to the rescue in any shape or form. In fact, I may say, that our circumstances are, to a certain extent, analagous. I am just in that peculiar position, at the present moment, that for the want of a few few pounds—a mere bagatelle, I may say—fifty or sixty pounds—I am going headlong to ruin."

"Dear me, is it possible?" said Miss Plumley.

"Yes," pursued Mr. Albosh, "I suppose I've got one of the finest inventions in the manure line that was ever thought of. In fact, a mine of wealth, sir; and yet, for the want of a few pounds—a mere bagatelle, I may say, there it is!" and Mr. Albosh threw up his head and his hands, to signify where.

"Dear me," said all the Plumleys together.

"Yes," continued Mr. Albosh, "and unfortunately, there is the whole of my capital sunk in that Californian affair. The great "Californian Gold Mining and Quartz Crushing Company. Not but what that must ultimately be a paying concern. I look forward to a dividend of fifty or sixty per cent. from that speculation, as a dead certainty. In fact, if anything should happen, that that should prove a failure, why, I

may say that I'm a ruined man. But I think we've guarded against that. The shareholders have sent out their own agent to look after their interests, and we expect his full report by the next steamer; when I hope the shares will run up, and enable me to sell out to the extent of a hundred pounds, or so, just to carry out this other affair."

"I should have thought," suggested Mr. Plumley, "you could have got some capitalist to advance the—"

"Capitalist!" exclaimed Mr. Albosh, with a smile of horror. "Ah, there's the rub! Once let a capitalist get hold of a thing of that sort, and you're floored—floored, sir!"

"How very sad," said Miss Selina.

"Sad, indeed," said Mr. Albosh. "But Plumley," he added, shifting his position nearer the fire, after disposing of the fourth cup of tea and a whole plateful of bread and butter. "But Plumley, it is really a lamentable thing, that a man of your experience and ability, should be able to get nothing whatever to do. Dear me, cant we think of a plan of some sort to put you in the way of doing *some*thing—why bless me, if it was only a trifle, it would be better than nothing. Let me see. You've been round to all the houses in your line, of course? Yes, well—let me see. You've tried all the public places, too?—yes, why, of course, you must have. Well, I dont know, I'm sure, what can be done. Unless we could manage to get up a memorial to the Home Secretary, and just represent to him the deplorable condition of the working classes at the present moment. Well, I must just think that over, Plumley. By the by, why dont you emigrate?"

"Well, the want of means is the only objection," said Mr. Plumley. "Even that takes a little money; or else I had some thought of trying it."

"Oh, had you, dear? Oh, how delightful that would be!" cried his wife; to whom this was a new idea, and therefore necessarily delightful.

"Which is the best place to go to, Mr. Albosh?"

"Well, for my part, I think Canada. That's a fine country—in fact, I may say, that Canada is a glorious country. There there's room for every one. A man of your ability there, Plumley, would make a fortune in no time. You cant help it. I'd undertake to say that in less than three years you would be a man worth your thousands of pounds. Mind you this is on good authority. There's no difficulty there; everything is just as straightforward as can be. Besides, if a man wants money there all he has got to do is to borrow it right off, and of course there he is. Then you are not compelled to stick to one thing in a country like that, you know. Go farming. You can have your one, two, or three hundred acres, just for a touch of your hat, as I may say—not a copper to pay for it. Well you've nothing more to do, but just to set to work, clear your land, fence it in, run up your shanty, put in your crops, and there you are, established for life."

"Oh how delightful that would be, George!" exclaimed Mrs. Plumley. "Is provisions cheap, Mr. Albosh?"

"O, a mere bagatelle," returned Mr. Albosh. "Need scarcely cost you anything. You would of course have your gun; very well, you just go into the woods whenever you like, and knock down your two or three dozen wild geese, or pheasants, or perhaps partridges,—or in fact, anything you please. Oh, a mere bagatelle."

"And what sort of a climate is it, Mr. Albosh?"

"Oh, magnificent. Cant be equalled. Sun shining all the year round. It is rather cold at times, I believe, but then it is so thoroughly brilliant that I believe a great-coat is regarded by the Canadians as a kind of phenomenon—a sort of thing they don't understand. To tell you the truth, I've some serious thoughts about that country myself. The very place for a man like me. Suppose I had this discovery I'm speaking of in Canada. Well, it would be just in this way: I should go to the Government and say to them, now, you are essentially an agricultural nation—the prosperity of agriculture is the prosperity of the nation. Very well. Now, I have a discovery with such and such advantages, and requiring so and so—a mere bagatelle to you, I may say—to carry it out. Well, sir, I would undertake to say that in less than a week I would have that thing in operation, under the immediate auspices of the Government. That's the way a man gets on in a country like that. Plumley, my advice to you is to get to Canada."

Mr. Albosh, who appeared to have become completely oblivious of his business engagements, continued to rattle away at this rate for two or three hours. When he rose and took his departure, the closing of the door behind him was the signal for a general Plumley exclamation, from little Lizy up to big Selina, to the effect that, after all said and done, Canada must be a delightful country. And every way and means and manœuvre, possible and impos-

possible, reasonable and unreasonable, through which the faintest chance presented itself of procuring the wherewith to escape to that land of plenty and sunshine, was discussed at full length; and after a full and complete list of all and every the friends and relations and likely acquaintances of both branches of the Plumley family had been made out in a bold text hand, it was agreed that, as that was the only source, (although Mr. Plumley said that, by George, it touched him to the quick, that's what it did,) their assistance and co-operation should be solicited, and that every nerve should be forthwith strained, with the view to carry the project to a satisfactory issue.

The Plumley family retired to rest that night with lighter hearts and happier minds than they had carried to their couches for many a long day, in the hopeful anticipation of ere long beholding their sorrows and troubles dissolved and forgotten and lost in the happy sunshine of the "Land of the West."

CHAPTER IV.

THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

Onward he flies! onward, onward, through the jostling crowds, that rumble to and fro,—now in the midst of the turbulent stream that rolls along the footway, now in the road, dashing through the labyrinth of wheels and hoofs and whips and tumult, with his hands upon his ears, his eyes glaring vacantly before him, and a death-pallor on his cheek,—on, on he flies! A thousand eyes are upon him, the motley crowds murmur as they pass, and point the finger at the fugitive; but onward he flies, onward, onward!—the voice of Conscience is behind him!

It was the man who accosted the child shoeblack, as we saw in the last chapter. He rushed across the bridge, dashed through street after street, with his hands still clasped upon his ears, and with the same wild and terrified appearance, until he turned into St. Paul's Churchyard; when he slackened his pace, removed his hands, and became gradually more composed. At the bottom of Ludgate Hill his eye fell upon an individual who was proceeding in the same direction, a few paces before him. He instantly quickened his speed, and, muttering indistinctly to himself, seized the man by the arm.

"Ah, Bolton!" he said, turning fiercely upon him; "you have left the office. What news?"

The individual was so bewildered by the extraordinary wildness of the other's manner, that he stood gazing at him in astonishment for several seconds before he was able to reply.

"No news," he said at length. "Why, what's the matter?" he added disengaging his arm, which the other still grasped as though half unconscious of what he was doing. "You look as wild and frightened as a child that's found out. Why didn't you come down to the office? I've been expecting you all the afternoon."

"Ay, why didn't I!" said the other, speaking more to himself than to his companion. "Why didn't I! What is the day of the month, Bolton?"

"The twentieth."

"I know that," he returned, looking fiercely about him, and again seizing his companion by the arm. "I have just learnt that, Bolton, although I had forgotten it up to the last half-hour. Why didn't I! Come, come this way," he added taking the other's arm and hurrying him away in the direction of the Strand, "and I will tell you *why*. Ay, Why didn't I? Why was I dragged across that bridge? I had no business there. What did I want there? and yet I was dragged there,—dragged like a child without a will. It *is* the 20th, Bolton, you say? Yes; I know that now. But as I came down this pavement two hours ago I tried in vain to recollect even the month. Look, look!" he exclaimed pointing to a poor, miserable creature with a child in her arms, who was coming towards them. "She is going to accost us! Give her something, Bolton, and let her go. For God's sake let her go! Why, man, I say give her what she wants, and send her off!"

The extraordinary excitement into which he threw himself, so completely disconcerted his

companion, that he was twice as long disposing of the woman as he would otherwise have been.

"Why, Blackbourn," he said, when the beggar had disappeared, "what on earth has got hold of you? You are a pretty follow to be such a faithful servant of the Old One. If he serves you out like this, I should cut his acquaintance."

As he turned away his head after this remark, there was a smile of satisfaction on his countenance, that must have been a very distant connection of the sympathetic.

"Bolton," said the other, turning his fierce eyes upon him, "there is a fascination even in this; madness has a fascination in it. It is an intoxication of the soul that cries, more, more! while you are still whirling in its delirium. I have been for ever flying from it, and yet for ever pursuing it from a child. But come; I must have some excitement to-night—any thing. What is going on? Here, stop, Bolton—billiards! —this will do, come this way."

So saying, he hurried his companion into a billiard-saloon that happened to be close by; and here they played and drank, and drank and played, in whirl of excitement, for two or three hours. But the "intoxicated soul" was not at rest. Every now and then its victim let fall his cue, stamped upon the ground, and, mumbling to himself, darted his fierce eyes towards the door, as if something in that direction annoyed him. At length he dashed his cue to the opposite end of the room, stamped like a maniac with his foot, and, throwing a terrible glance round the room, exclaimed, "Why must they jingle that accursed bell? Can't some one stop it? Come, come, Bolton," he added, suppressing his excitement and taking his friend by the arm; "I can't stand this jingle,—no bells to night; it calls up the old ghost. Come; somewhere else—we've had enough of this."

They regained the street, and hurried along through the sleet and rain that was now falling fast, until they turned into Covent Garden market. Here a gang of idlers and vagabonds had assembled to witness the progress, towards Bow Street, of a miserable little child-thief, whom a zealous and active member of "the Force" had just succeeded in capturing in the very fact of devouring a whole saveloy which he had just purloined from a neighbouring cookshop, while the inmates were engaged in discussing their supper in sweet unconsciousness of wrong.

"Look, Bolton," said he of the intoxicated soul, pointing to the little thief; "do you see that boy?"

"Well," said Bolton.

"Did I ever tell you my history?"

"No; but I know a little of it."

"Ay, well; I wonder what the urchin has been at. What has the boy done," he said, accosting the policeman.

"Robbery, robbery," replied the functionary, giving the boy a confirmatory shake, and throwing a resolute glance into the midst of the assembled vagabonds to inspire them with a proper estimation of his thorough invincibility in the event of a rescue being contemplated.

"Ah, he's very young," said Blackbourn.

"Young!" said the invinsible authority, to a certain extent thunderstruck at the thought. "If you'd seed him do it, I think you'd a said he was something of a old un. Lor bless you! about as old as you or me. There, no resistance, you young cut-throat, you."

"Bah!" cried Blackbourn relapsing into his former humour and turning hastily away. "Come, Bolton. Where now? Any where; where shall it be?"

Bolton, who had just been examining a play-bill with some apparent satisfaction, nodded to himself and squeezed his hands together and winked silently on one side, as much as to assure himself that that would do, and remarked:

"Come; Drury Lane's open—what do you say to that? Here we are, close upon it—its better than nothing."

Blackbourn offered no objection, and the other hurried him along, keeping him in conversation, and carefully diverting his attention from the play-bills that were posted on the walls, until they were seated in a private box.

The piece was a melodrama of "thrilling interest," in which a wronged maiden and a foundling boy were the leading features. But it soon made its way to the intoxicated soul of Blackbourn. During the first scene he sat pale and trembling, and seemed to be engaged in a violent struggle to keep his agitated soul in subjection. His companion sat beside him and watched him narrowly, while every now and then he reached his head forward to examine the contents of a box something nearer the centre on the opposite side, which consisted of an elderly lady and gentleman, and two young ladies of decidedly prepossessing appearance. He sat so as to prevent his companion, as much as possible, from seeing the occupants of this box, while he squeezed and twisted his hands

together, nodded and smiled confidently to himself, and seemed on the whole to derive considerable satisfaction from the general aspect of affairs.

During the second scene, Blackbourn's agitation increased. His lip quivered, the perspiration stood upon his forehead, his head moved to and fro as if impelled by an unseen hand, and it was evident there was a powerful commotion going on within him; but he nevertheless appeared rivetted to the spot, and scarcely removed his eyes from the stage for a single moment, until the scene closed; when he suddenly sprang to his feet, and, seizing his companion with both hands, exclaimed,

"Confusion upon it! Why did we come here? Why did we come here, I say?"

"Hold!" said Bolton, "do you know what you are about? Do you see who is in the opposite box, there? Look, the whole family of the McCamerons."

As he directed the other's attention to the box, he turned away his head, and a malicious smile played about his features, while his hands came together, and moved silently round and round each other until they appeared to have become amalgamated into one.

"Good God!" exclaimed Blackbourn, as his eye fell upon the occupants of the box. "This is the devil's night! come—enough of this!"

He turned round, rushed out of the box, and regained the street, followed by Bolton, rubbing his hands and nodding secret satisfaction to himself.

"Come, come," said Blackbourn hurrying away towards the Strand; "there is only one solace to night, only one. She may still be up. Home, Bolton, home! Will you come?"

Bolton complied, and they immediately hailed a cab and gave the word, to Berkeley Square.

They drew up at one of the darkest and smokiest of that smoked-out collection of departing excellence, and dismissed the cab. The door was opened by a long, thin, smoked-out servant in tights and slippers, who performed his office with profound respect until he found himself a little in the rear, when he winked familiarly on Mr. Bolton, and nodded towards his master with the assistance of his forefinger, as much as to intimate that he was perfectly posted up on the whole affair.

"Has Miss Alice retired yet, William?" said Blackbourn.

"Miss Alice have retired, sir," reply William respectfully.

"Hem, ah. What noise is that!" cried Blackbourn, turning and laying a hand on Bolton's shoulder.

"I'm afraid that were Jane laughing, sir," replied the respectful William.

"Bah! Tell Jane to *laugh* if she must laugh, and not to scream. Come, Bolton. William, glasses in the library."

"Yes, sir," said William; and when he had winked a second time on Mr. Bolton, and poked an imaginary rib in his master's side with his forefinger, he retired respectfully.

"Bolton, you will excuse me for a few moments," said Blackbourn as soon as they had entered the library. "I must see her. A few moments and you will find me a different being."

He ascended the stairs to the second floor and rapped gently at one of the room doors. Receiving no answer, he opened it carefully and went in. He evidently expected to find that its occupant, who was a beautiful little girl, apparently about eleven or twelve years of age, had retired to rest; and he started in surprise when he saw her asleep, with her head resting on a little miniature table which she had drawn to the bed-side. He closed the door, and, heaving a long breath, as if he felt suddenly relieved from a heavy load, he said,

"Gone!"

An extraordinary change appeared to come over him. His features, which had been partially distorted, and had worn a wild and domoniac expression throughout the evening, became instantly calm and composed. He moved across the room with a light and steady step, and his whole demeanor was altogether as mild as it had hitherto been boisterous. There seemed to be a holy influence pervading the very atmosphere of the apartment, that spoke peace to his intoxicated and turbulent soul. He sat beside the child and bent his eyes in silence upon her for a considerable time. A profound calm had overspread his features, and, so completely was the demon dispelled from his mind, that he almost looked an object of admiration, rather than of terror, as he bent his dark, expressive eyes on the sleeping angel before him, and drank of the balmy unction that flowed from her innocent being.

He was a man of some thirty-six years of age tall and well proportioned, and might almost have been regarded as handsome. There was however a withering expression in his large, dark eye, and a singular contraction on one side of the countenance, which left it a sterile blank under all emotions, and rendered it almost

impossible to contemplate his features with any feelings of pleasure.

After he had sat beside her for some time, motionless and in silence, he gently raised her little hand from the table and laid it upon his own. She started, and woke.

"Alice," he said with some approach to affection.

The color had left her cheek, and she trembled as if with cold. She raised her pensive little eyes to his, and a melancholy beauty beamed through her features as she gazed on him in silence. She tried to smile, but there was an unseen power within her that seemed to forbid her.

"Alice," he said again.

She moved her lips as if attempting to speak, but the same power had possession of her tongue, and no sound escaped her. There they sat gazing at each other in sad, melancholy silence; no words escaped them, and yet their souls held strange communion together, and the wild intoxication of the one was subdued, while the holy calm and innocence of the other was ruffled and disturbed.

While Blackbourn was thus engaged, Bolton and the respectful William were improving the time by enlarging upon the confidence silently, but no doubt voluminously, expressed in the language of the eye behind their master's coat-tails in the hall a moment before.

Bolton had established himself in an easy attitude, with his legs crossed, his elbow resting on the mantle-piece, and his coat-tails dangling against the bars of the grate. He was a long, spare, cadaverous-looking personage, with exceedingly prominent points; and on the whole suggested the idea of a bag of smoked parchment, crammed somewhat indiscriminately with a heterogenous collection of bones and sawdust.

As soon as his master was gone, William entered, placed his thumb upon his nose, poked the air with his forefinger in the direction his superior had taken, and proceeded to say,

"Bocus!" which, being interpreted, signifieth that the estimation in which that individual was held by him was infinitely small.

"Anything new?" asked Bolton.

"No, nothing in this quarter," replied William.

"Only the new victim. He's bent upon that, I believe. I've watched him to the house almost every day for the last month. Poor thing; she's a first rater I believe too. I suppose it's hardly in our line to interfere tho', is it?"

"No, I am afraid not," replied the other; "unless it would torment him a bit,—but I don't think it would. He's not soft on that point. From what I've seen of him for the last ten years, I think there is nothing like allowing him to complete his villainy,—that is when it touches him. If I hadn't been satisfied of that, and hadn't seen what a living curse he is to himself, I think I should have mustered the courage to have got up an explosion before this, although he *is* such a savage tiger to deal with. I've just seen *her*. We dropped into Drury Lane as we came along, and she happened to be there."

"Ah! poor thing," said William, putting his head outside the door to ascertain that the tiger was not within hearing. "Well, I think, as you say, he pays the reckoning pretty well as he goes; for if ever I see a man move about with the rack on him, that's him. Only think of the perpetual torment that that poor dear little creature must be to him. Just look at that. There's as perfect a little beauty as ever breathed, with as sweet a little voice—why, Lor bless you, she charms me every time I hear her speak; and yet just fancy, that she never was able to speak so much as one individual word to him since she first laid eyes on him. And what's more, I've noticed that she cant even smile when she's looking at him—try as she will, she cant do it: aint that a judgment for you? It strikes me I never heard anything to beat it." *

"I tell you what, Bill," said Bolton, "I look upon that as the most awful thing I ever heard of. I've thrown myself away—I know that, through sheer desperation perhaps, and I shall never rest until I've done what I've sworn to; but if I had a judgment like that to haunt me, I believe I should go mad—thoroughly mad, Bill. It must be fearful. He is a pretty tough piece of stuff, but I think he's going that way fast."

"That's right enough," rejoind William. "That's what it'll end in, I believe. Well, I suppose that will suit you as well as any thing else. You've got your oath, as you say, and I've got my pledge. Your's is a sort of deadly revenge, and mine a protection like. But some how or other they both work one way. I promised I would take care of her, and I'll give up my life but what I don't. And I suppose you'll

* There was a child born in America in the State of Massachusetts who was never able to speak to his father, although he found no difficulty in doing so to any one else.

do the other. You've been ten years holding on to it; and that looks as if you meant it."

"I'm coming to it by degrees," said Bolton; "there will be an explosion before long." And he squeezed his hands together, and winked and nodded silently to himself as if he were quite satisfied with the prospect.

The returning footsteps of Blackbourn at this point interrupted them, and William instantly relapsed into the respectful, and quitted the room.

"There is no virtue in this wine for me to night," said Blackbourn, who soon began to return to his former humour after rejoining his companion. "Let us try some brandy,—brandy, Bolton."

"With all my heart," said Bolton.

"Will you ring—no, no, stop; I'll call."

"By the by," said Bolton when the brandy had completely restored the other to all his former wildness, "what connection had that ragged little thief with your history, Blackbourn? You were saying something about your history?"

"Ah! I'm a strange being!" replied Blackbourn. "You know that," he added glaring fiercely round the room. "You know that, Bolton. Well, well, my history you say. Very well, we must beguile the time to night with something. But it must be short,—no long doleful stories for me to night. Come, there's the brandy, man. If you are as proof to it as I am, we may drain the cellar without knowing it. Well, Bolton, the first I ever knew of my existence was to find myself a little ragged, letterless boy, like the young thief we saw to night, roving about the streets of Whitechapel, picking pockets all day, and engaging in all descriptions of minor dissipations in the evening. I was the king of a small gang of similar urchins —I was the master spirit; I ruled them, terrified them, and was idolized by them. One of the things most prominent in my memory at that time, is my being selected by a respectable old man—a preacher in the neighbourhood—as an object of his special attention. He had nearly completed his work with me—I remember the day well; I look upon it as the one sacred spot in my existence, the only moment in my whole life that I can ever look back upon, and I almost believe my heart has bled in plain reality, before now, when I have recalled it. I had a small valueless bund[illegible]on my arm, I had left my unfortunate litt[illegible]associates, I had turned my back upon my o[illegible]haunts, I thought for ever. I was hurrying [illegible] to get fairly quit of them, and I remember the feeling of grateful pride and pleasure with which I moved through the crowd as I thought I was no longer a thief; when I was suddenly seized by the arm, and on looking around I found myself in the custody of an officer. I was taken before a justice, recognised as the thief in a street robbery, and sent to the house of correction. I left it what you have always known me,—a confirmed rogue and vagabond. I left it, with a black spot upon my soul that has stood out prominently before me, from that moment, to accuse me to myself as a condemned outlaw. It has been a black ghost hanging about me ever since; it has withered every better purpose, destroyed every kindly principle that ever entered into my nature, and, whenever a thought or an emotion of anything good has influenced my mind, its black visage has glared upon me with the fatal sentence engraven upon its features, 'a condemned outlaw.' It was one of those early impressions upon a child's susceptible soul, that can never be effaced."

There was a wild distress in his manner as he delivered himself of this, that showed he was in earnest, and felt and believed what he said. "It seemed to me," he continued, "that fate had carved out the road I was to follow, and I never entertained a serious thought of attempting to avoid it. When I took to read and to study, my accusing Familiar was beside me, and I studied only that I might become the more accomplished rogue. When I entered into honest employment, the black spot of my existence went before me, and I became honest for the time, only that I might qualify myself for a rogue of higher order. I was always insatiably ambitious, and my nature revolted at that which was petty and contemptible even in villainy. Whether I was born naturally clever, or whether there has always been some external influence actuating me, and whether I should have been equally successful in another channel, I don't know; but certain it is, that I never attempted anything villainous and bad that I was not able to accomplish beyond all my expectations. It seems to work out itself without any effort on my part, it matters not what it is. Bolton," he cried falling back in his chair and looking fiercely at his companion, "did you ever feel *this*, that I'm about to tell you. Whenever I have a piece of villainy in hand, I see it *all*, to its final completion, stand out before me, as though it were painted on a canvas and carried perpetually before my eyes; and above it, where its

last scene closes, hovers a black demon, a thing of tortures, into whose arms I fall as soon as I have done the devil's bidding. But it is strange, Bolton, that that object, and that alone, is the fascination that draws me onward step by step. I see that, and only that, as the object for which I rack my brains and toil day after day. There it hangs, and fascinates me on, over every obstacle; barrier after barrier gives way before the desperation with which I struggle towards it; until the work is completed, the object is gained, and I reach the goal for which I have struggled, to find that I have conjured up a new demon in my brain, that I can never again expel. I never get rid of it. I am to-night under the influence of one of these devils; and it was ten years ago that—hark!" he cried springing to his feet and clapping his hands to his ears; "who's doing that?"

It was the hall-bell.

"Mr. Growley, sir," said William, presenting himself in explanation.

"Something moving," said Bolton, seeing that Blackbourn glanced at him enquiringly, as he resumed his seat.

Mr. Growley was evidently a man possessing but a small amount of prejudice in favor of the usages of polite society. This at once became abundantly evident from the uninvited appearance of a large bony head, embellished with a fruitful crop of red whisker, loose red hair, and pimples,—the private property of that individual. The head preceded a large bony body to match, decorated in brown, with a dash of yellow about the neck: the whole being mounted on a pair—or rather two legs—the one extending by a series of obtuse angles to the usual termination on the ground, while the other stopped short some seven or eight inches above it, requiring an ingenious appliance of art and iron to carry it to its proper destination.

William having retired respectfully, after forwarding a telegram, with the joint assistance of his forefinger and nose, to his confidential friend Mr. Bolton; Blackbourn, addressing himself to Mr. Growley, said,

"Well?"

Mr. Growley nodded to both gentlemen, seated himself between them, poured out half a tumbler of brandy, and said, as he carried it to his lips,

"I suppose you've heard?"

"No; what?" said Blackbourn.

"Come, out with it, whatever it is?" added Bolton.

"She's arrived at Liverpool," said Mr Growley.

"Ay?"

"Just telegraphed; and the whole thing's blown," said Mr. Growley. "So, our grand Californian mining and quartz-crushing humbug is finally crushed at last; and if we escape without getting finally crushed with it, why it is more luck than I look for."

Mr. Growley sipped his brandy in perfect composure, notwithstanding his melancholy apprehensions; but the others, and especially Bolton, seemed to view the affair from a different aspect.

"What's to be done?" enquired Bolton.

"Well," said Mr. Growley, raising his glass and examining its contents with one eye; "I'm off. This country has been warm for some time past, but now its getting decidedly hot. I'm off. I think I shall take to rural simplicity and innocence in the backwoods, for a change: ha ha!"

"Bah!" said Blackbourn, starting to his feet and pacing the room to and fro. "It is not time for that. What are you afraid of?—a few paltry penniless fellows in the shape of one-pound shareholders? Bah! I don't run away from such pursuers as that. We must manage them. Call a special meeting at once; don't lose a moment. Lead them to expect some extraordinary intelligence; and leave the rest to me."

"I'm more inclined for the bolt," said Growley, playing with the loose end of his neckerchief.

"I think it would be best," echoed Bolton.

"I happen to know that it is not," rejoined Blackbourn, scowling from one to the other. "My name must stand good for another week or two yet. There is another matter in hand: the stakes are too large to lose. I must have three weeks at least."

"I tell you what, Blackbourn," said Mr. Growley, "you had better leave that job alone. Not that it makes any difference to me, but just take a friend's advice."

"So I think," added Bolton.

"What!" said Blackbourn, clutching the back of his chair with both hands and throwing back his head with a wild air, "is this what you have learnt of me in ten years? Bolton, I never retreat. I saw her to-night, and over her hung the canvas of her destiny—a dark shadow was above it!—I know the end. I'll tell you when it is time to fly. It is not yet. Do what I tell you to-morrow, and I'll vouch for the result."

"Well, I suppose it's got to be done," said

Mr. Growely finishing his brandy; "but I tell you what, Blackbourn, if you lead us into a trap it wont be the best job you ever did."

"You know the value I attach to threats," replied Blackbourn. "But there is no trap; I tell you I can keep all straight for three weeks, if I don't baulk them altogether. Will that do for you?"

Both gentlemen seemed to think, after a little reflection, that it would do; and Bolton having received intimation, by means of sundry nudges in the side, and several jerks of the large, red head appertaining to Mr. Growley, towards the door, that that gentleman wished to retire with him in company, they agreed to perform their part of the business as dictated, and, after a little further discussion of the subject, they quitted the house together.

Blackbourn stood for some time in the centre of the room, running his hand mechanically through his hair, while the violent compression of his lips, and the wild agony that shot from his eye, showed that his tormenting Familiar was returning, and gradually whirling his soul into a new delirium. It was an unseen terror, an incorporeal foe—he had no weapons to combat it, and his giant spirit, that would have defied an army of men in as desperate a cause, fell prostrate and trembling before it. There he stood until his body writhed to and fro, and every limb trembled, and every fibre was dilated with terror: he could resist it no longer. He stamped upon the ground, struck his forehead with his clinched hand, and, snatching up the lamp from the table, rushed furiously away to that chamber of innocence, into which this tormentor seemed forbidden to follow him.

He stands within the influence of her innocent spirit; he gazes upon those calm and placid features, that beam with the purity of heaven,—the demon has fled him, the fire of his brain is quenched, and a profound calm has fallen upon his intoxicated soul.

CHAPTER V.

NEW FACES, AND NEW PROSPECTS.

Now, at about this period of the world's history the canker-worm of corruption had crept into the very heart of the political, financial, and moral institutions of Old England, and a state of unqualified rottenness and political depravity had obtained. And such being the lamentable position of affairs, the question naturally suggested itself to every well-regulated mind, and every well-regulated mind naturally put the question emphatically to every other well-regulated mind, 'What was to be done?' When a great and glorious response was straightway heard to proceed from the councils of a noble institution then and at that time assembled within the confines and under the shadow of a stronghold known to the public generally as the Crouching Lion, and situate in the immediate vicinity of the New Cut, in the Boro'! The "Lion-at-bay Discussion and National Protection Society" was a great institution. It had for its object the total and universal amelioration of oppressed humanity, by no less an achievement than the entire uprooting and remodelling of the entire British Constitution. It was composed of a formidable league of no less than fifteen resolute men; men having a just appreciation of the rights of humanity, and their own wrongs—men inspired intuitively, so to speak, with the governing principle—men who were the true champions of freedom—repudiating the bugbear of laws generally, going in for community of goods, ignoring the physical degradation of manual labor, despising servility, and living on their wits.

The discussion Forum:—A long room, with a long table in the centre, covered with pipe-clay, glass, and pewter-pots; the requisite complement of Windsor chairs, and sundry graphic delineations of pugilistic warfare on the walls. Full of smoke, foul air, and the voice of the Society's champion—who is certainly a small man for the embodiment of so great an idea. He stands at an elevation of not more than five feet two, inclusive of three inches of perpendicular hair that shoots up in a direct line towards the heavens, from the summit of a conical ball of polished masonry (at least that

is what it looks like) which serves the purposes of a head. There is a total absence of linen and nap about his personal arrangements. His coat is buttoned close up to his chin, his nether garments strapped tightly under his boots, and, with the great length of head and hair protruding above his coat-collar, he looks extremely like a dwarf specimen of the human genus in a state of seed. He stands at the head of the table, and the other members of the institution, who are somewhat doubtful-looking personages, arrayed in a combination of fustian, corduroy, and polished black, are seated around it. At the bottom of the table is the vice-chairman, who is an equally small arrangement, and by no means imposing either in his personal appearance or his oratorical powers, which latter he principally displays in improving on the leader's remarks, with short, pithy observations such as, 'That's reg'lar plain, that is,' 'By George, if that aint reg'lar fust-rate and no mistake,' and so fourth; from which it would perhaps not require a very great stretch of the imagination to arrive at the conclusion that it is no less a personage than our eccentric little acquaintance, Timothy: that proud position having been conferred upon him in virtue of a strong friendship existing between the champion leader and himself; an act which, unfortunately for the good promise of the integrity of the Society, when it should come to be invested with power, was in itself a flagrant example of favoritism.

"I tell you, gentlemen," said the champion clinching the idea, before it was produced, with a thump on the table, "the inscrutable pertinacity of the minions of power is whirling the sacridotal fundaments of constitutional freedom into incomprehensible ambiguity (cheers). Look at the working classes! Look at the masses, I may say! And tell me if the soul of freedom aint crushed into infinitisimal atoms by the sacridotal ascendency of a concatination of vampires? (hear, hear). Well, then, are men of intelligence, men of perspicuity, to bend the supple knee before the contumacious ascendancy of an inscrutable hallucination of tyranical phantoms? (a voice, Down with the Pope!) I dont know what that gentleman means by, Down with the Pope," continued the champion doubtfully; "but if he means to elucidate the fundamental principles of homogeneous action, I cordially acquiesce in the full spirit of the declaration (cheers). Gentlemen, we must rouse ourselves. We must act together and with resolution; and when the slumbering lion that is now lying ready for his spring in the jungles of this mighty nation, is once aroused, we shall annihilate the whole concatination of sacridotal imbecilities at one tremendous blow."

"Blest! what a fust-rate sledge that'll take," said Timothy, who invariably took the funny side of the question.

"Come, none of that," said the champion, who regarded the interruption as irrelevant.

"Oh, freedom of speech, freedom of speech," cried the company, jealous lest their champion should violate the principles of the institution, by attempting to bind their consciences.

"Don't be inscrutably pertinacious," cried the champion indignantly. "What has freedom of speech got to do with incomprehensible ambiguity like that?"

"Oh, everything, everything," cried the company, in some confusion.

"Silence," shouted the champion.

"It's my opinion," said the most zealous member of the institution, rising and striking the table with the back of his hand, "that our liberties, as members of this here Surciety, is bein' refringed upon; and I protests agen it!"

Hear, hear, and cheers, from the company.

"Silence!" shouted the leader.

"Give us our rights!" bellowed the company.

"Silence!" reiterated the champion.

But his dominion, for the time, was gone. The company rose, one after another, and protested against any infringement of their rights and liberties as free men and Englishmen; and the more the champion shouted for silence, the more noisy and boisterous they became; until the glasses and pewter began to fly across the table, and blows began to pass somewhat indiscriminately from one to another, and a general stand-up fight for the liberty of conscience and freedom of speech ensued. As the general aspect of affairs was decidedly against the champion, and all hopes of re-establishing order had vanished, he seized his hat (a napless beaver) in the midst of the confusion, and made good his retreat.

"I didn't go for to make a row, Lus," said Timothy, who had followed the champion into the street.

Lus was the short for Theophilus; Theophilus Kwack being the title by which the champion counted one in the census.

"Why, of course you didn't," said Mr. Kwack. "But, between you and me, Tim, that's the sacridotal affects of inscrutability."

"Well, they're a rum lot," said Timothy.

"Rum!" said Theophilus, "they are the most pertinacious set of blockheads that ever I had to elucidate an idea to. Where are you going, Tim!"

"Home, I think."

"Well, so shall I. I want to study to-night."

Mr. Kwack's home was a small, unassuming apartment, in the same house and on the same floor with the Plumleys. As he opened his door, after parting with Timothy, and his eye fell upon a stump—or rather stump*less* bedstead, supported by half a dozen bricks, an inverted coal-scuttle, and a pitcher; two bottomless chairs; a table in the last stage of the rickets, and the ruins of a bandbox,—he heaved a sigh. And when he turned from these to a finely chiselled bust of one of the ancient philosophers, which stood upon the mantlepiece—minus a head—he heaved another, and straitway plunged, for consolation, into the depths of his library, which consisted of a Chronological Table, and a Johnson's Dictionary; in the philosophical beauties of which he soon became entirely oblivious to the meaner world and its troubles.

"Might I go for to speak a word with Lus?" said Timothy, dropping his head into the room after the philosopher had been thus engaged for some time.

"Elucidate away, my friend," said the philosopher.

"You couldn't spare a few minutes to come and talk to Mrs. Plumley abit, could you?" said Timothy. "The gov'nor's uncommon late to-night, and she's reglar low, and no mistake."

"Certainly," said Mr. Kwack; and he immediately closed the immortal volume and replaced it upon the shoulders of the philosopher in the place of the original head.

"I s'pose you're reg'lar sweet upon study, Lus," said Timothy, as they proceeded to Mrs. Plumley's apartment.

"Why, yes; almost my only gastronomic regenerator, Tim," returned the philosopher, as they entered the room. "Mrs. Plumley, I hope you're salubrious?"

Mrs. Plumley looked perhaps more dejected than we have before seen her. She was leaning forward with her hand supporting her head. The children had retired.

"Yes, I'm pretty well in health, thank you, Mr. Kwack," returned Mrs. Plumley.

"Miss Plumley, I hope I see you convalescent?" added Mr. Kwack, addressing the Victim, who was seated before the fire, in precisely the same attitude in which we last found her.

"No; but I'm used to it. I've been a victim—a poor miserable victim, but I'm used to it," returned the Victim, addressing the fire, and throwing into it a sigh that seemed to quench the little life remaining in it.

"Well, Mrs. Plumley," said Mr. Kwack, who considered that it devolved upon him to dissipate the general low spirits; "as Johnson beautifully observes, to be dull is to be miserable, low-spirited, dejected; and, upon my word, after all it would be very difficult to elucidate any real fundamental benefit arising from it. How about Canada?"

Mrs. Plumley shook her head.

"Well, as I've often said to Mr. P. *nil desperandum.* I don't see that you would gain much by turning your back upon your native soil; that is, unless things are going to remain as they are. But, take my word for it, the storm is gathering, the train is fired, and there will be an explosion before long. And then down comes your haughty usurpers of sacridotal puissance, and up goes the oppressed denizens of an incontrovertible tyranny. So, if you take my advice, Mrs. Plumley, you'll just quietly wait the issue, in your own native country—which I may say is the birthright and patrimony of every Englishman."

Mrs. Plumley turned her half-tearful eyes on Mr. Kwack, and smiled and shook her head, for she had sufficient penetration to perceive that neither the philosopher's ideas nor his mode of expressing them were particularly lucid.

"Have you seen George to-day, Mr. Kwack?" she enquired; for her mind was dwelling on her absent husband, and picturing a multitude of disasters as the probable cause of his being so late.

"No, I've not," returned Mr. Kwack. "He is rather late to-night?"

"Yes, very late. I scarcely ever remember his being so late. He is very much distressed, Mr. Kwack. We have tried all our friends—every one, I believe—and we can get no assistance at all, Mr. Kwack. They don't even speak kindly to us, they don't; and I'm sure I don't know what we've done wrong—what could we, Mr. Kwack? we've tried to do our best, I'm sure we have."

Mrs. Plumley was fairly in tears.

"Well, well," said Mr. Kwack, soothingly, "you must cheer up, Mrs. Plumley. I can only refer you to Johnson. There's your consolation. Anything uncommon, is new, rare, or unusual; therefore this being something un-

common, it naturally follows that something new, rare, or unusual has transpired. Therefore, since it is literally impossible for your present circumstances to be rendered anything worse, to come to the argument logically, it follows, as a matter of course, that something beneficial, something elucidatory of good has taken place."

In proof of the soundness of this reasoning, deduced from the philosophy of the immortal Lexicographer, in a very few minutes Mr. Plumley made his appearance, sure enough, with a lighter step than was wont to bring him home, and a brighter smile upon his haggard face than had been seen there for many a long day. Mrs. Plumley flew to the door to meet him, and tears of gratitude started to her eyes as she beheld the unlooked-for change in his beloved countenance.

"Good news, girl," said Mr. Plumley, "good news! Selina, girl, good news!"

"Ah! it's too late," sighed Miss Selina, "too late. I wish you had let me go into service, George; I could but have been a victim."

"There, there," said Mr. Plumley; "a little patience, Selina—only a little patience, girl, and I'll be bound to say it's all for the best, after all. Mr. Kwack, it's a long time since I brought home any good news, and it seems to quite overpower me, like. You'll excuse me," he said, endeavouring to smile down the tears that came into his eyes as he watched the grateful emotion of his loving little wife. "I suppose my two little ones is a-bed, Lizy?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well, Lizy, you see Providence is good, after all. As I was a walking down the Boro', after I left here, a-wondering what ever would become of us, who should I meet but that there gentleman, Mr. McCameron, that I painted that house for the other side of the water. 'Why,' says he, 'Mr. Plumley, you aint looking well, what's a matter, Mr. Plumley?' he said. So I went straight and told him the truth about it, just as it is. 'Why,' said he, 'that's very bad, Mr. Plumley. I wish I'd seen you before,' he said, 'I think I could a done something for you.' And after a good deal more conversation about Canada and different things (he walked with me right across the bridge, by my side, as if there wasn't the least bit of pride in him, at all,) he gave me this card, (he lives at the West End, it 'pears,) and said if I would call on him to-morrow, to'ards the evening, he'd go and make enquiries between whiles about the vessels and that, and see if something couldn't be done for us."

"Oh, what a good, dear, kind gentleman he must be," said Mrs. Plumley.

"Yes, and after that, Lizy," continued her husband, "as if this was to a been a regular fortunate day altogether, (some how or other it comes like that, Mr. Kwack,) who should I go for to meet but my old master, that I aint seen for so long. Well, he was very kind, as usual, and, though he's very short o' work himself, he gave me a job right off in his own shop; and *there*," said Mr. Plumley, throwing down a half-crown upon the table, "there, Lizy, is the first money as I've earned for this weary long time; and I look upon that, more than anything else, Lizy girl, as a certain surety that things is about to change."

"Only to think how things do come about," cried Mrs. Plumley. "Would you believe it, George, dear, it's been running in my mind all day long, that you would bring home some good news. Only to think, how kind!"

Poor, dear little woman! she felt obliged to say something, and what could she have said more interesting?

"Yes, it's very strange," said Mr. Plumley, thoughtfully; "it's very strange, Mr. Kwack, that one meets more kindness from strangers than what they do from their own flesh and blood. I don't want to say anything agen any one, Mr. Kwack, sir, but there's no denying it, that your own flesh and blood will actually let you starve,—starve, Mr. Kwack, they will, sir, I'm sorry to say I've seed it; and if you get a kindness done you, why it's ten chances that it aint a utter stranger—it's true, Mr. Kwack."

"True enough," said Mr. Kwack. "It's a thing I've never been able to elucidate to my entire satisfaction; but there is a certain heterogeneous superciliousness about one's own consanguinity that entirely flagellates my perspicacity to account for."

"Lizy," said Mr. Plumley to his wife as they retired to rest that night, "Lizy, my dear, you may be sure of it that a blessing is a following us with our dear little Simy. Mr. McCameron remembered me telling him about him, and asked me to bring him with me to-morrow. I always have said, Lizy, as a blessing will attend what's right, and you may be sure as there's a Providence a watching over them as tries to act according as their conscience tells them is right—that's what you may be sure of, Lizy."

The next day Mr. Plumley, accompanied by

Simon, made his way to Mr. McCameron's, at the West End. Mr. McCameron's residence was situated in Curzon Street, May Fair; and, lest it should (as would be natural) be inferred therefrom that he was holding the honorable and gallant position of a half-pay officer in, or rather out of H. M. S., it may be expedient here to state that he was in reality holding nothing of the sort.

On entering the street Mr. Plumley's attention was attracted to a small, slender, summerly-looking individual, who was pacing to and fro upon the curb-stone before Mr. McCameron's door.

"Look, there's Mr. Albosh," said Simon.

"So there is. How do you do, Mr. Albosh?" said Mr. Plumley, accosting him. "Aint you cold, walking up and down here, sir?"

"Lor, bless me, is it you?" said Mr. Albosh, throwing himself into a midsummer attitude, and trying to look warm and in keeping with his general exterior, although there appeared to be here and there certain unmistakable indications of the absence of the proper supply of animal heat. "Cold, sir!" added Mr. Albosh, "I may say I'm rather in a boiling heat—a boiling fury, sir. I've been swindled—swindled into beggary and ruin, Plumley, by a gang of sharpers! and the head of them is in that house. I've followed him here; and I don't leave him until I've planted him safe and sound into the custody of the law—no, never!" said Mr. Albosh, buttoning up his coat and exercising his arms in the manner of a man preparing for a pugilistic encounter.

"I'm sorry to hear it, I'm sure, Mr. Albosh," said Mr. Plumley. "What's gone wrong?"

"Gone wrong!" cried Mr. Albosh; "why, the mining investment is a swindle. The 'Californian Gold-Mining and Quartz-Crushing Company' is nothing but a phantom. Our agent has been out there a whole month, wandering the whole of California through and through without being able to find so much as the ghost of a shadow of any such company in existence. A fable, sir,—a base fabrication of a lot of swindling sharpers."

"I'm very sorry, I'm sure, very sorry," said Mr. Plumley, who, like the generality of humanity, found some considerable difficulty in throwing anything like variety into his expressions of sympathy. "It's very unfortunate."

"It's a complete crash, sir," said Mr. Albosh, "and, above all things, to come at this particular moment, when," he added, taking Mr. Plumley confidentially by the arm and lowering his voice, "a few pounds, a mere bagatelle,—twenty or thirty pounds,—would establish me for life. Yes, I may tell you, Plumley," he continued, holding up his forefinger to enjoin secrecy, "that I've just hit upon a discovery in the color line, a new green, that is a mint of money in itself. Besides it requires next to nothing to carry it out, a mere bagatelle,—twenty or thirty pounds,—and there you are, your fortune's made."

"Indeed," said Mr. Plumley. "Have you done anything about the manure yet, Mr. Albosh?"

"Well—a—no. Standing over for want of funds. But this is the thing I want to concentrate my mind upon now. You see it is in universal demand—must pay, there is no help for it."

"Well, perhaps you'll be here when I come out. I'm going in here," said Mr. Plumley.

"In there! why, that's the very house," cried Mr. Albosh.

"Perhaps he's gone in on some business," said Mr. Plumley. "What sort of a man is he?"

"Oh, why a tall, black-looking rascal. If you see him, just tell him he is wanted, and caution the people of the house to look after the plate," said Mr. Albosh, resuming his pugilistic demonstrations, and unbuttoning his coat to let out the superabundant heat that had generated within his waistcoat.

Mr. Plumley was not a man of the strongest nerves in matters of this sort, and he felt somewhat disconcerted, on being ushered into the sanctum of the McCamerons, to find that he had not only Mr. McCameron himself to contend with, but the whole McCameron family, *en masse*, comprising Mrs. McCameron, and the two Misses McCamerons, with the further addition of a fourth party, who at once struck Mr. Plumley as being the very individual upon whom Mr. Albosh was attending outside.

Mr. McCameron was a tall individual, somewhat bony, with a rather long face, a bald head, no whiskers, light eyes, and an open heart: which we dot down as conveying an idea of our peculiar model of a Scotchman. Mrs. McCameron was a lady of very ample dimensions, measuring any indefinite number of inches round the waist—glorying in pale greens, and given to tight lacing, invisible boots, and hysterics. Clara, their youngest daughter, was a perfect little Scotch beauty of about fifteen: which of course involves a pair of blue, expressive eyes, any amount of rich golden hair, fair transparent a-a-alabaster (dont they call it?)

cheeks, and an unquestionable figure. Her sister, Matilda, who was much older, was perhaps not so imposingly pretty; but there was a calm, pensive, melancholy beauty about her, that was more lastingly attractive than the lighter qualities of form and feature could ever hope to be. She was seated beside the "wanted" individual, at the farther end of the room, when Mr. Plumley entered, and appeared to be listening to the contents of a letter which he was reading in a semi-whisper.

"Weel, come in, my good mon," said Mr. McCameron as Mr. Plumley stood waving his hat up and down on the threshold. "This is the party I was telling ye about, my dear," he added, addressing Mrs. McCameron.

"Oh, dear me—yes," said Mrs. McCameron, casting up her eyes in the manner of one that felt she was perfectly resigned to it. "You've been very unfortunate Mr.—Mr.—"

"Plumley my dear."

"Very unfortunate, Mr. Plumley."

"Thank you, mum, I'm sorry to say I have, mum," replied Mr. Plumley.

"Weel, mon, I've been makin' enquiries for ye," said Mr. McCameron; "and I find you'll hardly be able to manage it this winter, mon. There are no vessels leaving for Canada now, and it would be an ower hard time for ye if there were! There 'll be little done in Canada in the winter, I trow, eh Blackbourn?

Blackbourn—for it was he—replied that he thought so, and busied himself with the letter he held in his hand.

"You see, mon," continued Mr. McCameron, "it's work in the summer and play in the winter with the Canadians; they mak' the hay while the sun shines. So I trow you would be able to do very little there till the spring, mon."

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Plumley, laying down an imaginary nap on his hat with his coat-sleeve, and preparing for a retreat; for all his hopes had by this time completely vanished. He thought this was merely an excuse on the part of Mr. McCameron for recalling his promise.

"Stop, mon," said Mr. McC. "You'll be wanting to do something in the mean, mon; so I've made arrangements for you with a party in the city, and if you'll just call at my office to-morrow, mon, you'll find me there, and I'll put you in the way of it."

"Thank, you sir," said Mr. Plumley; "I'm sure I am—"

"Weel now ye canna' live without work, so there are no thanks at a' about it," interposed Mr. McCameron. "Come here, my little mon," he added, addressing Simon. "Look, my dear, this is the laddie. Blackbourn, that is what we should call in Scotland a bonnie laddie, eh?"

Blackbourn looked round; but the moment he caught sight of the boy, he turned pale, and his eye gradually became fixed as if he were gazing upon an object immediately above the child's head. Simon recognised him at once, and flew instinctively to Mr. Plumley's side, and clung to him with an expression of terror. Blackbourn followed him with his eyes, not looking on him, but still fixed upon some unreal object above him; while his lip quivered, and the blank side of his face became more contracted, and perfectly bloodless.

"Dear me, what's amiss?" cried Mrs. McCameron, throwing a hysterical glance from the child to Blackbourn and back again. "Tilda, there is something wrong! I'm sure there is—O Tilda—Clara, quick, I'm I'm—oh dear—Til—da!"

Both Matilda and Clara ran to their mamma's assistance, and put into instant operation a large fan, three *vinegarettes*, and a tumbler of water,—all of which appeared to be kept at hand for such contingencies.

"No, ma dear, there is nothing amiss. What is it Tilda?" said Clara.

"I dont think there is anything, dear, indeed," replied her sister. "Edward, are you not well?"

"Quite, quite, child," said Blackbourn, who, seeing that he had created some confusion, rose to his feet and passed over towards Mrs. McCameron, and stood with his back towards the cause of his discomposure.

"How ridiculous of me!" he said smiling, and completely recovering his self-possession as soon as his back was turned upon the boy. "My dear Mrs. McCameron, pray dont be alarmed. The boy bears a striking likeness to an old school-fellow of mine, whom I have great cause to remember,—a very old and dear association to me, Matilda, and really for the moment it completely carried me away. We're strange beings, McCameron—strange beings."

"Ha, ha, ha! well that's singular!" cried Mr. McCameron, who had just succeeded in producing and polishing up his spectacles for the purpose of looking into the matter. "Upon my word, as we say in Scotland, that's mickle strange. Weel, how's mamma, my dears?"

"Oh, its' nothing. It's only my excessive weakness. Oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. McCameron,

describing a series of circles in distant vacancy with her eyes.

"Well, Mr. Plumley, I shall see you to-morrow, eh?" said Mr. McCameron.

"Thank you, sir, I shall only be too glad to be there, sir," replied Mr. Plumley; and, with a complicated performance enlisting the co-operation of his hat, arms, head, and foot, he took his departure.

He found Mr. Albosh ensconced under a doorway a few houses down, with his body behind a pillar, his head stretched out into the street, and his eye on Mr. McCameron's door; a change of position accounted for by a complicated shower of hail, rain, and snow, which was dashing about in all directions, and which was certainly but ill adapted to his midsummer arrangements.

"Oh, Mr. Albosh," said Mr. Plumley, "I just want to speak to you, if you please. This man as you spoke of; are you sure he is what you say?"

"I am sorry to say there is not the shadow of doubt of it."

"Can you prove it?"

"To demonstration."

"Then, by George," said Mr Plumley, "there's something wrong. If it's what I think it is, by George we must stop it. Will you assist me, Mr. Albosh?"

"If it is anything to serve that blackleg rascal out, I'm your man," returned Mr. Albosh recurring to his pugilistic symptoms.

"Then we must lose no time. Can you come home with me now, and I'll explain it to you."

"No, no no; not that!" said Mr. Albosh. "I don't mind moving down the street a little way with you," he added taking Mr. Plumley's arm and moving off; "but I've got to pounce upon this fellow to-night, come what will."

"Perhaps you may get a better chance. I should be glad if you could come."

"'Pon my word, couldn't think of it, Plumley—not this evening. Any other time you might have commanded me."

"It'll just be about our tea-time when we get home, Mr. Albosh, if you could make it convenient," urged Mr. Plumley, who knew something of Mr. A.'s private resources.

"Well, upon my honor, I'm sorry, Plumley," said Mr. A. conclusively; "but a resolution you know *is* a resolution, and it is directly opposed to my nature to give up a thing of this sort when I once enter upon it. If there is one characteristic of my nature, Plumley, more dominant than another, I believe it is an invincible determination." In proof of which Mr. Albosh took an extra coil round the arm of his friend' dismissed the subject, and accompanied him home without further resistance.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FATHER.

"O George, dear," said Mrs. Plumley, as her husband was preparing, with an unusual expression in his countenance, for his visit to Mr. McCameron's on the following day—"O George dear, what a blessing it will be if it's all as we think, and you're able to save the poor dear young lady! Only to think, what a shocking bad man he must be! Besides, Mr. Albosh says he's sure he is; and then his going to meet you at Mr McCameron's with all the proofs he says, dear, so I'm sure it must be right. Only to think what a bad world it is, George dear! But Mr. McCameron wont be offended, will he, do you think?"

"No girl, no. Not if I was wrong; he's too genuine good-natured," replied her husband. "But then how strange, George dear, about Simy! to think that he should be the very person, that Simy was telling us about. And what odd questions he asked him too—only to think! Oh, if some one was to come and take him away from us! Oh, I feel so frightened sometimes, George dear, because I think they might! and how dreadful that would be! Oh, Simy, suppose they was to come and take you away from your poor dear mother, Simy!"

"They shant do that, mother," said Simon, running forward and kissing her. "*I* wouldn't let them do that. If they were I'd come back again."

"O you tootsy, wootsy, darling little woos-lem you!" cried Mrs. Plumley, hugging, and

kissing, and shaking her pretty little countenance over him, by way of interpreting this learned quotation from the "mother tongue."

As Mr. Plumley moved along the street towards Mr. McCameron's office, it became evident that he was laboring under the burden of an idea. Every now and then a suppressed "by George," illustrated with an emphatic jerk of the forefinger, and a sympathetic movement of the head, escaped him, and more than once elicited an indignant glance from a passer-by, who, probably chancing to be a namesake of the immortal saint who was thus called upon to clinch the idea, conceived that some indirect offence was therein levelled against himself.

On reaching the office, he found Mr. Albosh already awaiting his arrival, and walking to and fro with an air of general importance that left no doubt on the mind that he also regarded himself at that moment as the soul and foreshadowing of another idea of equal weight and preponderance.

"Ah, Plumley!" cried Mr. Albosh, "here you are! It's all arranged. I suppose I am now prepared with the most sweeping evidence that was ever produced to consign an unmitigated rascal to perdition. It has cost me a trifle, but that's nothing—a mere bagatelle."

"I'm much obliged to you, I'm sure," said Mr. Plumley. "If you'll be good enough to wait here a moment, I'll just see if Mr. McCameron's disengaged."

"All right!" replied Mr. Albosh. "Stop, Plumley—one word," he added catching him by the sleeve and speaking with a show of mystery. "You are a painter, are you not? Yes, well I just want to ask you a question. Wouldn't a new pigment—a white—an article that would entirely supersede everything at present in the market, and that might be produced for about a twentieth of the cost—in fact for a mere bagatelle—be a desideratum?"

"I should think so," replied Mr. Plumley.

"Ah, yes—I thought so. I thank you. Then I've got an idea!" said Mr. Albosh, and he commenced prancing up and down as if he meant to make the most of it.

Mr. McCameron was not at the office, and moreover was not expected there that day.

This was a disappointment to Mr. Plumley, who felt that he had something of importance to communicate. But there was no help for it, and there was nothing for him to do but to wait quietly till the next day. If he went to Curzon Street, it would spoil the effect of his communication by giving to it the appearance of an excuse for furthering his own interests. An appointment was therefore made for the nex day.

They were there, but Mr. McCameron was not. They received the same answer: Mr McCameron was not expected. The following day they were there again, but still the same answer. This at once suggested to Mr. Plumley the question, which he put pointedly to his friend Mr. Albosh, What could be the reason of it? In fact he began to have his doubts—his apprehensions, and he put it further to his friend, whether he ought not immediately to waive all personal considerations, and to proceed straightway to Curzon Street and unbosom his mind, whatever results to himself might accrue from his so doing. Mr. Albosh thought there was something in that suggestion; but as it was drawing near the noon-day hour, at which nature usually puts forth her craving, he advised that they should first return home and discuss the matter cooly and with deliberation, to ensure against running headlong into an impropriety, which he thought, however trifling, would surely not come under the denomination of a bagatelle.

They accordingly returned home, and the matter was duly and soberly discussed, together with a humble repast which Mrs. Plumley had duly prepared. The result of course was, that in something less than an hour afterwards, Mr. Plumley was on his road to Mr. McCameron's private residence.

He found him at home and alone with Mrs. McCameron, who looked as though she had just recovered from a severe attack of her constitutional malady.

"Tak' a seat, tak' a seat, mon," said Mr. McCameron waving his visitor to a chair. "I suppose you've been looking for me, mon, doon in the city? Weel I am almost ashamed to say it, but I had really almost forgotten ye, mon."

"Well, I did want to say a word to you if I could, sir, but not exactly about myself, sir," said Mr. Plumley with some hesitation.

"No, of course not, mon," returned Mr. McCameron "a man with a family has few cares for himsel', I trow."

Mr. Plumley, seeing that he was misapprehended, was about to offer some further explanation, but Mr. McCameron, not observing him, continued,

"Weel, I'm sorry, mon; but perhaps if ye had yoursel' a dear darling daughter, mon, that ye were losing, and committing to the care of another, ye might perhaps be unfitted for business yoursel', mon. My darling bairn (that is what we say in Scotland, and it is a pure word, mon)

wa' married yesterday; and so you'll no' wonder that I've been little mindful of business, mon."

Mr. Plumley was completely bewildered. He saw that he was too late; and that intuitive delicacy which often displays itself as one of the finest touches of nature, in her most unpolished subjects, whispered to him—silence. There was a wound already; the affectionate emotion with which the father spoke of his absent "bairn," showed that he felt less secure of her happiness under the roof of another, and that he felt a father's anxious regret at losing the happy smiles of his beloved one from his fireside.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Plumley, rising; "I'm sorry I intruded, sir; I'm in no hurry, sir. I hope you wont think I am, by my calling, sir."

"Not at all, not at all, mon," replied Mr. McCameron. "I'm sorry you have had all the trouble. But I shall be in the city to-morrow, and if you'll just call in the morning, I'll see to mak' it all right wi' ye, mon."

"Thank you, sir. Good day to you, mum—good day to you, sir."

"Stop, mon," said Mr. McCameron, drawing out his purse. "I can't tell how you live, mon; it's ower strange, ower strange. Here."

He handed him a coin, which Mr. Plumley (not being inspired with any of the heroic principles that are usually found in the melo-dramatic world, and from which he would at once have perceived that he was destroying the very vitality of his good intentions, by selling them at a price) put into his pocket, and, making his usual complicated obeisance, withdrew.

Mrs. McCameron, who had sat in melancholy silence during the above, and appeared to be just hanging between the two worlds of consciousness and oblivion, produced a small, thin, consumptive little sigh as soon as Mr. Plumley disappeared, and remarked,

"Dear me, poor man. We've all got our troubles. Oh, dear me! you are dull, Gordon dear? no; don't say you are not, because it distresses me. I can see you are dull, dear."

Mr. McCameron sat thoughtfully gazing on his wife, and it was very easy to perceive, as the voice of affection had expressed it, that he was dull.

"Martha," he said, addressing his wife after a long pause, "tell me—I may have asked ye the question mony times before—but will ye tell me, Martha, what you really think of Blackbourn?"

"Oh now, Gordon," cried Mrs. McCameron, beginning to show signs of her habitual weakness, "you are going to recur to that dreadful subject. Pray don't—pray don't, Gordon. You know my delicate state. My nerves have received a terrible shock already. Oh, if there should be anything wrong! O Tilda, my darling Tilda!"

"Weel, weel," said Mr. McCameron, soothingly, for he saw that he had touched a dangerous chord, "I hope not, I hope not; God send not."

But there was a secret something at his heart that evidently troubled him.

"It certainly is strange," he said, after another pause, "that I never have been able to learn anything of his antecedents. His introductions were good, but I find they were only business connections. I sometimes thought him a fine fellow, and sometimes, I must confess, I couldn't understand him. And yet it is strange how he has got such a hold of us all; and how the darling child cam' to tak' to him so. She *did* love him, Martha—you are sure she loved him, Martha?" he said, turning his moistened eyes earnestly upon his wife.

"Oh, dear me," cried Mrs. McCameron, "what will become of us! Oh, I'm sure I don't know, it is all so dreadfully strange. She always said she did, but then I sometimes thought she didn't. O Tilda—O my poor dear Tilda! Oh, if anything is wrong, and the poor child in a foreign land! Oh, why did I let her go to Paris? It is all my fault. O Tilda—my poor dear Tilda!"

Mrs. McCameron really felt for her absent child, and, contrary to her usual custom, her grief found relief in tears.

Their youngest daughter, Clara, entered at this moment, and, seeing her mamma in tears, knelt down by her side, and tried to comfort her.

"Weel, weel, we must hope for the best, Martha," said Mr. McCameron, turning his head away to conceal the tears that he wiped from his eyes. "And yet," he added, after a long silence, and speaking more as if he were soliloquising with himself than addressing any one else, "I could have wished my business transactions with him had been less. I almost dread going down to the office, I feel so confident that some misfortune is about to happen. If there is anything wrong with him it will be a double calamity indeed."

"Oh Clara," cried Mrs. McCameron, who always put her own construction upon her husband's remarks, "you hear papa! We are going to be reduced,—I am sure we are. Oh,

what will become of us? Oh, Gordon, why didn't you tell me before that we were poor? I'm sure I might have done without that green silk, and those expensive bracelets, and I am sure, Clara dear, you would have done without some of your winter dresses, and then all that lace and jewelry for poor dear Tilda,—Oh, Clara, we have ruined papa! It is all my fault, and now it is too late—pa says we are going to be reduced. Oh, Clara dear, what ever will become of us!"

"No, ma dear; pa did not mean that. I'm sure you didn't, did you, pa?" said Clara, looking imploringly into his face.

"If anything is wrong, it will not be a matter of pounds, Martha, but of thousands," said Mr. McCameron.

It was, however, with the greatest difficulty that Mrs. McCameron was made to believe any other than that the sheriffs were expected every moment, and that they were all irretrievably plunged into the very depths of poverty.

The next day Mr. McCameron made his way to his office with an unsettled and troubled mind. There were two gentlemen awaiting his arrival in the outer office, his clerk (an interesting young man with an interesting *lithp*) informed him; and they were instantly admitted.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Growley; Mr. Bolton, good morning," said Mr. McCameron, casting an anxious glance from one to the other.

Messrs. Growley and Bolton nodded, and seated themselves with modest composure.

"From Mr. Blackbourn," said Bolton, handing a letter over the table to Mr. McCameron, who took it and broke the seal with a trembling hand. It ran as follows:—

Sir,—I have frequently told you that I am a strange being. They were no idle words. I regret that you have now to realize the full force of their meaning. You will heap curses and reproaches on me, in return for the injuries I have done you; but, sir, that is casting water into a sieve. *You* will say that *I* have ruined both you and your child; *I* say it is *fate*,—I am the tool. But the end is the same, and you will find but little merit in the distinction, while to me it is a matter of indifference. I have done what I have done, the consequences are before me, and I receive them as they come; —they are the one side of my destiny. But enough of preface.

I have to inform you that our business transactions together, as far as I am concerned, are, for the most part, based on frauds, and that in most instances I stand amenable to the law, and liable to prosecution at any moment. You are, as a natural consequence, implicated, and perhaps to a greater extent than you can possibly be aware of; and there is therefore but one opening through which you can hope to preserve either your honor or your liberty: act promptly as I shall dictate, and leave the rest entirely in my hands.

I shall be in London in five days from this date; and by that time it will be needful, in order to stave off the most immediate emergencies, that you should place at my command a sum of not less than £10,000. You can do it, I believe,—there is no alternative. I cannot doubt your good faith,—I hold your guaranty. —She is well.

Yours, &c.

G. Blackbourn.

P.S. As it might be imprudent for us to meet under existing circumstances, I shall in future communicate with you through the bearer, Mr. Bolton. *Don't seek me.*

Mr. McCameron evinced no signs of emotion as he read this extraordinary document, and, having finished it, he refolded it, placed it carefully in his pocket-book, and, turning to his visitors with an air of extreme composure, he said,

"Well, what more?"

"Can I take your answer?" asked Bolton.

"I have none."

"You'll excuse me, Mr. McCameron," said Mr. Growley, "but are the contents of that letter a secret?"

"I presume so."

"Oh, then I suppose he don't say anything about this Californian job?"

"Nothing."

"Well," pursued Mr. Growley, "I don't know how far you're concerned in that, Mr. McCameron; but all I can say is, that I've been regularly led into it, and I don't care who knows it."

"If you have completed your business with me, I will thank you to leave me, gentlemen,—I am busy," said Mr. McCameron, for it was with difficulty he could restrain the emotions that were silently accumulating within him.

Both gentlemen instantly rose and moved towards the door. Bolton lingered behind.

"Mr. McCameron," he said, "I know you have been deeply injured. I would willingly help you; but I don't mind telling you, sir, that I am like a child in his hands. He seems

to hold a sort of spell over me—I *must* obey him. Beyond that there is but one object that I live for: I have received an irreparable injury from him."

There appeared to be a touch of feeling in him as he said this, and, as he finished, he turned hastily and followed his companion, as though he were anxious to avoid any further communication on the subject.

McCameron closed the door behind them with a steady hand, and, turning calmly round, he stood erect and motionless in the centre of the room, with his arms folded on his chest, and his eyes fixed upon the dead wall that lowered down upon the office, like a black and angry cloud, from the opposite building. His broad chest heaved heavily up and down, and a heavy gloom overshadowed his countenance, as he struggled with the violent emotions that were raging within him. It was some considerable time before he moved from this position, and, when he did so, he stretched out his hand calmly and firmly before him, and a strange expression shot across his countenance, and his lips moved as though he were speaking, but no articulate sound was heard. He then sat down and carefully examined and sorted his papers; and as he turned them over one after another, he shook his head, and the cloud seemed to gather on his countenance, but still no sound escaped him. This done, he rose from his seat, buttoned up his coat carefully to his chin, gave some instructions to his clerk with respect to Mr. Plumley, adding that he (McCameron) should probably not return for several days, and quitted the office.

He bent his steps directly towards Curzon Street, and, contrary to his usual custom, continued to walk the whole of the distance. It would have been impossible from his appearance to have detected anything of the powerful emotions at work in his mind. His step was if anything more firm and unshaken than usual, his body less bent, and his countenance was calm and composed: but it is not always that the form or the countenance is an index to the soul.

On entering the house, his manner became instantly changed, and he passed on hurriedly to his own room. He closed and locked the door, drew down the blind, and fell heavily into a chair. And there, where the rude eye of his fellows could not follow him, where there was but one ear that heard, and heard in pity,—there, in the presence of Him alone, to whom the griefs of a father and a husband might be bared,—there, in the sacred silence of his own sanctuary, he poured out the great sorrow that troubled his soul, and let fall the tears that flowed, like drops of anguish from his heart, while in half-choked words and groans, the man, the father, and the husband cried through his grief,

"O my honor, my child, and my darling home!"

It was long before the first burst of grief engendered by the extraordinary intelligence of the morning—and in which he at once saw he was irreparably involved, and his honor, his happiness, and the welfare of his child irretrievably blasted—had subsided; but it passed away in course of time, and left him once more in possession of himself. The same firm and collected demeanor that had marked his receipt of the intelligence returned to him, and effectually blotted from his countenance that index of sorrow, through which the rude eye of the world might read the sacred emotions of his weeping soul. He rose to his feet, and, again stretching forth his hand and looking upward, his lips again moved in silence, and the same strange expression shot across his features for a moment, and for that moment he was another being.

He moved about with perhaps more than his wonted composure as he collected a few articles together and arranged them in their order in a carpet-bag. He opened a chest and took therefrom a small leathern case containing a pistol and the other necessaries for rendering it a weapon of death, which he carefully examined and placed in the breast-pocket of his coat; and while his hand rested on it there, the same strange expression again shot across his features and his lips moved in silence,—but it was only for a moment, and the same quiet, ominous composure returned, and threw its impenetrable mantle over the troubles and secrets of his heart. These arrangements completed, he descended to his wife's boudoir, where he found her alone with Clara.

There was a profound calm in his manner that was no part of his ordinary bearing,—there was no smile upon his features, and it was easy for the eye of affection and love to read, from that clouded countenance and that terrible composure, that his mind was troubled. As he seated himself, his daughter came anxiously towards him, and, folding her hands over his shoulder and resting her chin upon them, looked up in his face with her bright eyes already glistening with tears. He placed his arm

around her and pressed her fondly to his heart.

"Martha," he said, and the very sound of his voice seemed to fill the room with a dead, ominous calm, "some of my worst apprehensions are realized. Let me beg of you in God's name to bear whatever may transpire with fortitude and resignation. Martha, we have had mony, mony blessings to be thankful for: now comes our day of trial; let us bear it, my dear, with fortitude. I cannot tell ye to what extent we may have to suffer; but I am afraid, my dear, it is the worst. For the present, I am about to leave you for two or three days. I am going to Paris. Our daughter is unhappy,—I may tell you that: I am going to bring her home."

Both his wife and daughter looked at him, through their tears, in silence; and he paused himself, as if unable to proceed. At length, after several attempts to speak, he rose from his chair and continued in a trembling voice,

"Remember, my dears, what I have said; and remember there is an unseen hand above all; and may my blessing be with you. And, Martha," he added as he embraced his wife, and his trembling voice became almost inaudible, "whatever may happen, remember I am a Scotchman. Our honor, Martha, our children, and then our own safety."

They were so overpowered with grief that neither could find words for utterance; but they wept bitterly, and Clara clung imploringly to his arm and seemed to intreat him not to leave them.

"Your sister, Clara, your sister," he said kissing her and gently placing her in a chair; but she sunk down on her knees beside her weeping mother, and they both wept together, as he again embraced them.

With a hand resting on the instrument of death that nestled in his breast, and the other stretched forward,—his lips moving in silence, his eyes turned upward, and a dark cloud upon his countenance,—he moved away; and a still, calm voice seemed to whisper in their ears, "My honor and my child!"

CHAPTER IX.

ALL SORTS OF EMOTIONS.

As Bolton and Mr. Growley left McCameron's office and were moving quickly down the adjoining street, they espied two individuals coming towards them, one of whom, although at a considerable distance, had already fixed his eye upon Mr. Growley's imperfect member, and appeared to recognise him therefrom.

"Who is this?" said Bolton, "I think I've seen him before."

"Oh, why that's that Californian fellow," returned Mr. Growley. "Let us cross."

But it was too late. The Californian fellow had quickened his pace, and was close upon them.

"Hi!" cried the Californian fellow. "Just one word my friend. Don't sneak off in that way, because *I'm* not much in comparison with the legion you will soon have down about you,—in fact, a mere bagatelle, I may say, as I trust you'll find."

"Well, what have you got to say?" enquired Mr. Growley, replacing his iron member on the pavement and composing himself quietly against a lamp-post, when he saw there was no chance of retreat.

"Look here, Plumley," said the Californian fellow,—who of course was Mr. Albosh,—directing his companion's attention to the gentlemen before him; "these are some of the vampires of society, that get fat upon the credulity of honest men. Take a good look at them, Plumley," said Mr. Albosh, "and, take my word for it, you will look a long time before you will see through them. Oh, I knew you," continued Mr. Albosh beginning to show a disposition to pugilism. "I should know you at any distance by that thing-a-my-jig in the shape of a foot. Well, now perhaps you can tell me something about my property. You are one of the directors, I believe? and by George! as my friend says, you look fit to direct anything. Babbleton Rowdy, Esq., or something of that sort, is it? Well, come where's my property?"

Mr. Growley produced a small tooth-pick from

his pocket and commenced cooly mining among the cavities of the pearly collection that shot up in all kinds of extraordinary formations in his rock of a head,—probably with the view of conveying to Mr. Albosh, in an emblematical manner, an idea of the kind of speculation in which his property had been invested and sunk.

"Now, I tell you what, Mr. Allgammon," said Mr. Growley—

"What do you mean by Allgammon?" enquired Mr. Albosh buttoning up his coat and doubling up his slender little fingers.

"Why, that's your name, aint it?" returned the other.

Mr. Albosh indignantly explained that they would find no gammon about him, although his natural patronymic happened to be Al*bosh*.

"Well, Al*bosh* then," continued Mr. Growley, "it is much about the same thing. Well, all I've got to say, Mr. Albosh, is this, that you are altogether mistaken about me. If any one man is a loser by the failure of that speculation, that man's myself; as my friend here can testify,—eh, Bolton?"

"*Cer*tainly," said Bolton, emphasising the word, and throwing an extra force into it with his head, as though he were astonished that there should be found any one to doubt it.

"And," continued Mr. Growley, drawing himself up against the lamp-post and gradually dilating with virtuous pride, "if any man has acted an honourable and upright part in that business, I am free to say that that man is myself,—eh, Bolton?"

"Who can doubt it?" said Bolton, propounding a general proposition.

"Why, what do you take me for?" enquired Mr. Albosh, in a tone that plainly showed that, although he had condescended to put the question, he held their judgment in supreme contempt. "Ask my brother if I am a thief," he continued, winking on Mr. Plumley as though he would have said 'that settles them.'

"Now, I just want to ask you a question," pursued Mr. Growley, totally unaffected by this original sally from his opponent. "You've been talking a good deal at different times about *your* property, and your this, and your that, and the other; so I just want to ask you how you came possessed of *your* property in this said Company,—that's the question?"

"Never you mind that," returned Mr. Albosh, a little confused.

"Oh, but I *do* mind," rejoined the other. "About how much,—that's the question?"

"That's nothing to do with you," stammered Mr. Albosh, more confused than ever. "If—if—I got the shares for a mere bagatelle, that's my look out."

"Well, as you don't seem to be exactly clear on the point," said Mr. Growley, in his turn throwing a triumphant wink to his friend Bolton, "why, I think I can tell you precisely what you *did* give for them. *Nothing* in cash down, and the balance in promises,—that's your investment in the spec', I believe. A hundred shares for your name and influence, wasn't it? And perhaps you can tell me," continued Mr. Growley, who saw that he had completely extinguished the fire of his spirited little opponent, "about how much the half of your influence has been worth to us. Not much above the full length shadow of nothing, Mr. Albosh—eh? Well," added Mr. Growley, with an appearance of genuine magnanimity, "I hope I am one of the last men to dispute a man's lawful rights, however he may have become possessed of them; but as things have turned out, what I say is, let us act charitably one towards another. So if you are in the mind for a glass of ale, Mr. Albosh, and your friend will join us, why, come along, and there's an end of the matter."

Mr. Albosh was evidently three fourths horror-stricken at the thought.

"And *do you suppose I would?*" he enquired, dexterously throwing an unconditional refusal into the enquiry, by the mere force of emphasis.

"Oh, *I* suppose nothing," replied Mr. Growley; "but I only say, if you will, you know, you are welcome. We are going in here," added Mr. Growley, making a move towards the ale-house at the corner, "so just say, Yes or No."

"No," returned Mr. Albosh emphatically.

"Well, then, you mean to say you wont?" urged Mr. Growley, moving off.

"Of course I do," said Mr. Albosh, following him. "I am not the man to entertain malice, but, by George! as my friend says, to be asked to drink with one's open antagonists is something beyond a mere bagatelle," added Mr. Albosh, following the antagonists whither they went. And in another minute he was pledging the health of the antagonists with all sincerity in a glass of Alsop's pale. Two glasses of that consoling, feud-healing, love-inspiring beverage, and Mr. Albosh shook his antagonists warmly by the hand, and assured them there was too much genuine chivalry in his composition to allow him to enter into any serious squabble about what he might term a mere bagatelle,—he was above it; in proof of which,

he condescended to take another glass, and therein drank to their eternal prosperity, and fervently sent up his desires that a copious shower,—in fact, that a complete thunder-storm, of sublunary bliss might straightway be poured down upon their meritorious heads. Such being his magnanimous conduct, Mr. Growley, with strong expressions of feeling, and much emotion, assured him that from that moment his whole soul should be thrown into one great and unwearied struggle to serve him through thick and thin, and that he might count upon him to his dying day; whereupon he shook him heartily by the hand, wished him every blessing, and, turning round, departed on his way with his thumb on his nose, his forefingers moving playfully to and fro, and a perpetual wink in his left eye, for the private enlightenment of his friend.

"Green," said Mr. Growley.

"Verdant," added his friend.

"Taken in," said Mr. Growley.

"And done for," added his friend; whereupon they hailed a cab and gave the word, to Paddington.

They dismissed the cab at the corner of the Edgeware Road, in the New Road, and walked on to Paddington Green.

At that time, on the right-hand side of the Green there was a large brick-built house, standing some distance off the road, and almost entirely surrounded with trees and a brick wall. Into this sylvan abode they admitted themselves without any assistance from the inmates. On entering the hall, which was large and handsomely furnished, and spoke well for the general resources of the establishment, Bolton, with little ceremony and less melody, shouted out,

"William!"

"All serene!" replied that respectable individual, apparently from some far-off subterranean region; and a pair of slip-shods were immediately heard beating time up an invisible flight of stairs, to the shrilly whistled tune of "My master's gun."

"Oh, here you are," said William, suddenly emerging from behind an angle at the further end of the hall. "What news?"

"The governor's home to-morrow," replied Bolton. "He has changed his mind, or else circumstances have changed it for him. But however, he is home to-morrow."

"Well, its no use being surprised," said William: "he'll come home just when he likes, there aint much doubt about that. For my part, I shouldn't be a ha'porth astonished to see him come tumbling through the roof at the present moment, not a ha'porth. Wont you come down? there is no fires up here now, except there," pointing to a room on the right, "and Miss Alice is in there. I dare say we've disturbed her; but there, she's a hangel! there aint much doubt about that!"

The gentlemen accordingly condescended to follow him to his own private apartment below stairs.

"Now, then, what will you take?" said William, moving to a little liquor-sanctum of his own.

"Oh, anything," said Mr. Growley.

"Ay, well, I'm sorry to say that's about the only thing we're out of," replied William, putting it to his friend Bolton in a silent wink, whether that were sharp or not. "But I suppose a little sherry wont be sneezed at? or if it is, it 'll be simply because it goes the wrong way down,—eh? What do you say, gentlemen?"

The gentlemen said yes,—sherry, most decidedly.

"So he's coming home to-morrow,—eh?" said William as soon as he had drank to his friends and to the bottom of a tumbler of sherry.

"So he says," replied Bolton.

"Ah, well," continued William, "he's been playing up a pretty rig for the last few days, and no mistake. I never saw any one do things as he does. Who'd ever have thought that he'd have had a place like this, ready furnished, and laying in ambush, so to speak, in case of an emergency. And then see how he sold up the old place, as if he had done it by down-right magic,—all gone whiff! in one day, just like that! no more to do," and he snapped his fingers as an illustration of the manner in which it had all gone.

"Ah, he's a close card," said Mr. Growley, abstractedly, addressing the sherry bottle.

"You're right there," continued William. "I suppose every one thinks he's off to the Continent for good, and if they want him that's where they'll go to look for him; while he'll be snug and safe in Paddington Green, behind the trees, so to speak. I don't suppose there's a soul knows he's got this place besides ourselves. I'm sure I didn't know anything about it until I was lodged safe in it; and I suppose you didn't?"

"Not a word," returned Bolton. "How's little Alice?"

"Oh, she's charming. It's very strange how he left her behind. I never knew him to do it before; but I suppose he couldn't very well

take her along with the other. Poor lady, I'm sorry for *her*. What a life she'll have with him! That's an affair I can't understand. There can't be any affection in it, can there, think you?"

"Not on his part, I should say," replied Bolton, "and I expect he's got the consent on the other side by some deep piece of treachery or other, that only he would be equal to. I fancy, you know, he has got the poor old man into his toils, and he has worked upon the daughter's feelings in that way."

"Well, he is certainly the most extraordinary scoundrel that ever I came across," said William, taking another tumbler of wine and evidently enjoying, it, notwithstanding the depravity of his master, who had doubtless paid for it. "I never saw any one have anything to do with him yet, but what he brought them to downright ruin. And what's the most astounding thing, he alway sescapes scot-free,—always. I suppose you'll stay and take a bit of dinner, gentlemen?"

The gentlemen thought they would; and after dinner it was thought that, by way of a change, there might be many things worse than a few glasses of claret; and this idea proved so eminently correct, that it was not until the shades of eve were falling fast, and a startling alarm from the house-bell interrupted them, that they thought of shifting their positions; which they then did, however, in some slight degree of confusion.

"Oh, William, if here aint master!" cried one of the maid-servants rushing in with sundry startling gesticulations.

"The divil!" said William.

"Yes, that he is, and *she's* with him!" added the other, with sundry other mysterious gesticulations, which went to state that *she* was a very pretty, handsome young lady, and that she herself was very sorry for her, but then what could she do?

William hurriedly removed from the corners of his eyes the superfluous moisture that had been gradually accumulating there for the last hour or two, admonished his friends in a whisper, and with the assistance of his forefinger, to hold their noise, which, seeing that they were perfectly quiet, appeared somewhat unnecessary,—arranged his cravat, called forward the soberest of countenances, together with a blessing on his master for coming home at that particular hour, and proceeded up stairs the most respectable of servitors.

There was something unusually firm and collected about Blackbourn's demeanor as he crossed the hall to the room already noticed as having been occupied by Alice, followed—for she hung timidly behind—by the unhappy girl whom he had so ruthlessly wrenched from her happy home. Alice was not there, and he enquired for her. William couldn't say where she were.

"Has Bolton been here to day, William?" enquired Blackbourn.

"Have, sir," replied William.

"Any letters?"

"Two, sir. Sh'll fetch them?"

"Yes."

William had planted himself firmly in the centre of the room, that he might maintain as sober and respectful an appearance as possible under the circumstances; but the searching glance with which his master had favoured him during these brief enquiries, had so overthrown his praiseworthy and respectful arrangements, that in attempting to retreat with his ordinary consistency, he rolled round on his heel, brought his head in violent collision with the door-jamb, and narrowly escaped performing the somewhat disrespectful feat of sprawling at full length across the threshold.

"Why dont you sit down, child?" said Blackbourn, addressing the unhappy Matilda who stood trembling before him. "What in heaven's name are you so timid about? the house is yours—you are the only mistress here, child: don't you approve of it?"

"Oh yes, oh yes, Blackbourn!" replied Matilda, suppressing the tears that had started to her eyes. "Everything is very beautiful, I am sure. But you must forgive me, Blackbourn: I cannot be happy until I hear from pa, and poor dear mamma. I am very unhappy about them. I feel so certain that something is wrong."

William returned with the letters, and retired with infinitely more success.

"Have you none from pa, Blackbourn?" asked Matilda looking anxiously and sorrowfully into his dark, ominous countenance.

"None, child, none," returned Blackbourn, glancing at the addresses.

"Oh, Blackbourn," said Matilda laying her hand imploringly on his arm, "there is something wrong. Your look tells me there is something wrong. Pray let me go and see them. You will, will you not, Edward, let me go and see dear mamma?"

"Patience, patience, child," returned Blackbourn placing her in a chair. "I have told you, not yet. Your father's affairs are to a

certain extent in his own hands; he can recover both his honor and his position, or he can ruin himself just as easily. Your presence at the present moment will influence him to rush into the latter, while your absence will as surely bring about the former. You know your promise, Matilda: if you really wish for your father's release from his present embarrassments, keep it. I have sworn to free him from his liabilities; and if you will both be guided, I shall do so. I am a strange soul, Matilda. Do you nót know me yet?"

Something of his old wildness returned as he gave utterance to this last remark, and the half-terrified girl sat looking at him through her tears in mute astonishment.

"I know nothing but what you tell me, Blackbourn," she said at length; "but I begin to fear there is something very dreadful concealed beneath it all, that I cannot yet understand. But you will save papa, wont you, Edward? I dont care for any thing if you will only save dear papa," she said, and there was a solemn, sacred earnestness in her words that touched even the iron heart to which she appealed. His countenance became heavy and troubled as he bent his large dark eyes intently upon the weeping girl, and marked the soul-felt earnestness with which she prayed for the safety of him whose happiness he had so ruthlessly and hopelessly destroyed. He gradually raised his eyes as if he were following some distant object, until they became immoveably fixed; and with his arms folded and his body erect he stood glaring wildly before him, while the blank side of his face became pale and bloodless.

"Matilda," he said, suddenly throwing back his head, and speaking between his teeth, "men commit crimes under the influence of drink; but there is a stronger intoxication than that! The soul may be drunk. It is a strange thing, is a drunken soul!"

The terrified girl started to her feet and laid her hand tremblingly on the bell-rope, for she was scared by the wildness of his appearance, and perhaps more so by the strange language which he used; but before she could summon courage to ring the bell, he caught her sharply by the wrist, and looking at her with an intensity that seemed to pierce her very soul, he said, almost in a whisper,

"Never ring bells, child, when you see me troubled. I have a horror of bells. I have a strange soul, Matilda, and bells never quiet it. But come," he added assuming a milder tone, "I will go and bring Alice to you. If you love Heaven, child, you will love her. She shall initiate you into the ways of the house, and I am sure you will be good company. You must manage to amuse yourself here for some few days yet. But remember what I have told you of her.—You love your father, Matilda."

He left her; and she fell upon her knees, and, clasping her hands fervently together and lifting her beautiful but tearful eyes to Heaven, she prayed for that father whom she loved, and implored of Heaven to protect her and all the dear ties of her home from the strange influence of the intoxicated soul.

It was on the sixth day after his arrival in London that Blackbourn, who had attempted repeatedly to communicate with McCameron but without success, returned home in a state of extreme agitation, and finding Bolton awaiting his arrival, instantly dispatched him with a letter to McCameron, with injunctions to diliver it if he were any where to be found, and return with the answer without a moment's delay. Bolton went first to Curzon street, and there he ascertained that the family had quitted the house unexpectedly, and had left no traces behind them of the part of the town to which they had removed. The house was deserted and empty. He then made his way as quickly as possible to the office in the city. He found this likewise shut up and deserted, and no one could supply him with any information whatever as to the where-abouts of the owner. Knowing no other place at which he was likely to find him, he turned to retrace his steps. He was passing quickly through street after street, when, chancing to turn his head, he saw a tall figure buttoned up closely to the chin, and with his hat slouched partly over his eyes, coming hurriedly after him. He paused for a moment, and then, as if a new idea had suddenly occurred to him, he walked on rapidly, until he turned the next corner, when he quickened his pace almost to a run; but on looking again behind, after proceeding a short distance, he saw that he was still pursued; and he quickened his pace still more and darted round corner after corner, but still the figure was behind him: until, on turning two or three corners almost immediately after each other, he thought it had lost sight of him, and he slackened his pace; but to his astonishment he almost instantly heard the same hurried footstep close upon his heels, and in another moment a hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"Why do you shun me, sir?" asked the trembling voice of McCameron.

"Because I respect you, Mr. McCameron," replied Bolton. "I have been to your house and to your office both, with the view to see you and to deliver this letter, and I thought I might save you some pain by telling the sender you were not to be found. Here it is."

"Thank ye, thank ye for your consideration," returned McCameron, placing the letter in his pocket. "I care nothing for his letters. I canna do what he wishes. He has miscalculated my resources; I have given a' my property up, but it will not meet a tenth part of the liabilities. But, sir, I canna help that. I care nothing for the property,—I can do without it. But my honor and my child, sir. My name is already branded in the papers: I dare say you know that, and you know that I have no share in the cause. But my daughter, sir. I canna vindicate my honor while she is at his mercy. I canna, you know I canna, sir. My poor dear, dear girl. You can assist me,—you know where she is: it is a worthy cause, sir. Will you tell me where she is?"

He spoke with all the fervour of a father pleading for the child that was dear to him, and the voice of Bolton trembled as he replied:

"I am sorry, sir, but indeed I can't do that. I don't value my life much, certainly, but you scarcely know the man that Blackbourn is. I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I am afraid of him. No, I can't do that, sir. Your daughter is well, I can assure you of that."

"No, sir, no," returned McCameron, "she is not well, sir. You dont know her,—she is not well."

He shook his head and stood looking at the other in silence for some minutes.

"Will you return an answer to the letter?" asked Bolton.

"I have no answer," returned McCameron, still regarding him abstractedly. "I must have my daughter first,—my daughter, sir. Will you tell me where she is. She is very dear to me, sir."

Bolton shook his head, and made a feint of moving off.

"Stay, sir," cried McCameron detaining him, "I have never injured you; why will you not tell me where she is?"

"My good sir, I cannot,—I cannot tell you. If you have no answer, I must leave you. Good day, sir."

He moved off, evidently much agitated, and anxious to get quit of an appeal which was gradually awakening his better feelings and drawing him, as he feared, into a danger that he dreaded, and trembled even to think of encountering.

McCameron followed, still urging his appeal; he quickened his pace, but the other kept close behind him; he hurried on quicker and quicker, darting round corner after corner, but the despairing father was at his heels; he hailed a cab and jumped hastily in, in hopes of driving off before the other came up; but his hand was on the door before he could give the word.

"Sir, I shall follow you, go where you will. My daughter, sir,—my daughter," cried the unhappy man.

"For God's sake, leave me! you cannot follow me, sir!" cried Bolton pushing him from the door and giving the word to drive on.

He stood motionless and bewildered for several seconds. The cab was fast disappearing; he saw it in the act of turning from his view, and it seemed to bear away his only hope! He looked wildly round as it turned from his sight; he hesitated for a moment,—it would soon be to late,—it was his daughter, his darling child that called him! and he dashed down the street, through the crowd, away, away, wildly and furiously. He gained the corner; the cab was still in sight, and on, on he rushed,—his child was before him! They see him in pursuit, they quicken their speed; the lash, the lash, and away they fly, but still he pursues; turning on turning, street after street. He is gaining upon them. Faster, faster they seem to fly through the street, but he follows them still; on, on, my child, my child! Another long street, and yet another, and still they fly before him. His strength is failing him, his chest heaves, he pants heavily for breath, but still he staggers forward: he trembles, his eyes grow dim, his brain reels, he stumbles—he falls!

Hush! tread lightly; the delirium has subsided, and the sufferer sleeps. A loving wife and a fair daughter attend on the patient, and weep while they tend; and while they glide noislessly to and fro, and lave his burning temples, and hang over his suffering form, never wearying with watching, they cease not their silent supplications to their Father in Heaven, "Oh, spare him, spare him!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEPARTURE.

Well, time has rolled away, week after week, month after month. The chilling blast of winter has blown its last, and has all taken to its heels, and gone away to recruit its strength in the frozen caverns of the north. The balmy South is sending forth her messengers of spring, to gladden the woodlands with their music, and waken nature from her slumbers. The meadows and the hedgerows are laughing and merry and gay. The trees are glorying in their snow-white mantles, and shaking their perfumes in the air with very glee. Nature has her holiday; she is attired in her best, her little ones are about her, and all is smiling and cheerful and happy,—it is the merry month of May!

It was one of the brightest and happiest and merriest days that ever shone down from the heavens to gladden the dry old earth, and dispel the melancholy from the hearts of the poor, drowsy, melancholy atoms of animated clay that mumble and rumble and grumble aboat on its uncomfortable old crust. And whether it was the beauties of the day, or the beauties of their own prospects,—whether the result of external or internal influences, certain it is that the whole family of the Plumleys without one individual exception, on that beautiful day at about ten in the forenoon, were seen individually and collectively without respect of persons, to smile. Mr. Plumley smiled, Mrs. Plumley smiled, and oh what a smile it was too! her pretty little daughter smiled, Simon did the same, and Timothy followed his example; and last, not least, the Victim. Yes, gradually but surely, like the progress of time, there was seen to creep over the features of the Victim, a peculiar expression; it deepened, it extended, it burst, and was immediately hailed on all sides as the glorious and unsophisticated reality,—a smile.

Mr. Plumley was arranged in the attire of a respectable plumber, not exactly dressed off for a holiday, while at the same time he was decidedly not in anything like working gear,—somewhere about the happy medium. He had his hat on, and stood in the centre of the room, and also in the centre of a small but heterogeneous collection of boxes, bags, bedding, and sundries. Mrs. Plumley was attired to match, with the exception of a dreadful, harassing little bonnet, which certainly was a trifle too small for a plumber's wife; but then she was a very pretty plumber's wife,—in fact, as charming a little creature, no doubt, as ever wore the veriest apology of a bonnet that was ever invented to display the beauties of bewitching little heads. Simon was glorying in an entire new suit, and was strutting up and down the room with little Lizy, his own "pretty little lovy," as he called her, on his arm, with all the consequence inspired by the consciousness of being a participant in an important event. Miss Plumley was the foreshadowing of modesty, decorum, and faded silk. Timothy was great in fustian, and seemed entirely carried off his legs by the forcible recurrence of hornpipes, Irish jigs, and terpischorean medleys. A pot of porter was on the table,—no, on the top of a chest,—and a liberal supply of bread and cheese in its immediate vicinity, Mrs. Plumley having suggested the propriety of their taking a 'snack' before starting, wherever they were going; although when it came, she was compelled to confess that she was in such a state that the very sight of it was almost too much for her. Whatever was their destination, they were going by the boat from London Bridge, and the cart to convey the luggage thither was momentarily expected; but Mrs. Plumley said that she was convinced in her own mind it wouldn't come. There was no accounting for one's feelings, but she had, some how or another, a presentiment all along that they should be left behind. Now, they would see if her words didn't come true. Whereupon Mr. Plumley gave her a kiss in the style of ten years ago, and said she was a doubting little puss, and that she had said all along they would never go at all, and yet here they were; which Mrs. Plumley wouldn't hear a word of, and said, Oh, how could he! only to think! and then she flew for protection from her naughty, naughty, to her lovely, lovely, lovely, and hugged and kissed and shook her pretty little bonnet over them, until they jointly declared that mother was right and father

was wrong, and that they would stand by mother to the very death.

"By George!" exclaimed Mr. Plumley suddenly dropping a carpet-bag which he had in his hand, and seizing his sister round the waist and dragging her *nolens volens* through a favourite terpischorean feat of his boyhood; by which he seemed to think that any further continuation of his thoughts was rendered perfectly unnecessary.

"Well, but really," said Mrs. Plumley, "how delightful it would have been if Mr. Albosh was going with us!"

"Yes," said her husband, "I think he would have liked to, but it seems he can't manage it. But how strange it is he's not been. He said he would be sure to come, and bid us good bye; and now I'm afraid we shall be obliged to go and leave without seeing him. I should ha' liked poor Mr. McCameron to ha' seen us off too; but then, poor gentleman, he's too ill. It's through being out so much in all weathers, so they tell me, a looking after his daughter. Ah, that's a strange business! They say he's never been able to get the leastest intelligence of her at all, since they left that there place in Paddington, where he traced 'em to; and then he's never properly recovered that there illness he had soon after it all happened, you see. Ah, my heart bleeds for that poor gentleman, Lizy, that's what it does. When I think, too, of what he has been and done for us, even when he hadn't got the means of his own, I'm—well, by George! I dont know what as —hark! that's the cart."

This latter remark had reference to a pair of heavy footsteps that were heard tumbling up the stairs, and which, as Mr. Plumley no doubt intended to convey, if not the cart itself, had immediate reference thereto.

"Traps waitin'?" said a gruff voice following a large greasy head into the room.

All hands made a simultaneous rush upon the boxes, bags, and packages generally, and, away they went, tumbling down stairs one after another, over the landing, through the passage, into the cart, in what Timothy called a trifle less than a "brace of shakes." The last package was just arranged snugly in its place, and they were all on the point of moving off, when a sinister looking personage in stiff attire, who had been hanging about the door with a small pocket-book in his hand for several minutes past, accosted them, and inquired,

"I say, you dont happen to know a Mr. Kwack about here, do you?"

"O yes," replied Mr. Plumley. "He used to live here; but he's left for the last fortnight past, and I'm sure I dont know where he is now. Do you want him?"

"Well, I did," returned the other. "The fact is, I may tell you that he's *wanted.* I'm a officer."

"Dear me, what for, by George!" said Mr. Plumley.

"*Well,*" said the officer; and he shrugged his shoulders, threw his head on one side, and winked with his eyebrows, adding, "You—you understand."

"Well, I'm sure I can't tell you anything about him. I always thought him an 'armless young man," said Mr. Plumley.

"Oh, dear me, do come away, George dear!" whispered Mrs. Plumley to her husband, "what can he been doing,—only to think!"

It is perhaps worthy of remark, as involving a natural phenomonon, that at the first enquiry of the laconic official, Timothy, who a moment before had been seen standing on the pavement, a substantial reality, had incontinently vanished into thin air. He was nowhere to be seen; and it was not until the whole of the Plumleys, together with the cart, had turned the street, and the officer was no longer within eye-shot, that he was seen gradually to resolve into tangibility, and to appear limb by limb from among the complication of boxes and bedding in the cart.

"I say, Timothy, what's Mr. Kwack been a doing?" said Mr. Plumley as soon as that individual had once more assumed his original identity.

"Well, I 'xpect it's about that there hubbub as was in the Park," replied Tim.

"Oh, ay, I see,—the cheap-bread movement. Why I think you was there, wasn't you, Tim?"

"Well, I cert'ny were there, sir," replied Tim; "but I didn't go for to take no part in the row, sir,—not a bit. There was reg'lar desp'rate fightin' too, sir."

"Oh, how sorroy I am for poor Mr. Kwack!" said Mrs. Plumley. "I'm sure the poor young man didn't mean any harm. Oh, what a pity!"

It was about an hour after this, that Mr. Plumley, standing on the "landing" at the side of the Dock-Yard in the salubrious and quiet little town of Woolwich, where the dulcet pounding of ten thousand hammers combine to fill the soul perpetually with sweet emotions, and a thousand fires add their sanitary measures—and bumping measures they are too—

to the native purity of the atmosphere, and, stretching forth his hand to a vessel which was lying in the centre of the river, exclaimed,

"There she is!"

Yes, there she was sure enough. With her tall masts towering up against the distant sky, and her infinity of ropes and cables stretching out here and there, and up and down, and this way and that way, and in all conceivable ways, like a huge cobweb hung out to ensnare the rooks and pigeons,—her golden figure-head waving gracefully up and down, as if she were taking a long and earnest farewell of her native shores,—the water moving quietly and softly about and making the smallest possible murmur against her sides, as though it were chary of disturbing her silent thoughts: yes, there she was! her name was the Wanderer, and she was bound for Quebec.

God speed thee, O Wanderer! Thou hast a freight of precious souls,—of fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters. The dear ones of a thousand hearts are committted to thy care. They are the sons of misfortune, of care, and of sorrow. Unhappy has been their lot in the land of their birth. Penury and want have driven them from the homes that they loved, from the fair ones that were dear to their hearts. They go to seek a respite from their griefs and to build them a home in a far-off land, where tears shall not always mingle with their toil, and where their little ones may be fed. Then bear them in safety, O Wanderer, and God speed thee.

"Hi, boatman! can you take us to the Wanderer?"

"All right, sir,—here you are. There in a jiffy. Shall I hand in the ladies? Come along, my little dear." (Mrs. Plumley—O dear, what a rude man!) "Now then, mum." (Miss Plumley—What a monster!) "Down with your luggage, sir,—you aint much too soon. I see they 're getting her in trim."

In a few minutes more—after a desperate struggle on the part of Mrs. Plumley with that horrid ladder which bade fair to have proved an insurmountable obstacle—they were all lodged safely on board; and one and all looked round bewildered. They found themselves entirely surrounded, and smiled upon, and greeted, and quizzed in all directions by the motliest crowd of motley humanity that it was ever their good fortune, in the whole course of their lives, to form a part of. There were men, women, and children, of every age, caste, profession, business, character, appearance, dress, feeling, thought, and temperament. Men from the country, men from the town, men from the water, and men from nobody knew where. Carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, tailors, cordwainers, farmers, laborers, and men of every trade, calling, and profession, together with a great number who had no such valuable appendage as either trade, calling or profession belonging to them. There were fustians, corduroys, broadcloths, ginghams, blighted silks, cottons, and rags of no particular texture or material, all jostling together, and all received with the same smile of recognition as fellow-wanderers. There, was a group of red-faced rustics, laughing, and talking, and enjoying the voyage in prospective; and there another, with an old man and woman in their midst, were laughing, and crying, and hoping, and doubting, and running through the whole catalogue of emotions; and behind them, away in a corner by themselves, were a mother and son—they were taking a long farewell of each other, and they were crying in real earnest. But the great majority were rushing to and fro, in the midst of the labyrinth of boxes and bundles, and barrels, and chains, and cables, and masts, and planks, and canvas; some tugging away at ropes, rolling over baggage, handing in the fresh boat-loads of human beings that came pouring in one after another, thicker and faster as the time drew near, until the good old Wanderer began almost to groan beneath the heavy load of living, moving, restless, turbulent freight that she was called upon to sustain.

The Plumleys descended into the cabin (as far as name went there was no steerage,—it was all second cabin and saloon, by which arrangement an amount of importance was at once conveyed into the very heart of the assembled crowd at a trifling expense), and it seemed that all the motley collection of the decks, luggage and all, had descended with them. There was the same crowd of precisely the same people, in precisely the same state of bustle and commotion. Boxes, and bedding, and tinware, and noise were prominent everywhere. Ever one was laughing, and crying, and shaking hands, and hoping, and fearing, and doubting, and altogether in the sublimest confusion that could well be imagined. And above it all there was a continual din of hammering, and nailing, and screwing, and fitting in the berths, that seemed to drown everything else, and yet everything else was heard just the same, and—hark!

Mr. Plumley stopped, laid his hand on his

wife's arm, and, with the look of one that was completely astonished (a look which the reader will please to arrange according to his own ideas on the subject), directed her attention to a dicussion between two individuals, that was going on, in conjunction with a great deal of hammering and chiseling, in an adjoining berth.

"I tell you," said one, "that a discovery entirely superseding steam in every shape and form must be a desideratum; and when we consider that it is to be carried out for a few pounds,—a mere bagatelle, I may say,—why of course, there it its."

"Well," replied the other, "it appears to me the illucination involves a complex concatenation of heterogeneous fundamentalities."

"Why, Mr. Albosh!" cried Plumley thrusting his head into the berth.

"Why, bless my soul," cried Mr. Albosh grasping his hand, "here you are then."

"And Mr. Kwack!" added Plumley extending his hand to the philosopher.

"My dear, sir," cried Mr. Kwack, "I'm delighted to see you! yes, here we are, you see, expatriated at last. I've fully made up my mind that the poor old country's done for. No power of intellect can restore a system of inscrutable rottenness, and incomprehensible imbecility, to anything like a systematic state of convalescent salubrity. So I have just torn myself from her, and all I can say is, Heaven preserve her! I attempted to make a bold sally for the constitutional emancipation of her oppressed denizens, but, alas! monarchical sway and oligarchical supremacy prevailed, and pursued the lover of his country, the champion of the people's freedom, the avowed patroit, with the minions of the law, that, like blood-hounds on the scent, were thirsting for his very blood. Plumley! I've left her! I loved her, Plumley, but I've left her! Heaven preserve her!"

Mr. Kwack dashed a tear from his eye, and, springing out of his berth, went forward and greeted the whole of the Plumleys in the most affectionate manner. Mr. Albosh did the same.

"Why, really," said Mr. Albosh, "I had'nt the least idea that you were on board. I thought to have prepared a capital surprise for you,—a little ruse of mine; but there, this is the great pleasure of pleasures, and all the rest is a mere bagatelle. Hark! that's the tug alongside, and we shall soon be moving. Let us go on deck."

On reaching the deck they found the tug that was to tow them down the river, steaming and smoking away close alongside sure enough, and in the distance off the shore, was a boat, coming rapidly towards them, which seemed to engross an unusual amount of attention from the crowd on the decks, while a whisper was running from mouth to mouth, "The saloon passengers." As it approached, Mr. Albosh took Plumley by the arm in a somewhat mysterious manner and led him aside.

"Plumley,—a word. I have just hit upon a discovery. Something out of the common. What do you say to an invention that would throw the entire system of steam-engines and that sort of thing overboard,—eh? Desideratum I believe, eh? It is to be done, sir. But not a word,—not a *word*. Mind you, it is a thing I shouldn't mention to every one."

"Ay," said Plumley turning away his head that his friend might not get the benefit of a smile that was irresistibly playing about his features, "I think you make a good many discoveries, Mr. Albosh, don't you?"

"Lord bless you!" replied the other, "discovery is one of my happiest gifts."

Mr. Plumley made no reply, but he had his own notions about the happiness of the gift.

"Good Heavens! look here, Plumley," cried Mr. Albosh seizing his friend violently by the arm and dragging him in view of the boat, which had just come along side.

Mr. Plumley changed color and bit his lips, and looked vacantly at his friend. There were six people in the boat besides the boatman, —a little girl, a lady, and four males. As they moved directly into the saloon without taking the slightest notice of any of the objects by which they were surrounded as they passed along, Plumley and his friend stood watching them in mute astonishment, at a convenient distance, until they had all disappeared.

"I am sorry for this," said Mr. Plumley.

"Yes, so am I," returned Mr. Albosh. "It will throw a damper on the whole voyage. I am afraid it is a bad omen, Plumley. But don't say a word,—keep it quiet; it will only make them all uneasy."

"I am very, very sorry," said Mr. Plumley leaning against the bulwarks in a thoughtful mood.

The dull, heavy clank, clank of the anchor, and the "shanty" chorus that had been ringing through the air for the last fifteen minutes, had by this time ceased; the pilot was vociferating his orders, the tug was in her place,

and they began to glide gradually down the river. A cloud of hats and handkerchiefs uprose from the decks, in answer to a similar demonstration from the small fleet of boats that lingered on the river; and amidst a complicated burst of cheers and hurrahs, and smiles and tears, and distress and fear, and hope, and all sorts of emotions from all points of the assembled crowds, they glided away,—away from their homes, and their loves, and their dear ones,—away, for a far-off land, whence they might never return.

'Twas then, O England, that they felt they had lost thee! They are indeed the unhappy among thy sons; and many are the sorrows and the woes that have chased them from thy shores. Thy storehouses, that team with plenty, have been barred against them. They have petitioned in thy midst for bread, and have petitioned in vain. Thy great ones have frowned on them, and the voice of their sorrow has been drowned in the tumult of thy revelries. Their cries and lamentations have been mocked with the jingle of thy countless gold, and they have been made to gaze on thy abundance with famished eyes and broken hearts. But still they turn from thy shores with regret. They are thy sons, and there is much in thee to love; and while they bid a long and last farewell to thy receding shores, their eyes gush out with tears, and they exclaim in their hearts, "O England, with all thy faults I love thee still!"

CHAPTER VIII.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

The Wanderer made a good start after the tug left her, with stud-sails set and all hands as merry and happy and hopeful as might have been desired. But this was one of those conditions which are proverbially recognized as being too good to last. As the evening came on, the breeze that had hitherto kept the sails full, began gradually to decrease; heavy mists were seen gathering on the horizon, the wind came in fitful gusts from the opposite quarter, the sails begun to flap, and the heavy voice of the mate was heard every now and then, "Keep her full, keep her full." A remarkable change in the motion of the vessel became every moment more perceptible, and men, women, and children, who a few minutes before were capering about, and singing and dancing in high glee, were seen quietly quitting the deck one after another with pale faces and downcast eyes. A thick drizzly rain began to fall, the wind veered round, and round, and round, until the order was heard "'Bout ship;" and then the sailors began to rush to and fro, and the "Ya ho, heave ho, ya ho!" went ringing through the air, and everything was at once converted into confusion and noise and tumult. As the vessel began to roll and to pitch, so did the groans and moans begin to proceed from every conceivable corner of the cabin. Some were already moaning away in their berths, others were stretched at full length upon the seats and boxes and bundles about the floors, while the rest were rocking themselves to and fro, throwing up their eyes heavenward, and endeavouring to look as much as possible as if their last moments were at hand. Wives were appealing for assistance to their husbands, children to mothers, sisters to brothers, and perhaps upon the whole it was one of the sublimest scenes of misery and confusion and pantomimic wretchedness that could well be imagined. Almost the only exception to the general rule was our tight little acquaintance Timothy. Whether it happened that the mutual campact existing between himself and Nature extended to the exclusion of sea-sickness, or whether it was merely an accidental peculiarity appertaining to his peculiar construction, certain it is, as he wittily observed, that all her tossing didn't matter a toss-up to him, and he'd undertake to bet her anything at even odds that she didn't come any of her nolus bolus doctoring with him. He was pretty well, he thanked her, and didn't want any salt-water cures,—kismetics espice'ly. In fact, he went so far as to assure Miss Plumley, by way of consoling her, as he handed her a cup of tea with a trifle of brandy in it (of which she instantly capsized one half over the faded

silk on the one side, and the other, in attempting to recover her balance, into the lap of a bilious old gentleman on the other, and straightway reprimanded the unfortunate Timothy for making her such a victim), that of the two he rather preferred the rocking, and he hadn't the least doubt that after she had had about a fortnight of it, she'd say so to; so he advised her to cheer up.

This description of weather continued almost without any intermission for four days; when the pilot left them at Dover. A heavy sea was running at the time, and it was with the greatest difficulty he was transferred to the boat. He carried a large parcel of letters with him from the emigrants to their friends, and among them was one from Mr. Plumley addressed to Mr. McCameron, "with dispatch."

Still they continued beating against head winds, "tack and 'bout, tack and 'bout," until on the twelfth day they cleared the Land's End, and found themselves fairly in the open Atlantic. The wind veering round more to the eastward, they now began to make better headway, and, as the fair wind came accompanied by fair weather, pale faces and weak bodies began to creep up one after another from below, thicker and thicker, more and more, until in a very short time the decks were once more crowded with human beings; and the rolling, and tossing, and distress, and wretchedness were soon entirely forgotten, and everything and every body were converted into cheerfulness, and a general state of comparative happiness obtained.

During all this time, but little had been seen of the occupants of the saloon. Now and then the little girl was seen seated outside the door in a small basket-chair, reading, and looking very pale and ill; and at night a tall figure, closely enveloped in cloaks and wrappers, was generally to be seen walking hurriedly to and fro on the poop-deck. Sometimes he was accompanied by two others, who however usually walked on the opposite side by themselves, but he was more frequently alone. Beyond this nothing was known, or perhaps sought to be known, by the emigrants, as to who they were or what they were. But as our curiosity cannot be supposed to be regulated or circumscribed by ship's discipline and the barrier of caste, why of course it becomes our duty to ourselves to walk into the curtained sanctum, and see what all this mystery is really about.

It was on the third day, then, after the fair wind and fine weather had been established for general healthy purposes, that on looking into the saloon, up one side and down the other, we should have been rewarded with a full view of all the ordinary furniture appertaining to saloons generally, together with two individuals of the masculine gender, who were engaged at a quiet game of chess at the furthermost end of the apartment.

"I fancy she is begining to rock again, Bolton," said one, laying his hand involuntarily on the chess-board.

"I fancy you're about right, Growley," returned the other.

From these highly important and pertinent remarks, it is presumed the reader may form some faint idea as to who the parties were. If not, it is only to be regretted that the time and ingenuity expended in framing them have been entirely lost, inasmuch as they will have failed to realize the sole end for which they were created, leaving it still incumbent upon us to proceed in the usual way, to state that it was *indeed* they and none other.

In one of the state-rooms on the opposite side of the saloon, the door of which was closed, were three other individuals. Reclining on the small sofa which the room contained was the unfortunate Matilda. She had evidently been a great sufferer from the voyage, and was still ill. Her eyes were partly closed, she was deadly pale, and her hand trembled, as it hung at her side, from weakness and exhaustion. Kneeling by her side, with her tearful little eyes looking affectionately into her own, was the beautiful little Alice; but she was scarcely less pale, and seemed also to have suffered her share of the common affliction. Opposite, sat Blackbourn, with his legs crossed, and his hand supporting his head, apparently in some agitation.

"No, I can't tell you why," he said after a long silence, as if in continuation of some former remark. "I can't tell you why you are here, child. Why I should have conjured up a pack of lies to decoy you across this black abyss, I can't tell. I didn't want you. Would to Heaven I had never seen you!"

"Oh, Blackbourn!" cried Matilda in a faint voice, but with a look of extreme alarm, "have you then deceived me? We are not going to poor dear papa? he has not left England then? Oh, Alice, dear Alice!" she cried, putting her arm round the weeping child, and drawing her closer; "my poor heart Alice, my poor heart! God forgive him! he will kill me, and poor dear pa!"

Alice kissed her affectionately, and smoothed down her hair with her gentle little hand, and then, rising from her knees and quietly disengaging herself, she crossed over and laid her hand on Blackbourn's arm and raised her pale and weeping countenance to his with a supplicating look ; her lips moved as though she were attempting to speak, but no sound could be heard, and she shook her head and pointed imploringly to the couch. He sat glaring from one to the other for several seconds, until his eyes became fixed, and his whole body trembled with emotion ; when he started frantically to his feet, and cried, in a voice that rang through the whole saloon,

"Oh, Alice, Alice, you too have become a tormentor! Why did I know you, girl?" he continued turning savagely towards the terrified Matilda. "Why, O Heaven! why? She never maddened me with her looks before. You have robbed me of my only comfort! could I have sought that? Go and ask the devils that are about us, why I brought you here. I cannot tell you, unless it be to drive me mad—I wish it could!"

So saying he rushed out, and slammed the door behind him, and they heard him pass out on to the deck.

"Oh, Tilda, dear Tilda!" cried Alice falling on her knees by her side; "I didn't mean to be cruel to him."

"No, no dear," returned Matilda, pressing her little hands in her own: "you are too good, much too good, my own Alice. But he is very terrible: he has been very wicked, Alice, oh, very wicked! You will forgive me, dear, wont you? but I can't help thinking of poor dear pa and ma. Oh, my poor heart, my poor heart! I shall never see them any more,—never, never, Alice!"

"O yes, perhaps you will, Tilda," replied Alice putting her arms round her neck. "You mustn't cry now,—indeed you mustn't. I shall always love you, you know, so you mustn't cry, Tilda. And perhaps *he* will turn good to you some day, you know, and then we shall all be so happy! So you mustn't cry, that you mustn't. Oh, hark! what's that?"

It was the sound of Blackbourn's voice, accompanied by a cry which appeared to proceed from a child. Fearing something was amiss she rushed out, and on reaching the door of the saloon, she saw Blackbourn standing on the deck with his arm raised and his eyes glaring upon a little boy—it was Simon—who was cowering away from him at a little distance, surrounded by a large concourse of the passengers.

"Keep him out of my way, then," said Blackbourn in reply to a remark from one of the bystanders.

"Well sir," said Timothy, who happened to be at hand, "with all due reference to you, sir, I dont see as you had any call to go for to strike at him like that. For my part I couldn't see as he was *in* your way,—that's what I couldn't."

"No, no, no, not at all," said several of the passengers.

"I'm sure I didn't mean to be," said Simon.

"By George! what's amiss?" asked Mr. Plumley emerging from below.

"Why the gentleman thought as Simy was in his way and went for to aim a blow at him," said Timothy; "but he aint hurt him, as it happened."

"Oh, sir," said Mr. Plumley coming forward, "I'm sure that weren't right, sir, cause I'm sure he's a child as wouldn't give offense to any body."

"Bah! nonsense! You are all mistaken," said Blackbourn; and turning hastily round he hurried into the saloon. Little Alice retreated the moment she saw him turn, and was out of sight before he entered.

"Bolton," said Blackbourn taking him by the arm and leading him into a separate berth, "I am hemmed in with devils on all sides. They are driving me mad. I wish I had never set my foot on this cursed devil's hutch. If it hadn't been for your incessant howling I should have remained where I was. This is no place for me. The eyes of the whole ship are glaring at me. However, it is all in the programme I suppose. Just make some apology for me about that boy. Say I was drunk,—anything you please. You understand? I must lock myself up in that box, and keep there."

Bolton hung down his head, and the old secret satisfaction sat upon his face as he squeezed and ground his hands together and returned in silence to his chess.

During the whole of this time the motion in the vessel observed by Mr. Growley, had been gradually and almost imperceptibly increasing, and it was now with some difficulty they were enabled to keep their men in their respective positions. The Captain (a rough, bluff, weather-beaten, good-hearted, cheerful old fellow) had been seen to make frequent and anxious excursions between the poop-deck and the glass which was kept swinging against the mast in

the centre of the saloon; and at each succeeding examination of the mercury the monosyllable "Ugh," which invariably accompanied it, became more distinct and ominous.

Bolton had scarcely regained his seat, when, without the slightest warning, the vessel gave a sudden lurch, and over came castles, and bishops, and knights, and monarchs, pell-mell, all of a heap, into his lap. A heavy sea had struck her on the beam, and so unexpected was it that even the sailors lost their balance and were seen to bound from one side to the other like so many balls thrown from the hand; while the unsuspecting steward, who happened at the very moment to be emerging from his pantry with an arm-full of plates and dishes for deposit in the safety-rack, was observed to make a sudden halt, stretch out his legs, throw his body into sundry extraordinary contortions, and, then with one flying leap, away went plates, dishes, steward and all, crash against the opposite partition, through the panelling, away into the mate's berth, and down went the whole collection in a heterogeneous heap of crockery fragments, bruises, and sailors' benedictions.

The Captain threw another hasty glance at the glass, and in another moment the order was given, "Take in to'-gallant sails," "Stow the jib;" and away went the lads flying up the rigging, out upon the jib-boom, one after another, helter-skelter, with their "Ya ho, heave ho!" and in a few minutes all was confusion and rattle and tumult, and, among the passengers, consternation and alarm; for with the majority, the only associations accompanying such movements were fire, rocks, or icebergs; and many of them involuntarily thrust their heads over the sides to see if their was time to run down and arouse their friends before they were entirely engulfed. Heavy seas began to roll-in in rapid succession, and the vessel pitched, and tossed, and lurched until the passengers remaining on deck were forced to hold-on to the rigging, and cling to one another to maintain their balance; and the wind came in heavy gusts, that every now and then sent the whole vessel trembling and groaning from top to bottom.

The last order was scarcely executed, when, after another glance at the glass and a more emphatic "Ugh" than the last, the Captain emerged from the saloon, and, taking another survey of the weather, shook his weather-beaten countenance, and called to the mate:

"Clew the mainsail, sir: she's coming."

"Ay, ay, sir. It looks dirty."

The old sailors turned their eyes to windward, and thence to leeward, and, following their captain's example, shook their heads and said it was their opinion that she *was* coming; and the young sailor looked up to the rigging, and whistled, and danced about, and shouted and grinned, and said, Let her come.

Darker, blacker grew the sky; higher, fiercer rose the seas, and a white crest began to gather on the waves as they rose, and rolled, and broke, and rose again, and dashed on each other's heels; the wind came steadier and stronger, the vessel pitched and tossed, and dashed through the foaming waters with furious bounds; the passengers staggered from the deck one after another with distorted bodies and anxious faces, and shook their heads when they got below like ill-omened oracles; the captain paced to and fro, muttering to himself, and throwing hurried glances up at the sky; and everything looked as much like an approaching storm as everything could look.

"Martin," said the Captain, calling the first mate to him, "a word. What do you think of it?"

"Dirty, sir; very dirty. I think it'll be down on us 'fore long. It's coming from the right quarter, sir. How's the glass, sir?"

"Going down like lead. Hardly ever remember it to fall faster. My opinion is *she's coming*. A little rum and water, Martin?"

"Well, I 'xpect we shall have a stiff night of it, sir," replied Martin, with a voluminous jerk of his head to imply acquiesence.

The captain led the way into the saloon and produced the rum. Custom had rendered it an impossibility for him to discuss a matter of this sort, soberly and sagely, without the assistance of this oracle, and he naturally concluded that the same infirmity had entered into the composition of his mate; and Martin of course felt it a sort of moral duty devolving upon him to abstain from interfering with any such opinions so indulged in by his superior.

"Look," said the Captain, directing the other's attention to the glass, "why—why, she's down *that* (measuring the distance with his finger) in the last fifteen minutes. Ay, I thought so, —*she's coming*," and he drank off a tumbler of rum and water, and nodded and winked mysteriously at the glass, and then to Martin, as much as to assure them both that he had been privately informed on the subject, and that there couldn't be the slightest doubt at all about the matter, inasmuch as he *knew* she was coming.

"I haven't a ghost of a doubt about it, sir,"

replied Martin, examining the glass with the eye of a philosopher. "Close-reef top-sails, sir ?"

"Yes; close-reef top-sails. Is everything snug?"

"My word on it, sir."

The wind was blowing harder and stronger every moment, and they had scarcely time to reef the top-sails before it came driving down upon them a complete gale. The seas rose higher and higher, and swelled and broke and dashed against the bulwarks, and went flying through the rigging and over the quarter-deck, until every man about was drenched to the skin, and the main-deck was washed by every sea that passed,—pouring in at one side and dashing out over the bulwarks on the other, with a fury that threatened to sweep everything before it. It was with the greatest difficulty that the men could move from place to place to execute the orders that were momentarily shouted out by the mate; and it was only by clinging, as sailors only know how, to the ropes and cable-ends, and selecting their time with the skill which practice had given them, that they were enabled to preserve their footing in the midst of the boiling waters that were lashed about them on all sides, and to save themselves from being dashed about the deck like so many helpless blocks. As it was, they were frequently carried off their legs and rolled against the masts and barrels and planks that were stowed away about the decks, or entirely buried, every now and then, under several feet of the boiling element.

Still it rose higher and higher, harder and harder, mountain on mountain, thicker and faster, until the heavy voice of the mate as he bellowed forth his orders, could scarcely be distinguished above the rumbling of the heavy seas, as they rolled and broke, and thundered upon one another, and the steady, dead, perpetual, unchanging howl of the wind, that swept before it every sound but that of its own voice and the rumbling of the chaos over which it reigned.

The glass still falls, but there is more yet. She is creaking and groaning already, but there is a hurricane behind, and out rushes the captain, and, scrambling to the poop-deck, he seizes hold of trumpet and thunders forth with all his strength, and it sounds like the voice of a child in the midst of the raging elements:

"Stow the top-sails; haul out storm stay-sail."

"Ay, ay, sir."

And away go the dripping forms scrambling up the rigging, looking in the darkness like so many sea-monsters emerging one after another from the raging waters. Away they go, higher, higher, until they are lost in the impenetrable darkness, and then the faint "Ya ho, ya ho!" is heard like a distant wail travelling on the wind.

Still on it comes harder, fiercer yet. She tosses, and pitches, and plunges furiously against her assailants as they thunder and split and break against her sides. Crash go the bulwarks in all directions, and in pours the victorious monster, sweeping over the decks, away over the other side, dashing and crashing and boiling up and down, and carrying havoc every where before it, and—hark!

"Look to the long-boat!—the long-boat's a drift!"

Off scramble the black watery ghosts, but it is too late: away she goes dashing over the side, away into the boiling surge, and—hark, another cry!

"Look to the galley!—now then, hold on lads! for God's sake, hold on!"

Two men are swept from their hold and dashed furiously against the opposite side, and are all but overboard; but the others hold on manfully and the galley is secured, and lashed, and relashed, and this is scarcely accomplished when another shout!

"Quick lads!—a hand here,—the bo'swain's hurt!"

And off they scramble again to where the injured man has been knocked down. He is disabled for duty, and they drag him through the boiling water as best they can to the forecastle.

Still on it comes harder and fiercer yet. The mountain seas run higher and higher and foam and plunge more furiously yet. Now she rolls down, down, down into a vast and boiling chasm, and the towering waters hang like a threatening Etna above her; and now she hangs high up on the frowning summit, ready to be dashed again into the gaping vortex below. But still she rolls on and on; her timbers are staunch; the hearts of a hundred souls are breathing prayers for her safety, and she carries them firmly in her grasp over the chaos of waters! The destroying angels have no commission against thee, O Wanderer, and thy wooden walls are safe!

While nature above board was rushing into these wild extravagances,—for which we don't profess to be able to give the why or the wherefore, nor the end nor the object,—it would

perhaps have been somewhat difficult to form a just estimate as to the precise genus to which the varied and remarkable demonstrations that obtained among the passengers below, did really and legitimately belong. Whether the ludicrous, the tragic, the sublime, or the ridiculous predominated; or what peculiar share they each and all enjoyed in the great medley that was therein enacted.

The first shock which had so unceremoniously overturned Mr. Bolton's knights and bishops, had likewise performed the same office for sundry of the *dramatis personæ* of this strange drama. One phlegmatic old gentleman, who was quietly enjoying his usual evening's potion by himself at a corner of the table, was seen suddenly to receive the tin pot containing the same, contents and all, in the centre of his waistcoat, while he himself straightway proceeded to turn three distinct but inartistic somer-saults in rapid succession across the cabin floor, until his head suddenly disappeared through a piece of half-inch panelling on the opposite side. Several persons instantly made a rush to his assistance; but the sudden rebound of the vessel unfortunately destroyed their equilibrium as they advanced towards him, and precipitated them, pell-mell, one upon another, with unmerciful violence, upon the unhappy acrobat; which melancholy disaster was only equalled by that which followed immediately in its rear, in the shape of the further overthrow into their midst of a benevolent individual who happened to be moving along at the moment, cautiously, and as he imagined securely, with a basin of hot gruel in each hand, which he had affectionately provided for his wife and daughter.

At the opposite end, at the same moment, a no less ludicrous and disasterous affair occurred in the midst of a small and select family circle, who had taken it into their heads to make a late tea by themselves and had ingeniously smuggled a kettle of hot water for the purpose. They had laid out at the extreme end of the table a most respectable "spread," cloth and all. The tea was steaming in the cups, the kettle was standing in a dish in the centre, and sundry luxuries graced the surrounding space, when the father of the flock—a rather corpulent individual, and who happened to be sitting on the lee side—received the due influence of the lurch, and, feeling his equilibrium leaving him, seized hold of the cloth for support, and, amidst the screams and cries of the flock, over he rolled, dragging the whole of the luxuries, kettle and all, on to the top of his corpulent person.

The unaccountable supply of individual and private bruises that that one lurch entailed upon the "steerage," or rather the cabin, was incredible. But perhaps the most tragicocomic scene that the gale altogether was destined to afford, was singled out for a somewhat distinguished member of the crowd, in the form of a Hampshire farmer, an individual constructed in the form of a barrel, with two huge parsnips serving the office of legs, and a pair of bulky, uncultivated carrots swinging in the place of arms, the whole being finished off with a round, fat, shiny head, very much of the form and color of a full-grown Swedish turnip.

In consequence of an extraordinary propensity he had acquired for falling to sleep in all kinds of extraordinary attitudes and times and corners,—having frequently been discovered in a state of somnambulism standing bolt upright in the centre of the gang-way with his hands in his pockets and his body rigid,—he had been surnamed Joe, by some wags on board, after the world-famed Joe the fat boy. But Joe was a remarkably good-tempered fellow, and he took it all in good part. Well, at about the time that the storm was at its highest, Joe was seen suddenly to emerge from some invisible retreat in which he had hitherto been lost, and commence rolling, by means of a system which he had of sliding his hands gradually along the table with his back wedged firmly against the partitioning of the berths—down one side, round the end, and so on to his own berth, wherein he presently disappeared by some miraculous agency. Now, it had often been observed, that, after disappearing in this manner for a few moments, Joe had returned smacking his lips, and approaching nearer than usual to a waking state. Well, he had scarcely been lost to view for more than half a dozen seconds, when the vessel gave a tremendous lurch, and crash went the framework of Joe's berth and out came Joe, flying in the air with his arms extended,—a quart bottle in one hand and a wineglass in the other. Crash went the back of the seat and over came Joe, bottle and all, plump into the centre of the table, where the rebound of the vessel kept him oscillating on his spine for several seconds, with his arms still extended and the bottle and glass trembling in his tenacious grasp, until another lurch came, and away he rolled, crash against the seat on the opposite side, over and over, crash, dash, into the opposite berth; where he was only saved

from bounding through the ship's side by the extraordinary strength of the wood-work, and the rebounding effect of a collision with a poor unfortunate old lady who happened to be pillowed therein.

While such scenes as these were enacting by the gross, and every lurch brought its disaster and overthrow, there was a confusion of tongues and a mental aberration raging among the weaker brethren that was perhaps altogether unequalled by anything corporeal that transpired. The aggregate amount of female groans—made the more dismal from the fact that each one was regarded as about the last—that swelled the discordant chorus in that time of trial, it were impossible to estimate by any calculating-machine that was ever thought of. At every fresh plunge of the vessel, the whole place rang with soprano screams, and half-articulate exclamations to the effect that all was lost—that they felt her going—that they were resigned to it, and all they could ask for was mercy; which would almost instantly be followed by a reaction, and the place would ring again with fresh cries for some one to come and save them—in fact, that they *would* be saved if it were only for mercy's sake. Some were less exacting, and assured any body and every body that if they would only come forward and save the child, they would die happy. Another would undertake to resign the world without a moan, if they would only there and then agree to save her husband—not that she believed he could ever live happy without her, but there, she was a woman, and it was her place to suffer; while another asked nothing more than that they would just tell her if there was danger—was there danger? she was a wife and a mother, and therefore she wanted to know—was there danger? and as every one persisted in telling her there was *no* danger, she straightway commenced a pitiful wailing, and said she understood them—yes she understood them; and such being the case, she was resigned to it, and only begged to be saved for the sake of her husband and child.

Among the thus afflicted, the unfortunate Miss Plumley was not one of the least. On the first approach of bad weather while in the channel, she had taken to her berth, stating that she felt she had been reserved for a watery grave, and, being a victim, she might as well be one, and she merely begged that they would apprise her of the time and manner in which her last moments should be cast; and neither entreaties, nor threats, nor persuasion had been available in inducing her to quit her position so taken, either bodily or mentally.

As the storm advanced, Mrs. Plumely, who had hitherto been unwearied in her attentions upon her, had been compelled to retreat with her little Lizy to her berth, and Miss Plumley was left alone; whereupon she almost immediately lifted up her voice and wept aloud.

"O George dear, do go to Selina," said Mrs. Plumley to her husband, who was scrambling to and fro, hither and thither—not only attending to his own family, but to one half the families on board; in which good office he was assisted by Timothy, who was unanimously voted by the whole cabin to be equal to three stewards, a stewardess, and a cook, at any given moment. "Hark, how ill she must be! Oh do go!"

Mr. Plumley staggered away, and in another moment was supporting himself against the frame-work of his sister's berth.

"Well, Selina, what's a matter? What can I do for you, eh child?"

A groan.

"Come, cheer up, girl. What would you like—a little brandy?"

"Oh—mercy—what—a—victim!" groaned Miss Selina. "What could—you have—brought me here—to die for Ge—orge? Oh, I'm a victim. I wish you would get some one—to put me in the sea—Oh, I wish you would."

"Come, come, you mustn't talk like that there, girl."

"Oh, I dare say—that dreadful-looking sailor with the black beard would do it—oh dear—I wish you would let him, George—he looks fit for anything. Oh, mercy!—what a victim!"

Miss Selina entirely refused to be comforted. The more her brother sought to console her, the more she insisted on instant measures being taken for committing her to the waves—that a period might be put to her victimized existence.

Well, towards the morning the storm began to abate, and by sunrise, although the sea was still running high, there was nothing more than a stiff breeze blowing from the eastward, and that was still rapidly abating. By noon it had almost completely lulled into a calm, and the sea was fast subsiding into a similar condition; while the sun shone out brilliantly and dried up the decks and saturated rigging; the passengers began again to appear from below, and gradually crowded the decks; and the fears and calamities of the night were soon effectually and for ever dispelled by the brilliancy and beauty of the day.

In the evening, Alice (the little lady, as the emigrants called her) was seated in her little chair by the saloon door, with her book in her hand, attentively watching a group of children who were engaged at a short distance from her in a somewhat limited game of " touch." Lizy and Simon were among them, and it appeared to be the latter upon whom Alice's attention was more particularly concentrated. Her eyes followed him mechanically wherever he went; and at length, as he stopped close to her chair with his hand on a piece of iron that was to protect him from his pursuer, she spoke to him.

"May I speak a word to you, little boy, when you have finished playing?" she said speaking partially in a whisper.

"Oh, yes, if you please, miss," replied Simon giving his attention at once.

"Oh, don't let me interfere with your playing, please," said Alice, slightly confused by the suddenness of his acquiescence.

"I'm quite tired, thank you, miss," replied Simon; for the fact is he felt a little proud and a little confused himself at being noticed by the handsome little lady.

Alice looked at him for a moment, and then bent down her head as though she were doubtful if she should speak to him then; but after a moment's hesitation she shook her pretty little curls over her face, and, looking up at him again, observed,

"I wanted to ask you if you were hurt yesterday? because I've been so anxious to know."

"By the gentleman, do you mean?"

Alice nodded.

"Oh, no, thank you. He didn't strike me. But I'm sure you are very kind to ask."

"I am sure he didn't mean to hurt you," continued Alice looking down on her book again. "Would you mind telling me your name, little boy?" she added, turning about the book with some little embarrassment.

"Simon Seek, miss," replied Simon, who stood motionless before her, with his eyes fixed upon her beautiful little countenance, until he became almost bewildered with the variety of emotions that were rushing through his small composition.

"Well, you are not a *poor* boy, Simon Seek, are you?" continued Alice looking innocently up in his face.

"Oh, yes," returned Simon more bewildered than ever; "we have been very poor."

"How strange," said Alice, "you don't look like a poor boy to me. I am sure you can read —cant you?"

"O yes, I can read, miss."

"Did you ever read this book?" said Alice holding the book open before him.

"No, miss, I dont think I ever did."

"Well, dont you think you would like to? It is full of beautiful tales, and it is called the Arabian Nights," said Alice looking shyly up.

"Oh yes, I am sure I should, miss," replied Simon.

At this point of the conversation Alice became evidently confused, as if she wanted to say something and didn't know whether she ought or not. At length, after marking out a variety of odd shapes on the cover of the book with her finger, she looked up, and throwing her little head pensively on one side, she said softly,

"Simon—you wouldn't mind if I were to call you Simon for the little time we are on this dreadful ship, would you?"

"You are very kind, miss, I'm sure," replied Simon almost with the tears in his eyes, her peculiarly kind manner in addressing him so overcame his susceptible nature. "Not if you please, I'm sure."

"Well, it *dòes* seem strange, don't it?" said Alice hanging down her head as the color rose to her beautiful little cheek. "But I think I *am* a very strange little girl, do you know. I never spoke to a little boy before in my life, I think, and only once or twice to a little girl. That is very strange, isn't it? I've always been alone—quite alone, and that seems so very dreadful, doesn't it? I have had a governess, you know, but I don't call her a friend, because she was cross, and I didn't like her much. Well, I was going to ask you, Simon—is that considered a pretty name?"

"I'm sure I dont know."

"Well, I was going to ask you if you thought your ma would let you come and read to me on the deck when it is so very fine—if you would like to."

"I should be very glad to indeed, if I could," replied Simon.

"Oh, I am sure you must be able to read beautifully,—perhaps better than I can. Then it would be so delightful, and it would be just the same as if we both read the books, wouldn't it? Oh, but what a strange girl," she continued, rising and shaking her pretty little curls over her face. "Please do ask your ma, will you? Oh, good bye Simon,—oh, I am so strange!"

So saying, and still shaking her head to and

fro, she darted off into the saloon, leaving Simon with his eyes brim-full of tears, looking after her, bewildered and confused, and wondering why so beautiful a little lady should have taken so much interest in a poor boy like himself.

Little Lizy had run away and hid herself behind a mast as soon as she saw Simon conversing with the little lady, whence she stood and watched them with an anxious countenance,—and her little heart beat, and the tears came involuntarily to her eyes, although she could not tell why. She was very glad to see Simon taken notice of by the little lady, and yet there was another feeling that made her sorry; and when Alice disappeared she felt almost afraid to approach him—her sensitive little heart beat faster and faster, and she felt very, very sad, but she could not tell why. Was it a silent whispering within her of the sorrows of future years ?

Mrs. Plumley was of course very proud and pleased that her darling little boy should be made so much of by the little lady; and day after day, when the weather was fine, he was seen seated by her side reading and talking; and often did he sit by the hour together, gazing in silent admiration on her beautiful countenance, and lost in the wanderings of his own bewildered little soul. And thus were sown in his heart the first seeds of a future, imbittered and charmed and disordered with strange emotions and conflicting passions, that were destined to control his movements, to direct his aspirations, and for a time to distract his mind and destroy the happiness of himself and of those that were dear to him.

Although little Lizy had often been asked to form one of their party, she could never be prevailed upon to do so. She usually seated herself alone in some distant corner, whence she could watch them unobserved, and often the tears were in her eyes; but she said nothing and never complained of being left alone for so many hours; and when Simon—his conscience telling him that he had neglected her—tried to make up for it by telling her all about the tales he had been reading, and what the little lady had said to him, she always laughed and kissed him and said they were both very good, and she was sure he wouldn't forget his poor little Lizy.

So time went on, day after day, with fair winds and head winds, fine weather and foul, until, after crossing the "Banks" in a dense and uncomfortable fog, the sun rose brilliantly and gaily on the fortieth day out, and they sighted the first land,—a long, blue irregular streak, away, far away in the distance,—and with cheerful faces, and hopeful hearts, and grateful minds, they entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence and bore down upon the Canadian shores.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARRIVAL AND FLIGHT.

As the emigrants entered the St. Lawrence, the imposing scene that gradually opened before them, inspired them with all the known varities of pleasurable emotions. There were the far-famed Canadian hills—the glorious mountain range, that rises up like nature's giants from her rock-bound banks—summit on summit, higher, loftier, mightier as they stretch away, range after range, height upon height;—now towering up like the monarchs of creation, high and higher, marching onward to the clouds; and now rolling away chain upon chain—away, until they dissolve in the distance, rising, and swelling and undulating like the waves of a mighty ocean, enchaining the sense, and wrapping the imagination in admiration and delight as it rolls on in contemplation of their vast and untrodden labyrinths. There was the wild and trackless forest, clambering up the lofty steeps, filling the deep valleys, and ravines, and undulations with its ever-varying hues, and clothing the landscape—as far as the eye could penetrate, above and below, and away over an interminable tract, with a rich mantle of the never-ending, never-tiring varieties of nature's gorgeous colorings—blended and softened, and dissolved in the distance, until nature herself seemed bewildered and lost in the accumulation of her own extravagance and profusion.

As this imposing scene gradually opened and

expanded and burst upon their view, their hearts leapt within them, they clapped their hands, they rushed about the decks, calling to one another,—men women and children became completely ungovernable in their excitement; and as far as could be judged from their repeated and vociferous exclamations, and the general expression of countenance, they no longer entertained a doubt that Canada was a great country—a glorious country; that to a certain extent her streets must be paved with gold, and her highways flowing with milk and honey; and further, that from that moment their fortunes, individually and collectively, were for the most part made. And certainly, if an imposing landscape—if the wildest and grandest of nature's handiworks—the most magnificent scenery that it would be possible for the world to produce, were any earnest or criterion of such a happy condition, they were fully and unquestionably justified in their conclusions.

Towards the evening of the third day in the river, and while they were yet in a whirl of excitement,—sending up their grateful acknowledgements to whomsoever it might concern for having provided for their several necessities and established them in life on such a sound and satisfactory basis,—it was proposed by Mr. Kwack, and generally responded to by the company, that a "mass" meeting of the whole congregation of fortunate adventurers should be held below, for the purpose of discussing their future prospects and designs in a friendly and unsophisticated manner, for the general instruction and edification. Mr. Kwack having proved himself the great orator and oracle on every subject throughout the passage, was unanimously voted to the chair; and the principal lions of the company were arranged in due order on his right and left; while the listening crowd were stowed away and huddled together by the dozen round the tables, and in odd corners, or perched up in their berths with their heads hanging over, their hearts in their mouths, and expectation on tip-toe to hear the best suggestions, and the prospects held out by the oracles of making a fortune off-hand, and arriving at that degree of independence to which fallen nature will never cease to aspire, doubtless, until the world is remodelled, and the glorious era of the Kwack philosophers and philanthropists is ushered in.

On the philosopher's right sat Mr. Albosh, Mr. Plumley, Timothy, and William,—the latter gentleman having found the society of the emigrants an irresistable attraction to his social and colloquial turn of mind, notwithstanding that his master had taken care to provide him with a spare berth in the saloon for the twofold object of keeping him within call and preventing any unnecessary intercourse with the "steerage." On his left sat Joe—already made conspicuous and celebrated by his somnambulism and bottle-feat—and two young men of rather a superior exterior to the ordinary run of the crowd, and with respect to whom, as they are already singled out as future subjects and fellow-laborers in these Adventures, a word may not be out of place.

They were brothers, of about the respective ages of twenty-six and seventeen; and had crossed the ocean provided with the euphonious patronymic of Sorftish. Josiah, the elder Sorftish, was a slimly made, sickly looking, soporiferous piece of framework, that looked as if he had been forced in a hot-bed, and allowed to shoot out in all directions, until he had ultimately run to seed and lost his identity in a straggling complication of nothing but arms and legs. He was married; and had for his wife a harmless little, tender-hearted fragment of affection and simplicity, that from her cradle upwards—with a view to the hardships of a colonial life—had been systematically fed and developed on sentiment, soft words, indolence, and curl-papers. She had of course been a great sufferer from the effects of the voyage, but she bore it all with an amiable sweetness, buoyed up by the happy anticipations of bliss and sunshine, plenty and prosperity, with which, in her innocence, she had invested that stern, matter-of-fact land to which she was going. Philip, the youngest Sorftish, was established on better principles, and constructed out of sharper and stouter material than his soporific brother; but nevertheless he did'nt think so. He looked up to his brother Josiah with a sort of reverential awe; and he would just as soon have thought of jumping over the side of the vessel in the immediate vicinity of a dinnerless shark, as of disputing one inch of ground on any subject whatsoever with the oracular Josiah;—in fact, it may be mentioned in illustration, that he scarcely ever felt so much as a private inclination to sneeze that he did'nt straightway cast up his eyes to the soporific countenance to ascertain the propriety or non-propriety, as therein indicated, of allowing nature to take her course. They were two flowers of a flock of ten, and the beloved offspring of a broken-down merchant of the city of London—the ruins of whom were then and at that time to be found ensconced with his partner in afflic-

tion in a "two-pair back" in one of the obscure corners of the suburban retreat of Haggerstone. Being indulgent and affectionate parents, they had educated their children to nothing in particular, and sent them forward in the world with good advice, no means, less experience, and with certain confused ideas of their own importance —inasmuch as, being the direct representatives of *nothing*, they considered themselves candidates for *anything*, which we believe is popularly recognised as about the same thing. Josiah however had started on his present expedition, as he had taken no inconsiderable pains to impress upon the minds of his fellow-passengers,on what he termed a safe basis—which consisted of the lawful possession of no less a sum than one hundred and fifty pounds of lawful English money; which he calculated, on being transformed into solid Canadian land, would tend to render him a pretty considerable individual in his own right, without much chance of mistake about the matter.

Well, all parties being assembled and everything in order, Mr. Kwack opened the proceedings. He rose stifly, firmly, and imposingly—placed the tips of his fingers on the table, elevated his eyebrows, and said,

"Friends and fellow-passengers! In the various ramifications of our social destiny, we find ourselves inscrutably thrown together in a heterogeneous multitude—exiles and wanderers from our patrimonial inheritance, seeking a home and an asylum amidst the uncongenial and incongruous vicissitudes of a foreign clime (hear, hear). Well, what we wish on the present occasion, is to elicit a clear and perspicacious elucidation of the various conflicting concatinations of progressional advancement (cheers). We propose that each gentleman called upon, shall elucidate his views as perspicaciously as possible. For my own part, my natural bias will probably lead me in a channel perhaps totally diametrical to that in which most of you, in the natural fluctuation of events, will be pertinaciously impelled."

"Begging your pardon for the interruption," said William, who felt disposed to view the whole proceedings as a sort of practical joke, "but, if it's a fair question, I suppose you go in bang for the Gov'nor-Gen'ralship, by way of starting like?" (a laugh).

"Gentlemen," continued Mr. Kwack, thrusting his hand into his waistcoat after the manner of Bonaparte, and drawing himself up erect, "I make no boast. I leave the future to the inscrutable unravellings of an incomprehensible destiny. But I simply say that it will be a a part of my tactics to watch with a perspicacious scrutiny both the political, moral, scientific, and philosophical fundamentalities of the Canadian nation; and if fortune and my own humble abilities should open up the way to future emolument and aggrandizement in any one of those categorical ascendencies, why I hope that your humble servant will be found equal to any functionary responsibilities that the aberration of events may consign to his care or supervision (hear, hear). Gentlemen, I will not occupy your time with any unnecessary perambulations. But before I sit down, I think it my duty to assure you of my unqualified conviction, from what I have already seen of this magnificent and flourishing Province, that we have a mine of wealth, an ocean of power, a universe of happiness, before us; and it is only for us to exercise a due and legitimate proportion of perspicuity and comprehensive penetration, in order to lay our tenacious grasp on the fundamental principle of all sublunary good, and ultimately to arrive at the very pinnacle of sacerdotal puissance in the midst of the labyrinthical concatinations of humanity and men" (cheers).

"Bravo!" cried William, as soon as the philosopher had resumed his seat. "That's what I call a perspicacious elucidation of incomprehensibility. Take my advice and don't condescend to the Gov'nor-Gen'ralship. Who's the next?"

Mr. Kwack again rose.

"We can all appreciate a joke," said Mr. Kwack; "but certainly the inscrutable hallucinations of our facetious friend are something pertinaciously incomprehensible. I beg to call on my learned and scientific friend on my right, Mr. Albosh, gentleman."

Mr. Albosh rose amidst much cheering.

"Gentlemen and friends," said Mr. Albosh; "since I have looked out upon the gigantic developement of this unrivalled country, I feel satisfied in my own mind that I have made a discovery. I believe I am among friends, I believe I am addressing men of honor and integrity; and therefore I make no scruple of announcing the fact, that, from the knowledge which I happen to possess of the noble sciences of geology and mineralogy, I am fully convinced in my own mind that such a formation as that by which we have all been enchanted this day, cannot possibly exist without the co-existence in no limited degree of auriferous deposits —of the precious metal which constitutes the wealth of nations; and I am further persuaded

that the peculiar character of these deposits will render the cost of working and producing the same a matter of but small importance—in fact, a mere bagatelle."

"What do you say to lower the boats and fetch away a sample of a few hundred weights off hand?" suggested William.

"Gentlemen," continued Mr. Albosh, "our friend is disposed to be facetious; but I would seriously impress upon you not to regard this suggestion as a bagatelle; and I could only wish that I could see the whole of our friends around us at this moment combined in heart and pocket in one grand expedition of discovery to these auriferous hills; but I suppose such a thought is entirely fallacious. For my own part, immediately on our arrival at our destination, I shall make this discovery the subject of a memorial to the Govenor of this flourishing Province, together with sundry other important schemes which I have in view for the furtherance of the interests of this the country of our adoption; and I doubt not that the spirit of enterprise and progress which actuates its sons, will respond in a manner both beneficial to themselves and flattering to your humble servant. Gentlemen, such is the *modus operandi* which I have at present in view. Your views and prospects are possibly of a different character; but I would say this, that in this country there is room for all. You have the assurance, gentlemen, from one that speaks from good authority, that with perseverance, industry, and intellect, there is to be found in this country both wealth, independence, position, and happiness (cheers). I call upon our friend Mr. Sorftish."

Mr. Josiah Sorftish rose; and in rising he produced a palpable sensation,—such a sensation as a stray ghost in a clean sheet might have carried before him had he suddenly appeared from the unfathomable depths below them without introduction or invitation. He spoke in an unassuming voice, that was about the happy medium between the soprano of the softer halves of humanity, and the nocturnal melodies of the Canadian bullfrog.

"It is my awpinion, gentlemen—a," said Mr. Sorftish, "that—a—we shall—a—find that—a —Canada presents—a—to the man with prudence and experience—a—and a small capital —a—a small capital—a direct road to success—a—and even to opulence—a. We may have to rough it—a—(hear, hear, from Joe) but for my part I am prepared for that—a. I have a small capital—some hundred and fifty—a—and I flatter myself I can turn my hand to anything —a—(Joe shakes his head). And then I have a brother—a—who, with a little guidance—a—I have no doubt will be able to turn his hand to almost anything likewise—a—and I flatter myself that that is what is wanted in this country—a." (Hear, hear, from fifteen individuals at once, all of whom, having been apprenticed and trained up to nothing, were, like Mr. Sorftish, perfectly prepared to turn their hands to anything.) "Yes, gentlemen," continued Mr. Sorftish, "I would impress upon you the importance of being in a position to turn your hands to *any*thing."

"If I might be allowed to put a question," said William, "I would just ask the gentleman, what he would advise in case the market happened to be full of gentlemen of that there profession—which I take to be rather probable; and further, if he goes in for the popular comparison between *any*thing and *no*thing?"

"I apprehend—a," replied Mr. Sorftish, "that my sentiments—a—are better understood than to be subject—a—to any miscon—a—ception—a—such as Mr.—a—a—would wish to convey—a. But what I say is—a—and I repeat it—a—that prudence, experience and a small capital—a—if not more—a—than a hundred and fifty will—a—carry a man a long way—a—in a country like this—a—"(cheers).

"Well, I should say it would," pursued William, "seeing that they do the travelling at a hap'ny a mile. To Halifax and back I should say—a—. So up goes the next."

The chairman called upon his esteemed and perspicacious friend Mr. Plumley.

"There's only just one obs'vation, gentlemen, as I shall offer," said Mr. Plumley, "if you'll excuse me, as I'm not accustomed to this here sort of thing. But, with all difference, I think as we all seem to labor under a great mistake with respect to this here country. And that is as we all seems to be looking towards making a fortin. Now, with all difference, I thinks myself—not that I wants to discourage any one—but I thinks as we shall find as there aint all that wonderful difference atween the two countries as we seems to look for; and that if so be as we can make a comfortable livelihood, it's all as we can reasonably expect (hear, hear, from Joe); and I shouldn't wonder if we has to work hard and close even for that, let alone a fortin. I don't expect no fortin, and I'm sure I only hope as them as do won't be disappointed, that's what I do, I'm sure. But I would strongly advise you, in a friendly manner like, not to be

too sagerwin ; and I hope I've given no offence, friends, which I'm sure I didn't mean to."

Hear, hear, from Joe, cheers from William, and silence from the rest of the company. Joe was next called upon.

"Oi'm noa speaker," said Joe, "but oi agree with wort Mr. Plomley have sa-ad. Oi doan't wornt to bo-ast loik a thing, burt thor' oi've gort a little morny loik—a foifty pun' or soa; yoit oi doan't expect noa fortins. Oif oi couldn't work moi forteen or foifteen hours a day, oi shouldn't expect to do much in Canady. Oi'm torld by moi brother, who's been in the country now goin' orn for ten year, tha-at thors never a thing got by orny thing but hard work —*noiver* a bit. Morny even aint o' murch use without hard work, soa it's moi orpinion that tha-at's wort we've gort to look for-'ard to."

This speech, like the last, was received with anything but general approbation ; the prevalent opinion being among all classes, that gold and independence were the chief constituents of the Canadian character; and that *any*thing was the chief line of business by which that happy condition was arrived at and maintained. Several hot and powerful speeches—which completely succeeded in convincing all those in favor of the principle—were forthwith made from all quarters of the cabin, to prove the utter fallacy of supposing that a man that could turn his hand to anything that happened to "turn up," was'nt in the high road to fortune the very moment he planted his foot on Canadian soil, and that fortune wouldn't straightway come forward and turn up a trump ; and further that when a man of about that stamp had the powerful lever of capital — of anything approaching a hundred and fifty, to back him, that he wasn't at once plunging into an unfathomable ocean of wealth, power, and importance: and this principle had just been indubitably and everlastingly established, when an unusual bustle was heard above, combined with the thundering of the heavy anchor out at the bows ; and on rushing on deck they found themselves lying before the Quarantine station, that salubrious little Paradise of Grosse Isle—for salubrious it certainly must and ought to be, considering the amount of disease and filth and depravity and wretchedness it has had to contend with for the last fifty years ; an ordeal from which it still emerges every spring as bright and cheerful and salubrious as ever, and still sends out its invitation to the thousands of infected, ship-scourged, ill-conditioned mortals that roll in, load after load, to the "land of promise," that they may be cleansed and made whole, and sent straightway into the land of milk and honey in a healthy and sanitary condition.

There having been no disease nor sickness of any moment on board, the vigilance of the health-officers was soon satisfied, and, after a little general cleansing and an immense amount of bustle and confusion and anxiety on the part of the emigrants, they were allowed to go their way in peace.

The next day the sun shone down brilliantly, and lit up the infinity of white villages that crowd together on both sides of the river on the way to Quebec, with a wonderfully beautiful effect ; and all hands on board, as they rolled past them one after another towards the goal of their happiness, were, to say the very least, transported,—in fact, much happier than transportation was ever known to render any equal number of the race; until, at a little after midday, after catching sundry glimpses of glittering spires and shining gables from between the hills, they rounded the Point, and, behold, the full blaze and splendour of the far-famed city of Quebec outburst upon their astonished gaze. Towering up tier after tier, with its tinned roofs and spires and gables, shining and blazing and glowing in the sun-light; its infinite variety of shapes and forms and positions—its far-famed citadel and ramparts frowning down from their rock-bound heights, and looking like giants of strength that might defy the battering-rams of the world ; and then away on all sides the magnificent scenery by which it is surrounded—the forest-mantled hills, and the bold mountain-chain, stretching away range after range as far as the eye can reach, and all glowing and blazing in the mid-day-sun,—it looked, to their astonished view, like a mountain of oriental splendour ; and the poetical among them at once peopled it with all the fabled fairies and genii of Eastern romance. Every one was on deck, and every one was rushing about in a state of sublime excitement ; and among them Mr. Kwack might justly be described as being fairly rampant.

"There you are—there you are! there's the whole thing elucidated!" he cried, slapping Mr. Plumley sharply on the back, and making a sweep over the whole city with his right hand. "Positively *tin*—pure metallic tin, blazing away upon the very roofs! none of your tupny hap'ny tiles and slates and inscrutable rubbish, giving every one the contumacious blues to look at, here! If that's the ostentatious fun-

daments of the roofs, what will one expect to see in the streets—eh, my cadaverous desponding topolonean?" added the philosopher, quickening the perceptibilities of his cadaverous friend with a tremendous dig in the ribs. "Ah, Albosh! what d'ye think of this?"

"O, there can't be two rational opinions about it," replied Mr. Albosh, who for some moments had had his eye riveted upon the fortifications. "But what astonishes me is (to be sure we might expect it in a new country) the almost infinite scope one sees every where for discovery. Just look here. The construction of these ramparts. Now, according to all the known laws of fortification and defence, the entire construction of this outer wing is altogether preposterous. Who ever heard of turning an angle in that manner—d'ye see! here on the right;—just in the very position in which it would never be able, by any earthly chance or possibility, to plant a shot effectually in any quarter from which an enemy could possibly approach. Lor bless my soul! if a man of anything like parts did'nt make a fortune here, what on earth must he be about!"

"Ay so—a—I should say—a," observed Mr. Sorftish, who had just been pointing out to his brother the amount of room that existed for two such enterprising individuals as themselves in the shape of wild and uncultivated tracts of country that stretched away in all directions. "And especially—a—when I see—a—on all sides—a—the scope there is for experience—a —and a small capital—a—. Doubtless the Canadians—a—are deplorably ignorant—a— and know very little about—a—the proper cultivation—a—of the soil—a—doubtless."

Joe, who had just fallen to sleep against the main mast, started up at the word "soil;" but when he saw from whom it proceeded, he shook his head ominously and fell again into oblivion.

In a very short time they were boarded by the customs officers and the guardians of the general health; and it was observed that Blackbourn availed himself of the very first opportunity of hailing a boat and going ashore. He went alone; and to those acquainted with his habits in London, it was easy to perceive that he either aimed at a very eccentric display of his wardrobe, or else—which was most probable—at disguise.

Among the first specimens that appeared on board from the fairy city was a tall, thin, cadaverous piece of animated American clay—that looked remarkably like pipe-clay baked brown and anointed with a coating of cart-grease to impart to it the outward and visible sign of an inward and decidedly invisible soul. He was attired and made eligible as *one* among the citizens of the world, in a loose blouse coat, striped nankeen continuations, that looked as if they had been constructed out of the American standard, and sufficiently proclaimed the flag under which he sailed among the congregations of men; the crowning point of the whole being an extensive straw hat that threw its shadow over the whole shadowy substance over which it brooded, and conveyed to it the general appearance and effect of an overgrown mushroom in a time of dearth. He was driving before him a small factory of smoke from about ten inches by one of the "weed"; and his appearance on the whole was strongly suggestive of the idea of his having been cultivated in a lime-kiln, and fed and nourished from his infancy upwards on quick-lime, tobacco smoke, and "Yankee notions."

After looking around with the eye of a connoisseur on the emigrants swarming about the deck, he seemed all of a sudden to decide in favor of Mr. Plumley, who was standing apart from the rest conversing with Timothy; and he immediately walked up to him and accosted him with the ease and familiarity of an old and tried acquaintance.

"Heow d'ye dew?" he said; and the sharp nasal twang in which the words were encased, went into Mr. Plumley's ears, and produced a similar sensation to that which would ensue from the scraping of a bad fiddle on the wrong side of the bridge.

Mr. Plumley thanked him, and thought he was pretty well considering.

"Guess yeou'vé had a smart pass'ge!" said the stranger.

As Mr Plumley considered that the definition "smart" would apply equally well to any description of passage whatsoever, he replied that such was the case.

"Calc'late yeou're all Britishers here, mister?" pursued the stranger.

Mr. Plumley was of that opinion.

"I sh' say, yeou'd be going up West?" continued the other. "A tarnal feine country tew. Calc'late yeou'll be wantin' a neat little plot, friend?"

The stranger removed his cigar and emitted a long, thin, elongated stream of smoke as he contemplated Mr. Plumley's countenance with his keen, piercing eye, after making these interrogatory remarks; and Mr. Plumley felt both a

little confused and amused as he replied that he was not exactly sure about the plot at present.

"Reckon, mister," said the other, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, and laying his finger on Mr. P.'s shoulder, "if want a reg'lar Gov'ment Agent to put yeou in the way of doing the proper thing, slick off like, calc'late I'm yeour man. Want a neat little vill'ge lot—tarnal feine land—consider yourself lucky fellow to fall in along wi' me."

"Much obliged to you," said Mr. Plumley, "but I think not at present, thank you."

"Sh' say, yeou'd better deal with a Gov'-ment Agent. Feind me up-and-down straight, I guess!" returned the other.

"Perhaps Mr. Sorftish 'ud be likely. He's a wantin' somethin' o' that there sort," said Timothy, glancing inquiringly at Mr. Plumley.

"Guess yeou're a smart lad," said the Government Agent, turning sharply round upon Timothy. "S'pose the gent's a-board?"

"Yes; there he is," said Timothy, pointing the gentleman out with his fore-finger.

"Guess I'm obliged to yeou?" added the Agent moving off. "Think yeou said Sorftish?"

"Yes!" replied Timothy.

"Looks like a Londoner, I guess?" added the Agent.

"Yes, I think he does come from London."

The Agent wedged his way through the crowd until he stood in close proximity with Mr. Sorftish, when he stopped and threw his keen eye over him for a second, and then, giving a sudden start, made a rush up to him, and thrusting out his hand exclaimed,

"Heow d'ye dew, Mr. Sorftish? Guess I'm tarnal glad t' see yeou!"

Mr. Sorftish looked puzzled, and replied that —a—he wasn't aware—a—that—a—

"'Spect yeou've f'rgotten me," interposed the Agent, keeping his keen eye rivetted to the other's countenance. "Calc'late ten years since saw yeou in London. My name's Slicker. Sh' say, I knew your father pretty well."

"Dear me—a—is it possible—a?" said Mr. Sorftish. "How strange—a—you should know me—a!"

"Reckon I'd know yeou anywhere. Countenance like yeourn aint easily f'rgotten, sh' say. Hope they're all well at 'ome?" said Mr. Slicker.

"A—yes—a—thank you, quite well," replied Mr. Sorftish.

"Shouldn't be s'prised things are altered a bit since I was in London. Guess they're altered with me. Calc'late got a first-rate 'pointment under Canadian Gov'ment. Agent for all the Crown Lands—aint much mistake 'bout that, b'lieve. Shouldn't wonder if got some of the feinest lots to dispose of in the whole Province—tarnal cheap tew—gospel that is!"

Mr. Sorftish was in a small degree surprised and delighted. This was the very party that he had desired in his heart to fall in with. And to think that he should turn up in the shape of an old acquaintance of the family! It was a stroke of fortune to which his most sanguine hopes had not dared to aspire; and the future straightway opened, and spread, and expanded before him, until he beheld himself gradually dilate into a wealthy millionaire, possessing his thousands of acres of the teaming soil of the land of his adoption.

While Mr. Sorftish and his friend Slicker were thus engaged, Mr. Plumley had been watching the boat that had conveyed Blackbourn to the shore. It had scarcely been absent fifteen minutes when he again saw it coming rapidly towards them, and Blackbourn sitting in the stern, apparently hurrying the men on. As he came alongside, Plumley thought he looked unusually excited, and evinced considerable anxiety to regain the vessel. He leaped on board the moment the boat reached the steps, and hurried away into the saloon.

Both Growley and Bolton, who were looking after the luggage and satisfying the Customs' Officers, started at his sudden re-appearance, and exchanged looks of mutual understanding as he called them aside. He whispered a few hurried words in their ear, and then moved away again to the berth in which Matilda and Alice were engaged in making preparations for going ashore. He scarcely remained with them a moment, when he sought out the Captain, and, after remaining in conversation with him a few seconds, William and one or two of the sailors were set to work, and the luggage was hauled out pell-mell, helter-skelter, (it had all been stowed away at the back of the saloon and in the empty berths, for better convenience,) and lowered into the boat: and in less than five minutes after his return, every thing belonging to them was cleared out of the vessel, and the whole party stood on the deck ready to depart.

Mr. Plumley had called his friend Albosh aside, and, as he conversed with him in a whisper and at a distance, his extraordinary gesticulations and the peculiar expression of his countenance,

showed that he was unusually troubled or excited about something connected with these proceedings.

Simon stood at a little distance and watched every package as it descended into the boat with anxious eyes and a beating heart; andwhen little Alice—seizing an opportunity when Blackbourn was engaged in the saloon—came hurriedly towards him and held out her hand, his heart leaped and jumped about within him, and he trembed from head to foot. The tears stood in her eyes; she shook her head as she offered her hand, but said nothing; but there was more in that sad, earnest, melancholy silence, than either of them could have found words to express. Simon followed her mechanically with his eyes as she descended into the boat; he saw nothing but the departing reality of some strange influence that was within him; he leaned his head over the side as the boat prepared to start: her eyes were turned towards him. The boat moved rapidly away, and still they continued gazing on each other, intently and sadly, until their forms were gradually dissolved in the distance, and the tears that filled their eyes had completely shut them out from each other's view.

If Mr. Plumley was excited by the preparations for their departure, it would certainly be difficult to say what was the precise state of his mind when he saw, that, instead of steering for Quebec, the boat had taken the contrary direction, and was making the best of its way to the opposite shore. He called upon Mr. Albosh to witness this extraordinary proceeding, and shook his head, and flung about his favorite "by Georges" by the dozen, until the boat had entirely disappeared in the direction of Point Levi.

He had scarcely recovered his surprise and settled down into serious reflection, when his attention was attracted to another boat which had just put off from the town, and which appeared to be almost flying through the water towards the vessel. As it approached nearer and nearer, his eyes became fixed. He seized Mr. Albosh by the arm and pointed to it mechanically with his finger—the color left his cheek, and he exclaimed,

"Good heavens! it's him!"

"What! you don't mean to say it's ——"

"Yes, look! By George! Here he is!"

In another moment the boat was alongside, and the object of their surprise had leapt on board. It was McCameron.

"How d'ye do, how d'ye do, mon!" cried McCameron, grasping Mr. Plumley by the hand. "Mony thanks, mony thanks for your letter. Am I in time, mon?"

The earnestness of his manner, and the hope that seemed to beam through his emaciated countenance, completely overpowered Mr. Plumley, and he stood gazing on him vacantly and shaking his head for some seconds before he was able to speak.

A melancholy change had passed over the unhappy Scotchman since we last saw him. His countenance was emaciated and pale; his robust figure had dwindled down to the mere skeleton of its former self, and an indelible expression of grief had settled upon his manly and good-natured features. He wore a long, close coat, that, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, was buttoned close to the chin; and the outline of the leathern case which he had placed there six months before, was still visible against his breast, and every now and then, as he watched the other's agitation, his hand wandered feverishly to the spot and rested on the instrument of death that nestled beneath it.

"They—they are just gone!" stammered Mr. Plumley at length, pointing to the opposite side of the river.

"Strange, very strange, mon," said McCameron, shaking his head and looking anxiously about him as though he could scarcely believe that his daughter was not near him; "I came out by the first steamer after getting your letter. I have been here ten days, and this is the first time that I have been absent from the town for an hour. Very strange, very strange. I canna understand it, mon. You say they are just gone?"

"Only just, sir," replied Mr. Plumley; "I think you may ketch them."

"Thank you, thank you," said McCameron, "please God I may. I have mony things to say, mon, but you must excuse me now,—excuse me, mon. I am sorely troubled. God send I may! Send letters for me to the Montreal Post Office, and I will do the same for you. You understand? You will not stay here, I know, mon. Good bye, good bye, mon. God bless you all! God bless you!"

He descended again into the boat, and directed her course towards the opposite shore. After he had waved his hand for the last time towards the vessel, it could be seen by his gestures to the men that he was hurrying them on faster and faster, until the boat seemed again to fly through the water; and in a very few

minutes he had reached the Point, and disappeared behind the hills, under cover of which, not half-an-hour before, his child—for whose sake he had crossed the ocean and endured a thousand agonies—had been lost to view.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. KWACK'S DEBUT AND EXIT.

As soon as they were at liberty to go on shore, the emigrants lost no time in paying a visit to the golden city. What the precise state of their feelings and aspirations were, as boat-load after boat-load drew near to this abode of the happy—this mountain of magnificence, teaming, as they one and all verily believed from the bottom of their hearts, with peace, plenty, and demigods—it would have been difficult to ascertain; but that they each and every one entertained some peculiar, undefined hopes—some shadowy, fairy-like visions of being met at the very threshold, as it were, by certain wealth-diffusing genii, and straightway borne away to the abodes of everlasting bliss—is our firm and unsophisticated opinion.

Mr. Kwack found himself, for the time being, in a high and glorious position. He had undertaken the escort of an extensive party, including the whole of the Plumleys, Mr. Albosh, and Joe, through the golden labyrinth; and as the boat glided across the water, and they neared the city, the swelling emotions of his breast had well-nigh overpowered him; and it was with some difficulty that he called forth his manhood against them, and succeeded in shutting up the flood-gates of his joy, and preventing the co-mingling of a briny tribute from his philosophic eye, with the translucent waters of the St. Lawrence.

"Friends," said Mr. Kwack, rising up in the stern of the boat with all the solemnity that the occasion demanded, and unconsciously letting go the rudder, of which he had volunteered the guidance, "I shouldn't be surprised if a startling elucidation is about to challenge the pertinacious fundaments of our respective perspicacities. But all I have to say my friends is, don't be too contumaciously astonished."

The advice was well-timed, for it was scarcely produced, when the boat, left to run its own course, went crash against the wharf, and over went the philosopher head-foremost, splash, dash, into the water. Now, whether Mr. Kwack was himself contumaciously astonished or not by this sudden and unexpected transition from one element to another, did not appear, inasmuch as the whole of his emotions, together with himself, were, for the time being, entirely extinquished; but unquestionably a change of considerable import had passed over his countenance by the time it re-appeared at the surface; and to say the least of it, his philosophic ardour appeared to have sustained a "damper." Now, whether this little incident was designed as an emblematical illustration of what was to follow, is not, we believe, known; but certain it is, that on being transferred to the boat in a somewhat ignominious manner, by the collar of his coat, he looked about him on the right hand and on the left—he rubbed his eyes and looked again. Good Heavens! what had become of the golden city? It had vanished; and in its place he beheld one of the most ordinary places that it had ever been his fate to feast upon. He saw nothing but the most tumble-down, dirty-looking compilation of wood and ruin that it had ever occurred to him was likely to be standing, or rather tumbling down together in any part of the world. And his mind straightway descended from the ethereal regions wherein it had been wandering for the last few hours, and plunged all of a heap into the grosser element of matter-of-fact existence.

However, this was only the wharf, and could scarcely be expected to represent the town itself, and therefore Mr. Kwack endeavoured to instill fresh courage into his saturated spirits; and having shaken himself and re-arranged his attire, he announced his determination of marching through the city as he was; and collecting his friends around him, at once led the way up the slimy, wooden steps, and planted his foot for the first time on the Canadian soil—or rather on the Canadian planks.

They landed in the market place; and as they cast their eyes about them, and opened their ears—despite the previous admonition of their leader—they were slightly astonished. They found themselves surrounded on all sides by an assortment of creation's lords, such as their most lively imaginations could scarcely have conjured into existence. One collection, apparently limitless in point of numbers, and to be seen everywhere, consisted of men, women, and children, with faces displaying a great deal of bone, attired in every known and unknown species of dress—blue smocks, blouses, nankeens, straw hats, wide-awakes, and rags of every hue and shade, and in every stage of delapidation—who were dancing and capering about, and cutting all kinds of extraordinary antics to their own infinite delight, and shouting and bawling to one another in an unknown tongue—an unintelligible jargon that Mrs. Plumley said was exactly, for all the world, like the chattering of the monkeys in Regent's-Park Gardens; and as to suppose that any body could ever understand a word of it, she couldn't think how people could be so stupid.

Mr. Kwack cast his contemplative eyes around on this remarkable assemblage, and then, turning to his friend Albosh, nodded in silence and mystery.

Mr. Albosh simply buttoned up his coat, and, nodding in return, said,

"French!"

Removed from these—crouched away in corners, and wandering in small dejected groups by themselves, and lolling about in all directions—was another class. They were almost, without exception, covered with rags—filthy and miserable, with gaunt and haggard faces, and with every indication about them of the extreme of poverty and distress. These were of course the remnants of the ship-loads of hopefuls, from dear Old England and the Emerald Isle, that had been pouring into the city by thousands for the last few weeks, and that had not yet been forwarded to their respective destinations. The arrangement for forwarding-on the poor, helpless, penniless thousands that pour into the St. Lawrence every season, were less complete at that time than they are at present; and the facilities for distributing them throughout the Province being then comparatively limited to what they now are, a great deal of distress and misery was necessarily congregated, during the emigrating season, at the two different ports at which they were disembarked. But this view of the subject never for a moment suggested itself to Mr. Kwack and his party; and they had begun to cast anxious glances at one another; and despair was fast creeping over their countenances, when the ominous silence that had fallen in their midst was somewhat unexpectedly broken by Joe, who had been looking round purely on his own account, and appeared to be the only "wide-awake" fragment of the party.

"Oi rather loiks the look o' this," said Joe, nodding approvingly on things generally, but more especially on the cabbages and potatoes in the market, in the contemplation of which he had been absorbed for the last few minutes.

The whole party of twenty souls looked scared.

"Well," said Mr. Kwack, "if you are pertinaciously *nun compass*, why this will do for you. But, however, let us move on, friends. This is, no doubt, the 'Wapping Old Stairs' of the town, and to be sure it whops a good many things that I have seen in my little time. But come along."

The party formed themselves into military order, two abreast, and proceeded to follow their leader; and despite the most praise-worthy exertions to the contrary, the more they saw the more they were astonished. There were long, narrow, dirty streets, swimming with mud and slush, produced by the recent rains; huts and shanties, and houses, and undefined structures of wood—all wood, nothing but wood—thrown together, huddled-up in corners, and jostling awkwardly against each other in a heterogenous heap of paintless melancholy and dilapidation. Old-clothesmen, marine-store dealers, and men of no defined occupation whatsoever, appeared to them to be the presiding genii of the place. New swarms of ragged, melancholy importations from the mother country, (one would have thought, as an affectionate and decent-minded old lady, she would at least have sent her children out fit to be seen; which Mrs. Plumley, said, really with many of the specimens before her, was far from being the case,) met them at every corner, and crowded along the wooden pavement, to their infinite horror; and in attempting to avoid them, they invariably went splash into the mud up to their knees on one side, or flop into the arms of a marine-store of old-clothes dealer, on the other; so that, after an hour's wandering through the lower part of the town, it was suggested by the female portion of the party, that they should then consi-

der themselves satisfied, and return. Being so bewildered by the unexpected appearance of the town, they had of course been wandering through the only portion of it in which nothing whatever prepossessing was to be seen, and had over-looked the upper town altogether; and it is therefore not surprising, considering also that Quebec was not then even what it is now, that Mr. Kwack was himself thoroughly astonished. He looked at Mr. Albosh, and Mr. Albosh looked at him; and they shook their philosophical heads together.

"Well," said Mr. Kwack, as they retraced their steps towards the wharf, "I've heared that 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' but this is certainly one of the most contumacious metamorphoses that ever astonished a Pagan!"

"There's one thing that's rather encouraging," said Mr. Albosh, in about the tone in which a man might be supposed to speak of the decease of an affectionate friend, "there is evidently room for discovery and improvement."

"Well, by Janus! now you've hit it!" cried Mr. Kwack, as his foot slipped into a loose board and sent the mud flying through the party.

"Well, after all, I can't say as I'm so much disappointed," said Mr. Plumley. "I certainly don't like to see so many poor about the streets, or else what can one expect in a new country? That's where it is, you see. I'm afraid you've been expecting too much, and that's how you've got disappointed. What do you think, Lizy?"

"Well, George dear," replied Mrs. Plumley, who was picking her way carefully through the mud, "it's very dirty, there's no saying it's not."

"Oi'm rather pleased with it, for moi part," said Joe. "Them turnips is perfect pictures. Oits jurst wort oi thort—a agricurltral curntry."

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes," said Mr. Kwack, "certainly. But look! Here comes our friend Sorftish. I wonder what he thinks of it."

Mr. Sorftish was making his way leisurely up the market-place, leaning on the arm of his friend the Yankee Agent; and Mrs. Sorftish and Philip were following in the rear.

"Dear me—a," said Mr. Sorftish, stopping and speaking in a somewhat patronizing tone, "and what do you think—a—of the town—a? I'm just—a—going to have a look—a."

"Oh," replied Mr. Kwack, winking on his friends, "it has perfectly astonished the lot of us. It's like Hicks the actor,—requires to be seen to be appreciated. It's a little muddy, certainly, but otherwise it's contumaciously splendid, if you can only just appreciate the style."

"Calc'late, mister, reckon yourself smart," said the Yankee Agent.

"Oh dear, no; not at all," replied Mr. Kwack, "if you're a Canadian—and you look contumaciously like one—why I beg to congratulate you on your Provincial capital—specially when viewed from the distance."

"Well—a," said Mr. Sorftish, "I'm just going to look round—a—with my friend here, before selecting any ultimate destination—a. It's a fine counrty—a—for men of experience—a—and a small capital—a—I've no doubt—a. Good day—a—good day."

"Oh, Mrs. Plumley," said Mrs. Sorftish, in a whisper, as her husband passed on, "don't it seem a dreadful place? What strange people?—and how wretched! Oh, I begin to feel so ill!"

Such being the case, Mrs. Plumley felt called upon to encourage her, and said she supposed they must hope for the best; but the poor girl shook her head mysteriously, and whispered in Mrs. Plumley's ear that she was sorry to say that it was constitutional. She was very sorry for poor Josiah, because he was so clever, but then he *would* come, and what could she do!

As Mr. Plumley had decided to stay a day or two in Quebec to see what was to be done—or rather, as Mr. Kwack said, what wasn't to be done—he took up his abode at a small boarding-house in the lower part of the town, where things were both humble and reasonable; and Messrs. Kwack, Albosh, and Joe, by way of making up a party, quartered themselves in the same establishment—in fact, with the two former gentlemen there were certain potent reasons why a close proximity with their friends was eminently desirable.

The rest of the emigrants from the Wanderer, with the exception of the Messrs. Sorftish, were soon dispersed, hither and thither, to the four winds of heaven, and they saw them no more.

Mr. Plumley at once cast about him to ascertain the chances of employment, and the best mode of procedure; and he very soon discovered that any prospects of employment of any description at that time in Quebec, were entirely out of the question—in fact, that there

was no question at all about it. He saw the Government Agent (not Mr. Slicker), who was remarkably kind and attentive and obliging, and strongly advised him to make the best of his way West with all possible despatch; and he was just in the act of consulting his wife on the propriety of starting that very same evening, when Mr. Kwack rushed into the room in a high state of excitement, followed by his friend Albosh, and delivered himself to the following effect:

"Well, Plumley, the dye is cast—sink or swim, an elucidation of the mystery is now ponderating in the balance!"

"Bless me! what's it all about, Mr. Kwack?" asked Mrs. Plumley.

"Why just this," returned Mr. Kwack. "For the last twenty-four hours I have been sedulously probing the national ascendency of the Canadian people, and I have discovered the great desideratum, the *seni quo non*, to be oratorical perspicacity. The people want an advocate—a man of parts and rhetorical power to vindicate the cause of freedom, liberty, and independence. So I have struck the blow. I have hired a public hall capable of seating a hundred and fifty people. The first lecture is announced for to-morrow. The posters are now being displayed upon the walls—the subject, 'National Emancipation and Universal Freedom.' Admission, 1s. 3d."

Joe shook his head, and Mr. Plumley smiled.

"And do you think it will succeed, Mr. Kwack?" said Mrs. Plumley. "Oh, I so hope it will, I'm sure!"

"My dear Mrs. Plumley," replied Mr. Kwack, "the country is ripe—success is inevitable."

As the whole party were anxious to witness the effect of Mr. Kwack's debut in Canada, it was generally agreed that they should remain over the following evening to keep him in spirits, and to share in the inevitable success that awaited him.

By way of preparing himself for his debut on the morrow, and quickening his oratorical powers, Mr. Kwack proposed to pay a visit to the Parliament House that evening (the Government being then located in Quebec), a d invited Mr. and Mrs. Plumley to accompany him. He had already procured tickets for five, and, as Mr. Albosh had other important engagements to attend to, as he said, and Miss Plumley was the victim of a severe head-ache, which she was of opinion was indigenous to the country, and would never leave her until she was finally disposed of under a Canadian sod—it was arranged that Simon and little Lizy should be of the party. Accordingly, at about seven o'clock, the whole party wended their way up Mountain Street—which Mrs. Plumley said put her very much in mind of the time she went up the Monument when a child—and presented themselves before the congregated wisdom of the land.

They thought, on the whole, that it was a very fine place; and that the Speaker's elevation in the midst of so much moral and intellectual worth, was particularly imposing; but, nevertheless, they were somewhat disappointed to find the great ones, the M.P.P.s., looking so much like ordinary, every-day individuals. They were all addressed as "Honorables"; but Mrs. Plumley declared that really, with the exception of one dear old gentleman with a snowy white head, and spectacles, she couldn't see that they were a bit better than other people. Unfortunately, the debate happened to be of a somewhat uninteresting nature,—being a local question about a water-right, involving a mill-dam and a water-wheel in some unknown locality, with some unpronouncable French name, in the middle of a swamp;—the discussion on which was entirely conducted in French, with the single exception of a few words from a smart-looking individual, who rose with dignity, smiled benignly round upon the ladies in the gallery, and proceeded to say, that it was all very well for honorable gentlemen opposite to attempt to inundate the house with their watery eloquence—which he must say flowed like oil from the last speaker—but he was satisfied that if there had not been a wheel within a wheel, they would never have heard anything of the water-wheel that was then going the round of the house. He hoped a dam-per would be put on the dam altogether, and that a shower of indignation would be thrown upon this water-wheel circumlocution, such as would open the flood-gates of justice and right—he didn't mean the water-right—and completely drown the wishy-washy sophistry of honorable gentlemen opposite. [Cheers and Laughter.]

"Well," said Mr. Kwack, "if they call that rhetorical enunciation, why we needn't wonder at the national imbecility in which the country is fundamentally involved. And as for the other gibberish, why it is simply preposterous to suppose that any Christian could ever understand a word of it."

Mr. Kwack was evidently but little impress-

ed, and not in the smallest degree awed by the phalanx of wisdom that was before him; and perhaps the only one of the party who was sensibly affected, and upon whom the proceedings made a lasting impression, was our little hero, Simon. On his way to the House he was all absorbed in his love and attention to his little Lizy; but from the moment that he entered and his eye fell upon the congregation of beauty and power by which he found himself surrounded, his feelings became gradually and entirely changed.

He leaned his chin upon his hand and gazed intently upon the speakers; and his eyes flashed and sparkled as he watched the importance with which they marched to and fro. As he turned from these to the gallery, and remarked the handsome and elegantly attired ladies that surrounded it, and noted the interest and admiration with which the assemblage of great ones below appeared to inspire them, strange emotions shot through his breast, and his heart beat as it had hardly ever beat before. His poor little Lizy seemed to fade and fade before him, despite all his efforts to prevent it; and as his eyes wandered round and round the gallery, in all the beauty and elegance it contained, he seemed to see but one form, but one countenance: Alice was before him, behind him, by his side—it was all Alice; and her voice seemed still to whiser in his ear—

"You don't seem like a poor boy to me!"

His heart leapt at the sound, and, as he looked again upon the great ones, that even the handsome ladies so much admired, a vague hope crept over him that he might one day be as great and as much admired as they; but in his enthusiasm, there was still but one form, but one countenance, but one approving look, that rose up before him, and her encouraging voice seemed to whisper to him still,

"You don't seem like a poor boy to me!"

"Mother," said Simon, as they returned home, "I think I should very much like to learn French. I think if I could get some books I would try to learn it myself; and then there are so many French people about that I am sure I could get them to help me."

"Oh, really, do you think so, dear," said Mrs. Plumley. "Then I'm sure father will try and get the books—won't you, George dear?"

"What! Simy learn that language!" said Mr. Plumley, incredulously. "Why, if I thought he could do that, why—by George! if I wouldn't—why, of course I'll get them. Simy learn French!" continued he; "why, if he was to do that, why, I shouldn't wonder if they went and made a honorable of him right off!"

"O, George dear, only to think!" said Mrs. Plumley.

"I should like to try," said Simon, whose aspirations were doubly kindled by the last remark of Mr. Plumley; and he resolved from that moment to accomplish that much at least.

On arriving home, they found Mr. Albosh absorbed in the depths of two or three sheets of foolscap, and glowing with smiles and importance. The fact was that his emulation had been fired by the bold proceedings of his friend and companion, Mr. Kwack, that day, and he felt determined not to be behind hand; and he had therefore commenced to put in progress certain plans of his own for at once establishing him in the Province as a man of importance, a public man, and a man of worth.

"Ah, here you are!" cried Mr. Albosh, arranging his papers with mathematical precision. "Well, I've been pretty busy, I may say, since you have been away. Here it is, some length you see; scarcely a bagatelle. So if you will just sit quietly round, I'll just run over the introductory epistle to see what you think of it. Here it is.

"To His Excellency the Governor General, &c., &c.

Sir,—

I take the liberty of addressing your Excellency on this occasion, feeling assured, that as a man of science, a man of learning, and a lover of progress, (of course that's a little palava—but it's what they like,) you will be graciously pleased (the usual form,) to condescend to take humble cognizance of the following suggestion from an unworthy but fellow laborer in the great cause of science, progress, and national advancement."

Hear, hear, from Mr. Kwack.

"As a man of research," continued Mr. Albosh, reading, "a humble votary of science, and a man, I may say, endowed by nature with some of the elements of discovery, I have been able, during my transient sojourn in this noble country, (of course you must give the country a lift, you know,) to make certain important scientific revelations, hatt, together with others of equal magnitude, which it was my good fortune to discover in my native land, I am satisfied are of vital importance in respect of the welfare, progress, and prosperity of Canada and the Canadian people—affecting them as they do both socially, politically, and constitution-

ally. Detail here were impossible; but if your Excellency will kindly condescend to grant me an interview, I shall be proud of the honor of laying the whole subject plainly and lucidly before you. And I trust your Excellency will find, when I have done so, that it is by no means a bagatelle. With your Excellency's permission, I will call to-morrow at eleven in the forenoon. I am, &c."

"There," said Mr. Albosh, laying down the epistle, and glancing round upon his friends, "I flatter myself that that's touching the right nail about the head."

"Well, at any rate," observed Mr. Kwack, "there's no mistake about the diction. I should say a man of your perspicacity in such matters, ought to succeed. The thing is, can you elucidate your principles?"

"Here they are—here they are!" returned Mr. Albosh, holding up three or four closely written sheets of foolscap. "And," he continued, giving them an artistic slap with his left hand, to increase their rigidity, "I flatter myself they are about the proper thing."

The next morning Mr. Albosh was up by times, and sallied forth to deliver his introductory letter with his own hands, that there might be no mistake. Immediately after breakfast, he commenced arranging his wardrobe and preparing for the grand event of eleven. And at precisely ten minutes to the hour, he was ready to start. On the whole, he looked extensive; and considering the limited nature of his wardrobe, which was still confined to the original mid-summer suit in which he first made his appearance on the stage of these Adventures, his general effect was something astonishing—a remarkable degree of perfection having been thrown into the arrangements by a red and yellow neckerchief, loaned for the occasion by his somniferous friend, Joe.

Mrs.Plumley having thrown an old shoe after him to ensure his success, he departed on the expedition full of hope and scientific pride.

As Mrs.Plumley was about to close the door on Mr. Albosh, she encountered the pale features of Mrs. Sorftish, who said she had just looked-in to say Good-bye.

"Oh, dear, are you going away altogether, Mrs. Sorftish?" said Mrs. Plumley. "Do come in; I'm so glad to see you."

"Well, really," replied Mrs. Sorftish, falling into a chair and casting her eyes upward, "you see, Mrs. Plumley, Josiah is so wonderfully clever that he is always falling into something. Not that I ever advised him to come to Canada, between you and me, Mrs. Plumley,—in fact, it was all his own doing. And then I am so very delicate—it's constitutional, Mrs. Plumley—that I'm a great burden to him; and if he wasn't so very clever, I am sure I don't know really what we *should* do."

"But perhaps you may get stronger in this climate, Mrs. Sorftish. It is very likely you may, you know," said Mrs. Plumley, encouragingly.

"Well, I am sure I don't know," replied Mrs. Sorftish. "Anything constitutional, you know—bodily, Mrs. Plumley, you see," and she shook her head until every ray of hope appeared to be dispelled by the process.—"Ma would have taken me home again, you see, Mrs. Plumley," she continued; "she said she would until Josiah returned, but he wouldn't hear a word. And then the money—it's very little, but it's all pa could give me, you see—a hundred and fifty pounds—and Josiah thought it would be of so much service to him, you see. It was very good of him to wish to put it to account, very good—and then he is so clever! But it is our little all, Mrs. Plumley—all we have to fall back upon. Oh! if anything should happen, we should loose it! All our little dependence—oh, what would ever become of us!—in this wild country, too! Oh, there! I'm going to cry again!"

Poor silly child! She was quite right—she was going to cry again; and it was nearly ten minutes before she was able to speak again from that simple fact.

"Really, things are so strange now we have left home, Mrs. Plumley," she resumed, after partially suppressing her tears. "You don't know Mr. Slicker, do you?"

Mrs. Plumley did not.

"I don't know, I'm sure," continued Mrs. Sorftish, pulling mechanically at her handkerchief, "but he is going to do something for Josiah—it's very kind, I dare say—but, Mrs. Plumley, I feel so frightened lest we should lose our little all. I wish Josiah could get some nice, comfortable situation; but there, I suppose he is too clever. Mrs. Plumley," continued Mrs. Sorftish, lowering her voice almost to a whisper, and drawing her chair to Mrs. Plumley's side; "I wan't to ask you a question. Don't think me foolish; and you musn't tell any one. But do you think, Mrs. Plumley—now please don't think me cruel—but do you think that any one would marry a poor sickly, silly girl for a little money—say a hundred pounds or so?"

"Oh, what a strange question!" said Mrs. Plumley, "I'm sure I can't tell. I should think they wouldn't—besides, how wicked it would be!"

Mrs. Sorftish shook her head and burst again into tears.

Mrs. Plumley did all she could to soothe and comfort her; but there was a something that had evidently taken a very strong hold on her mind and made her miserable; and all Mrs. Plumley could say or do could not erase it. Before leaving, she begged and implored Mrs. Plumley to let her know where she might be able to write to her, and was very emphatic in declaring that they were the only friends she had in the world.

Mrs. Plumley, who was a good deal affected by the peculiar distress of the poor girl, promised to let her have their address, and tried to send her away with all the tender consolations that she could possibly manage to store into her mind.

In a few minutes after the departure of the unhappy girl, Mr. Albosh returned.

"Well, what's the elucidation?" cried Mr. Kwack, who had just come in from making his preparations for the evening.

"Oh," said Mr. Albosh, throwing his papers indignantly on the table, "the fact is, he don't understand it."

"What, you got an interview?" cried Mr. Kwack.

"Oh, yes," returned the other, "he's modest enough in that way—never saw any one more so; but it's very plain he knows no more about scientific research than a kangaroo!"

"What did he say, then?" asked the philosopher.

"Say," replied Mr Albosh, throwing himself into a chair with an air of contempt for things generally. "Why, I couldn't get a say out of him. There he stood," added Mr. Albosh, pointing out an imaginary Governor with a look of ineffable scorn, "smiling at everything I said as if he had nothing but a parcel of worthless suavity belonging to him. And when I had finished, as if the whole thing were the merest bagatelle in the world, he quietly said he didn't exactly understand the subject. And coolly advised me to get into some employment as soon as possible, and obtain a knowledge of the customs and requirements of the country. Why, what does he think? That it takes a man a lifetime to understand a tumble-down, savage, uncultivated wilderness like this?"

"Well, it's just like them!" said Mr. Kwack, "for upon my word they are most inscrutably cadaverous. They are actually so contumaciously mistified, that they don't know even the value of a simple British coin of the realm. There was I, not ten minutes ago, exhausting the whole fundaments of Johnson to prove to a fellow that a solid English sixpence wasn't sevenpence hap'any. Yes, sevenpence hap'any! that's the beauty of it! If it had been fourpence hap'any, or twopence hap'any, or any dodge of that sort, one might have understood it. But I certainly did think that sevenpence hap'ny was something too rich."

"Burt oi think thurt is the diff'rence in the volur here," observed Joe.

"Value!" cried the philosopher. "Why I suppose sixpence is *sixpence* all the world over? There's no refuting that, I believe? The fact is, it seems all alike from top to bottom. But, however, it strikes me I'll waken up their perspicacities a bit to-night!"

Whatever money may be, time is about the same thing in Canada as elsewhere; and consequently, at about the period at which it is usually expected, the evening approached. Seven had gone down into oblivion, and eight was fast marching on its heels; when the whole party—Joe and Miss Selina inclusive—were found on their way to the scene of Mr. Kwack's *debut* before a Canadian public.

On arriving at the room, which was rather a primitive one, constructed wholly of wood, and lit up with just one pound of "dips," and an extra mould for the platform; they found three people—worthy citizens no doubt, but certainly by no means prepossessing—already congregated, and discussing in a loud tone the merits of the Emerald Isle as compared with any and every other nation as yet known.

Joe shook his head, and Mr. Plumley did the same; but, very much to their astonishment, this performance was scarcely accomplished when a rush was heard at the door, and in came upwards of a dozen jocular-looking fellows and rolled into the seats all of a heap. This was encouraging; although, to be sure the general appearance of the new arrivals was slightly the reverse. They were for the most part big, burly developments, unwashed and unshorn, and, in Joe's opinion, somewhat rough and ready—in fact, he thought ready for anything. With respect to their personal arrangements, they were evidently free-thinkers; for several of them appeared in their shirt-sleeves, one or two with their arms displayed in all their native innocence, without any covering whatso-

ever, and the rest in every known and unknown variety of fustian, corduroy, and fragments; from various points of which, to Mrs. Plumley's utter consternation, could be seen certain shiny, round-headed substances, which looked remarkably like the foreshadowing of those harmless little cudgels which are known to be the life and glory of Hibernia's sons.

Now, it was not known to Mr. Kwack that in the lower part of that world-renowned city, there existed a select and peculiar class of cosmopolitans—a small community to themselves, designated and known as the "Boys of Champlain"; who, although perfectly harmless and inoffensive boys in their way, are the sworn champions of liberty and freedom of conscience —loving excitement, and glorying in the soul-stirring innocence of a "row." That by way of giving life and animation to the city, and affording a little harmless entertainment and excitement to their less jocular neighbours, they gratuitously came forward on all possible occasions, public or private, great or small—but elections preferred—and enlivened the scene with an innocent but energetic display of their pugilistic, cudgelistic, and mirth-inspiring propensities, to the infinite delight of all parties concerned.

Mr. Kwack's audience was almost exclusively composed of these worthy specimens of Nature's own; and by eight o'clock, they amounted in all to something like fifty souls.

Precisely as the clock struck, Mr. Kwack emerged from behind a piece of perforated canvas, through which his person had already been indistinctly visible, and moved towards the platform with all his native dignity. He stood before them, and straightway created an impression. It might be difficult to state precisely what the nature of that impression was; but there it was nevertheless, and all eyes beheld it.

The Boys were seen to nod significantly to one another; while several of them proceeded to flourish their hands in the air in an artistic manner, and bring them down emphatically on their respective knees.

Mr. Kwack surveyed them for a moment, waved his hand to enjoin silence, threw himself into attitude, and commenced:

"Ladies and Gentlemen! Friends! Fellow Cosmopolitans! (Cheers.) Canada is a great country. (Cheers.) I may even prognosticate the categorical syllogism, that Canada is a glorious country. (Renewed cheering.) But, gentlemen, in my unsophisticated opinion, Ireland, (applause,) Erin, gentlemen, (much applause,) is a greater, (great applause,) a more glorious still. (Tremendous applause.) But still, gentlemen, (murmurs,) Ireland is not the greatest. (Groans.) There is a greater, a mightier, and a loftier still. (Uproar.) Without any derogation or detraction, I say a mightier still. (Tremendous uproar, and cries of Down with him.)

Mrs. Plumley and Miss Plumley scream and make a rush towards the door.

The philosopher calls upon them as men, as cosmopolitans, to give him an impartial hearing; but he is immediately answered with a general flourish of shillaleighs, and cries of "Down with the traitor!"

A general rush is made upon the platform; seats are overturned and begin to fly about the room; the lights are extinguished, and the philosopher finds himself suddenly surrounded by the exasperated Boys, and by a general shower of forms, shillaleighs, and tallow candles.

Mr. Plumley removed his family into the street as quickly as possible, which he was enabled to do without much difficulty, having chosen the back seats; and then returned, accompanied by Joe and Mr. Albosh, to look after his discomfited friend. The room was in total darkness, and a perfect chaos of voices and blows, and the crashing up of seats, and the clashing of shillaleighs, prevailed.

They tried to make their way to the platform, but the attempt was entirely fruitless; and despite all their anxiety for their friend, they were very glad to be allowed to escape again into the street with their usual symmetry unimpaired. And Mr. Plumley was just on the point of running off for assistance, when, to the astonishment and delight of the whole party, the philosopher appeared before them, steaming hot, but entirely uninjured except in his wardrobe, in which he had sustained the total loss of one coat-tail, the whole of one sleeve, a boot, and sundry other inferior articles, including his hat.

"Well!" said Mr. Kwack, putting it emphatically to the company with the assistance of his sleeveless arm, "what do you think of this for a country?"

The whole party shook their heads, and merely suggested the propriety of returning home as soon as possible.

Mr. Kwack was perfectly rampant; and the moment he arrived home he commenced flinging the whole resources of Johnson at the head

of everything Canadian, both animate and inanimate, that came within his reach.

"Well, but," said the landlord, a respectable individual, who had been in the country long enough to learn to esteem it, and whom Mr. Kwack had attacked with the rest, "you must make allowances, you know. It's a new country."

"Eh, what, what, what's that?" cried Mr. Kwack, contemptuously. "New! new, did you say? Well, I don't happen to know what you call *new*. It may be new certainly—I'm not going to say it's not; but all I can say is, it looks to me contumaciously like a tumble-down, rotten, unsophisticated piece of imbecility! New!" continued he, driving the sound out between his clinched teeth; "well that's rich. I thought, according to Johnson, that anything new was fresh, recent, unworn; but if this place aint pertinaciously worn out, what in the name of the seven wonders would you wish to see it?"

"Well, but," urged the landlord, "you'll find good and bad everywhere, won't you?"

"Good and bad," replied the philosopher, "no. I am contumaciously doubtful if you've got anything *good* in the whole country."

All attempts to soothe the irritated feelings of the philosopher were entirely futile. His indignation and disgust were so thoroughly aroused, that he continued wandering about the house abusing and challenging the whole Canadian nation to mortal combat, in compensation for the insult he had that night received at its hands. And there is no saying to what lengths his offended dignity would have carried him, had he not been suddenly and effectually interrupted by Mr. Albosh, who, taking him aside, whispered in his ear that he had just found it out—the real Canadian desideratum—the discovery was made—the future was clear; and that if he would only just retire with him for a few moments to the secrets of his own chamber, he would then and there propound to him the mystery, which he could assure him was by no means a bagatelle.

Mr. Kwack suffered himself to be led away; and he very soon lost sight of the injuries he had just sustained, in the new vistas of prosperity that gradually expanded to his view through the startling revelation of his scientific friend.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PURSUIT.

Although McCameron had followed so closely on their heels, he found, on reaching Point Levi, that Blackbourn's party had already secured a conveyance—almost the only available one in the village—and had achieved some half-hour's start westward, with good horses and a light vehicle, although to be sure with bad roads and a heavy load.

McCameron lost not a moment, but immediately secured the first thing he could find possessing a pair of wheels and to which a horse could be attached, and, offering a reward to the driver in the event of his overtaking the party, he started in pursuit. He had a tough little Canadian pony—which is at once saying a good deal for speed and durability—and although the vehicle was an excessively rickety affair, and the wheels appeared altogether unacquainted with even the first objects of their existence, and, instead of confining themselves to simple circular revolutions, flew off at every turn into a complex complication of geometrical eccentricities,—while the roads were rich in alluvial deposits even up to the axle and the knees, and rose up and sank down, and turned and twisted about in open defiance of all the laws of highways and byeways that were ever thought of; yet, as he reflected that the party before him had the same difficulties of road, with the additional aggravation of a heavy load, he was in great hopes of being able to overtake them before they should reach any point from which they could successfully elude him.

The country in this part being pretty thickly populated, and the driver being a Frenchman, also learned in the English tongue, they were enabled to obtain information of the party of almost every one they met, and at every village they passed through; but McCameron was

both surprised and distressed to find that as they advanced, so, in the opinion of their informants, did the length of time since the passing of the pursued appear to increase; and all agreed in the opinion that they had never seen a pair of horses, followed by a vehicle containing anything like the same amount of load, dash through the same amount of mud in the same amount of time, as they had witnessed in the case of the vehicle in question.

Still McCameron hurried forward as fast as the two pairs of legs by which they were propelled would carry them, and still the same information reached them from all sides; until the night had fairly closed in, and, at about ten o'clock, they had arrived at the village of Lotbinère,—a place of some extent and importance on the St. Lawrence, and about forty miles from the Point. Here he ascertained that the party had halted some few minutes for refreshments, and had also procured a change of horses; but to his alarm he found that there was a considerable difference of opinion among the villagers assembled at the inn as to the route the party intended to follow from that point.

Some had heard the gentleman—whom McCameron recognized from their description to be Blackbourn—enquiring for the nearest route to Sherbrooke, in the Eastern Townships, and had noted that the driver had suggested that they should go on to Port St. Francis, and take the stage from thence; while he had been heard by others discussing the best route to Montreal, and had made particular enquiries of the landlord as to the nearest port at which the steamers going Westward touched on that side of the river, and also the best point from which he could cross to the town of Three Rivers.

McCameron was very much puzzled what to do; but as it seemed the general opinion that the party intended to go on to Port St. Francis, whatever course they might pursue from thence, he resolved to push on to that port with all possible speed; and he was just on the point of making enquiries for a fresh supply of horseflesh, when one of the villagers, who had been watching him with something like a compassionate expression of countenance for some minutes (for no doubt most of them, having seen the party and the nature of its constituents, divined something of the cause of his extreme agitation and anxiety) stepped up to him and said,

"Tink, m'seur, von might go by better vay den te calash."

"How, my good mon! how so!" said McCameron, turning anxiously towards him.

"Vy, dere te steam tug just out in te river vich might possible take you for trifle."

"Thank you, thank you, mon," returned McCameron. "Can you show me, mon, where it is?"

"Vit pleasir, m'sieur," said the man, leading the way at once.

They found the master of the tug just preparing to start. But his destination was the town of Three Rivers, on the opposite side; and at first he demurred very much about going so far out of his way as Port St. Francis for any remuneration that one individual could be supposed to afford. But when McCameron, whose anxiety was increasing with every moment's delay, took him aside and communicated to him something of the cause of his desire to reach the place as speedily as possible, a most extraordinary change became instantly apparent in his manner of treating the subject. He stood looking vacantly on the agitated Scotchman for several seconds, and then, without offering an observation, he dashed away, calling out to his men to get up steam; and McCameron had just time to send the discharge of the "calash" by the kind-hearted Frenchman who had suggested the tug, and who stared at the remuneration that McCameron gave him for his trouble as if it was about the most extraordinary thing that he had ever been called upon to witness, when he found himself steaming away towards the scene of his hopes and fears, at a very much more expeditious rate than he could possibly have secured by any other means.

Notwithstanding the excited state of his mind, McCameron could not help observing the extreme simplicity and kindness of disposition manifested by the humble *habitans* of this district. There was a supreme contentment, and an absence of all signs of care and thought among them, that it was impossible not to observe and to admire; and which, combined with their apparent anxiety to serve and oblige him in all ways and on every occasion during his hasty drive through the district, excited in him an esteem and respect for them, as a class, that would not be easily effaced.

It was the dead of night when they arrived at Port St. Francis. Everything was dark and still in the village, and no sign of life could be anywhere seen or heard beyond the occasional barking of a dog, and the distant croaking of a wakeful bull-frog. But the master of the tug,

who was probably well known in the place, accompanied his solitary passenger ashore, and undertook the waking-up of the innkeeper for his accommodation; which having been accomplished, he returned to his vessel and steamed away for his original destination.

From all that McCameron could gather from the innkeeper—whose knowledge of English was something like his guest's knowledge of French, considerably limited—it appeared pretty certain that Blackbourn and his party had not yet arrived.

Having ascertained that they could not get into the village by any route without passing the inn, he concluded to sit in the store and watch for their arrival. But this the kind-hearted old Frenchman resolutely over-ruled, and insisted on being allowed to perform the office of watching himself, while his guest retired to rest. McCameron was greatly fatigued, and he accepted the good offices of his host in watching for the arrival of the vehicle; but nothing would induce him to go anywhere beyond the primitive but capacious sofa in the room immediately at the back of the store, whereon he reclined and endeavored to snatch a little rest for his weary body and his still more weary mind.

But he was too agitated and troubled to sleep. The rattle of wheels, or the sound of his daughter's voice, or the dark form of Blackbourn, was perpetually rushing into his mind, and crowding one upon another into every moment of unconciousness that came to him, until the attempt to sleep became more wearying and distressing than lying awake altogether. As the time drew near at which he expected the party to arrive, his agitation gradually increased. He paced up and down the room with a countenance full of trouble; his hand wandered mechanically to the leathern case that nestled at his breast, and his eyes were turned upward, and the same expression, but something more sorrowful, that had rested on his features as he first placed it where it still remained, again flashed across them; and then again he shook his head and paced to and fro more sorrowful than before. But hour after hour passed away—the grey light of approaching day was just stealing over the hills—the sun began to gild the horizon, and still they came not.

He had begun to reflect on the probability of their having taken a different route, and had partially made-up his mind to retrace his steps eastward, and so avail himself of the double chance of meeting them, provided they were still coming westward, and of putting himself again on their track in the event of their having diverged into a different route; when, to his surprise, he heard the voice of the master of the tug enquiring for him in the store. He instantly rushed out, and the other came hastily towards him, exclaiming,

"Da all gone! da all gone!"

"How so—where, my good mon?" cried McCameron.

"Da were all over at te Tree Rivers 'fore I get tare, and all take te boat to Montreal, m'sieur!"

"Are you perfectly sure, mon?" said McCameron.

"No chance to mistake," replied the other. "Tree gentl'mans, von laty, von leetle girl, and te servan'."

"And are you sure they are gone to Montreal?" said McCameron.

"All to Montreal. And I come express to tell you."

"Mony thanks, mony thanks, mon," cried McCameron, something overcome by this generous and disinterested kindness.

"Shall he go to Montreal, m'sieur?" asked the other without the least apparent consciousness of having done anything out of the common order of things.

"Yes, I must, I must, mon," replied McCameron, suddenly starting from an abstracted mood. "Can ye tell me how I may get there?"

"Sal have vary much plasir take ova tare in te tug," replied the other. "Am to go to Montreal. Have te vessel to tow down to Quebec."

McCameron thanked him over and over again, and immediately accepted his offer; and in a few minutes more he was again steaming up the St. Lawrence on his way to Montreal.

It was past noon when they arrived at their destination; and McCameron lost not a moment in pursuing his enquiries. He found the last boat from Quebec lying at the wharf, and from the steward he learned that such a party as that described by the Frenchman, and which he had no doubt was that of which he was in pursuit, had gone on board at Three Rivers, and had landed in Montreal some five or six hours before his arrival. Beyond this, after interrogating cabmen and policemen, and spending two or three hours in making a tour of nearly all the hotels in the city—he was able to obtain no clue whatever to their whereabouts, or

to ascertain whether they were still remaining in the city or not.

Weary, desponding, and exhausted with disappointment and fatigue, he was moving slowly and dejectedly through Notre Dame Street —the tears gushing into his eyes as he looked round on the strange world in which he found himself, and thought of the feelings of his child, so far away from all that she loved and that loved her, and at the mercy of a ruthless villian without any hope of escape : he was surrounded by strangers—they knew not the nature of his grief, and as he limped slowly along, the tears rolled freely down his cheeks, and he prayed in silence for his child, and that he might once more be permitted to clasp her in his arms; when, as he was crossing the Place d'Armes, his eye suddenly fell upon an individual who was moving hurriedly before him. He thought, to be sure he recognized him. He quickened his pace, and in another moment his hand was laid upon the other's shoulder. The man turned with a start, and, when he saw who it was that was before him, the colour left his cheek, and he stamped his foot savagely on the ground with chagrin. It was Bolton.

"Why, Mr. McCameron, I never hoped to meet you here," he said. "You fly from place to place like a ghost."

"My daughter, sir—my daughter!" replied McCameron. "I have left my home—I have wandered everywhere—I have crossed the sea —I have destroyed my health seeking her—you canna tell what I feel for my daughter, sir. You will surely assist me now. What motive can *you* have for injuring her—for keeping her in misery—the worst of misery, sir? You will surely tell me where I may find her?"

Bolton, who appeared considerably excited and kept continually casting his eyes feverishly about him, shook his head, and, after struggling with his emotions for some moments, replied with some hesitation,

"You are too late, sir. They are gone."

McCameron looked at him earnestly, and endeavoured to read in the expression of his countenance the truth or untruth of the statement; but he could make nothing of his agitation and the frequent glances he cast about him, further than a fear of meeting with some one whom he was anxious to avoid.

"Can I trust you, Mr. Bolton,—is it so?" he said at length.

"You may probably have little reason to credit what *I* tell you," replied Bolton; "but I can tell you no more—they are gone!"

"You have accompanied them thus far," said McCameron: "may I ask you why you are now behind?"

"On business."

"You will not refuse to tell me their destination?"

"You cannot find them," returned Bolton, stamping again upon the ground and becoming violently agitated. "I don't wish to send you on a wild-goose chase—I know you cannot find them."

"Will you tell me where?" pursued McCameron.

"To Kingston, then, if you will know," said the other. "I am sorry for your daughter, sir, very sorry, and this meeting maddens me. Good day, sir."

"Stay," said McCameron, detaining him. "My daughter—how is she?"

"She is well," replied Bolton. "It were useless to say she is happy."

"Thonk you, thonk you," returned McCameron. "I may trust you? They are really gone to Kingston?"

"I have told you that you cannot overtake them," replied Bolton, moving away; "but they have taken the boat to Kingston. Again good day, sir."

McCameron hurried away down to the wharf to see if he could learn anything which might corroborate this statement; but he could only learn that a boat had left that morning—the description of the passengers being unknown to any one that he could find. There was another boat leaving in the evening, and he resolved, if all his exertions failed to discover them in the city by the time the boat left, that he would trust to Bolton's fidelity and take passage to Kingston; but he had serious misgivings nevertheless, and his mind was gradually becoming bewildered with the complication of distresses that were crowding around him.

As Bolton turned away into McGill Street, he was almost immediately overtaken by William, who, unseen by McCameron, had been following at a little distance.

"Why, by Jove! isn't that poor McCameron?" cried William, in some surprise.

"You're right," replied Bolton. "Poor fellow! I don't know what to do about it. That devil is driving me mad! I have got to serve him by instinct; and, somehow or other, I do it against every feeling to the contrary."

"Well, it's a strange business," returned William. "I begin to think the end is fast com-

ing. He's talking of going to live in the woods. And just fancy his taking those two delicate little creatures into a howling wilderness like that. Why this is bad enough for such as them; but Heaven knows what the woods must be! Well, there's no harm shall come to either of them, if I can help it. Will you go?"

"Go," replied the other, stopping and looking savagely on his companion; "I've sworn to see his corpse; and I'll never leave him, go where he will, until I do. I have an idea that if we go into the woods together, we shall never come out alive. It is what I have been waiting for. There will be no want of opportunity. By Heaven, William," said Bolton, grinding his teeth together and striking his palm with his clinched fist, "I'll kill him!"

William made no reply, and they both walked on in silence after this until they stopped at a private boarding-house in the upper part of the town. William went round to the side door, and Bolton entered at the front. He went directly to a private sitting-room on the first floor, where he found Blackbourn alone.

"Well," said Blackbourn, "any letters?"

"None," replied Bolton. "But there is something else: McCameron is in the town."

"Ah, have you seen him?"

"He caught me by the arm as I was leaving the Post Office."

"What did you tell him?"

"Oh, put him on the wrong scent. He is going after you to Kingston."

"Humph! that is right," replied Blackbourn. "We shall be away before he can return. I am going into the back country for a time, Bolton. Growley will go; and as to the rest, they may all do as they like—with the exception of Alice—she must go; and—and—well you will all follow—there is no need to make exceptions: I don't require to ask any of you. I know your answer. It is not surprising that the devil's magnet should attract the devil's progeny; but when Heaven's angels follow in the same train—good God! it puzzles us!"

Matilda entered at this moment, followed by Alice, and put a stop to his remarks. They were both looking very pale and sad.

"Are there any letters, Mr. Bolton?" said Matilda, casting an anxious glance towards him.

"None, I am sorry to say, Mrs Blackbourn," replied Bolton.

Matilda looked at Alice and shook her head, but made no further remark. A calm resignation had settled on her countenance, and, although her cheek was hueless, there was something more of beauty in that quiet, melancholy sadness, than all the brilliancy of mirth, and even happiness, could possibly have imparted to her mild and placid features.

"Matilda," said Blackbourn, "you must prepare to leave this. We shall be travelling again probably to-morrow or the next day."

"Oh, Blackbourn," said Matilda, imploringly, "not into the woods?"

"Why, what do you fear, child?" replied Blackbourn. "You will not be the first of your position that has done so. There is nothing to fear, child!"

"No; but it's so terrible to be shut out from all the world," replied Matilda. "Must we indeed go?"

"We must. I tell you there is nothing to fear," returned Blackbourn.

Matilda said no more; but the tears stood in her eyes as she quitted the room—for the thought of leaving the world around her for a remote wilderness, a dismal forest, away from everything that she had been accustomed to regard as belonging to the world—brought back to her the recollections of her home; and all that was dear to her on earth, seemed to vanish for ever with the dark, uninhabited wilds that rose up before her, a terrible picture—at the very mention of the Canadian forest, which had so long been associated in her mind with all that was terrible, and savage, and inhospitable.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE REST.

THE day after Mr. Kwack's untimely discomfiture, the whole Plumley party bid a long and last (at least they had no desire that such should not be the case) farewell to Quebec, and took the steamer, or rather got the steamer to take them, to Montreal.

Mr. Albosh would fain have remained behind for the purpose of carrying out his new project, which was a comprehensive plan for clearing the forest lands by steam and magic, and by which he calculated that at least a thousand acres might be swept through in the course of a single day—provided, of course, that the machinery were sufficiently extensive and powerful; but as a somewhat partial estimate of the cost had shown that the undertaking involved an outlay of not less than ten thousand pounds at the outset, and that it moreover required the immediate co-operation of the Government in order to carry it out at all, it was thought advisable, however sound the scheme might be in itself, to allow it to stand over for a week or two, and in the meantime to see what prospects for men of research were held out by the city and citizens of Montreal.

The weather being fine, and the travelling medium scarce on all sides, the party contented themselves with deck accommodation, with one exception—an exception which undoubtedly should be duly noted, although, at the same time, we would approach it with delicacy.

It happened that Miss Plumley had not yet recovered from her attack of "Canadian headache," as she insisted on calling it; and it further happened that the affectionate Joe had duly observed that melancholy fact. And the feelings of the afflicted spinster may perhaps be imagined (although we doubt it) when he presented himself before her—not, it is true, without some slight embarrassment—and magnanimously tendered for her acceptance a ticket for the cabin, stateroom included; and further announced his intention, in order that she might not be cast among strangers without a protector, of assuming the dignity of first-class cabin passenger for himself.

Let us not attempt to unvail the sacred emotions that played around the heart of the sensitive spinster as this noble generosity was made manifest; suffice it to say that she graciously and gratefully accepted it at his hands, and allowed herself to be straightway led away to the cushioned sanctum, leaning timidly on his stalwart arm. It should perhaps be further mentioned, as supplying an interesting subject to the spirit of enquiry, that the welcome sound of the supper-bell had scarcely died away upon the ear, when Joe was seen conducting the fair object of his solicitude through and in the midst of the jostling crowds, with a grace and gallantry that no one had hitherto imputed to him.

What all this might portend, is for the present hidden in the inscrutable darkness of the future; and we presume not to attempt to raise the curtain, until, in its own good time, it shall unveil itself.

Mr. Kwack had been so much engrossed in other matters during his short stay in Quebec, that he had never found time to make a survey of any of the boats then lying at the wharf. And it was with some astonishment that, with Mr. Albosh on his arm, he made a tour of the boat in which he had already begun to fly through the water at a rate that he had never before associated with anything but rifle-balls and telegrams.

The superbly elegant saloons, richly decorated in white and gold, and furnished in a style that he had never before seen anywhere but through the plate-glass windows of first-class upholsterers in the West End of London; the handsome chandeliers and girandoles, and richly stained glass windows; the endless conveniences and comforts for any one and every one that existed everywhere; and above all the magnitude and power of the engines,—all struck him as being something, as he said, inscrutably incomprehensible, as compared with his already established opinion of Canadian resources. At any rate he was obliged to allow, as he certainly did with a magnanimity that did him credit, that, in comparison with those dirty, smoky, paintless, unChristian-like conveyances that creep about on the back of Old Father Thames,

they were perfect floating castles, and might do credit to the greatest country in the world.

"Egad !" said Mr. Kwack, as they returned from their survey, "I don't happen to know whether these Canadians are a parcel of contumacious geese and fond of the water; but this completely flagellates cock-fighting. If they would only arrogate to the ostensibility of *terra firma* a little of this homogeneous display, why it strikes me that that sacridotal imbecility that seems to pervade the whole fundamentality of the country, would receive a metamorphosis. Contumaciously astonishing, isn't it ?"

"Well, yes; it's rather first-rate," replied Mr. Albosh, who had just concentrated his attention on the machinery about the engine. "But still it occurs to me—yes, to be sure; let me see. I've got an idea. The very thing. I wonder where the captain is to be found ?"

Mr. Albosh at once hurried away, idea and all, and sought out the captain. He found him in his little look-out box, absorbed in a labyrinth of paper and a cigar.

"Beg pardon," said Mr. Albosh, stepping in and closing the door carefully behind him; "but you are the captain, I believe ?"

The gentleman in question removed his cigar and inclined his head.

"Oh, well, if you are not *too* busy, I just wanted a word," continued Mr. Albosh.

"Not at all. Take a seat," replied the captain, re-installing his cigar and composing himself for the interview.

"Well," pursued Mr. Albosh, "the fact is, I am a bit of a man of science; and I want just to ask you if you thought the proprietors of this line of boats would be inclined to entertain a suggestion for improving the speed, and economizing expense in their boats, by a small outlay—in fact, a mere bagatelle ?"

"Undoubtedly," said the captain, screwing his mouth into sundry inelegant contortions, with the ostensible view of giving the accumulated smoke a free passage outward, although it appeared to have a more direct communication with his risible faculties.

"Oh, you think so ?" added Mr. Albosh, evidently delighted with the prospect that began to open up before him. "Then, without encroaching on your valuable time, I will just throw out this one simple suggestion for your consideration, as a part of that which I shall immediately make it my business to lay before the Company. Don't you think then, if the bottom of your vessel was constructed in that form," (placing his hands something in the form of an old-fashioned washing tray,) "and you had your paddle-wheels placed just so," (giving his hand a slap on one side,) "and the engine placed on a gentle elevation here," (touching the palm of his right hand delicately with his forefinger,) "and, in fact, the whole thing altered from first to last so as to throw the weight more on the stern, and keep the vessel free of the water, that there would be a material difference in the speed, and, in fact, in the general working of the vessel ?"

At this point the captain, who, as the other proceeded had been twisting his countenance into all kinds of contortions, seemed to be suddenly, although secretly, called away on some peculiar duty; for without making any reply, he jumped up from his seat, rushed precipitately from the box, and, to the other's astonishment, immediately disappeared with his body bent almost double, and his whole system apparently trembling with emotion, but whether pleasurable or not did not appear, since his back was alone visible.

Mr. Albosh waited a little time where he was; but as the captain didn't re-appear, he returned to his friends, a little puzzled it is true at the strange reception his suggestions had met with; but, however, it never occurred to him for a moment to abscribe it to any peculiarity in the suggestions themselves—in fact, nothing could ever have inspired him with the belief that there was any such property connected with them.

While Joe was enjoying himself at the supper table, with his fair companion by his side, he encountered almost directly opposite him, three countenances, with the lineaments of which it occurred to him he ought to be perfectly familiar. They were accompanied by a fourth, on which it had been his happiness to gaze at least on one previous occasion. These interesting objects were respectively the properties of the Sorftishes, and of the Yankee Agent, Mr. Slicker. Joe having passed and received a private telegram, implying recognition, across the table, was favored, on returning to the saloon, with the most polite and special attentions from Mr. Slicker, who lost no time in procuring a formal introduction from his fast friend Mr. Sorftish the elder.

"Sh' say, mister, yeou're looking to get a neat little farm-lot, slick off leike ?" said Mr. Slicker, after the usual formalities set down in the social code had been duly gone through.

"Wurl, oi durn know," replied Joe, fixing

his eyes on the seat which Miss Plumley had just vacated. "Oi may in the course orf a little time; but oi warnt to get a little knowledge orf the ways like orf the courntry."

"Calc'late you're a farming man, friend?" said Mr. Slicker.

"Yers, oi'm a farmer, it's true," returned Joe. "Burt things is always strange in a new courntry loike."

"'Spect I can put yeou in the proper way," said Mr. Slicker, drawing closer and speaking confidentially. "If yeou're meind to take a neat little farm lot at about thirty pounds sterlin', and go up West along a friend of mine; calc'late he'd put yeou in the way slick, and give you six months' employ on his own farm tew. Sh' say, that ought to fix yeou up, mister."

"Wurl, tha-at's something abourt wort I worn't," said Joe, throwing his head to one side to ensure a proper reflection on the subject. "Wort sort of land might that be?"

Mr. Slicker drew nearer still.

"Consider if there's a first-rate piece of land to be got," he replied, "that's the piece. Can tell you, mister, it's a tarnal feine little lot—no mistake about that. Got several farmer men after it present moment—that's what I have tew."

"Wurl, oi'll think it over," said Joe.

"Calc'late wan't to secure it 'fore it slides, better be smart and close the bargain," said Mr. Slicker.

No; Joe was a man of deliberation in all things. He never did anything out of the ordinary routine until he had slept on it at least once; and all the eloquence and art of the Yankee Agent were insufficient to move him a step beyond that position. He would think it over. And after two or three hours' praiseworthy perseverance on the part of Mr. Slicker to induce him to fix an early period at which the first step towards his future independence as a Canadian farmer might be taken and made, he was compelled to retire with the assurance that he would think it over.

And thus after a night's rest for the cabin passengers, and a night's unrest for the deck, they all arrived at Montreal together at about eight o'clock on the following morning; and without being bewildered by any blaze of splendour such as burst upon them at the first sight of Quebec, they were one and all favorably impressed with the general appearance of the town—an impression which was not in the slightest degree altered as they came alongside the solid masonry of the wharf and got a more accurate view of the houses and thoroughfares.

As soon as the boat stopped, Mr. Slicker, who had in vain endeavoured to persuade Joe to follow him, took his friend Sorftish by the arm, and, followed by Mrs. Sorftish and Philip, proceeded to lead the way to a select establishment in the neighborhood. As they passed they volunteered a nod of recognition to the Plumleys, who were something surprised to see them for the first time on the boat; and Mrs. Sorftish whispered Mrs. Plumley to send her a note to the post office, and, shaking her head sorrowfully, proceeded to follow again in the rear of her husband and his benefactor.

There were several boats similar to the one in which they had arrived, about the wharf; and to one, which appeared to be on the point of starting Westward, the people were flocking from all directions and in all degrees of excitement.

As Timothy, with Simon by his side, stood watching their evolutions, together with matters connected with the wharf generally, a cab drove hurriedly past him and drew up in front of this boat.

"Hallo! here's a rig," cried he, as the first person alighted; "where's the gov'nor?"

Saying which he hurried away in search of Mr. Plumley.

There were several persons in the cab, and, as they alighted one after another, they passed on instantly into the boat; and by the time Mr. Plumley arrived they had all disappeared but two, whom he immediately recognised as Blackbourn—who was just entering the saloon, —and William, who was looking after the luggage.

"Simon," said Mr. Pumley, "who went in before I came?"

"I think they are all the saloon passengers," returned Simon, who appeared somewhat bewildered.

"All?" said Mr. Plumley; "are you sure there was all? Two ladies?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Simon.

The fact is, he had seen Alice; and she had recognized him; and every other object was shut out from his mind until she had disappeared, and even then he stood gazing after her entirely unconscious of what was passing around him. And he was not positive of anything but that Alice was there, and that she had recognized him, and smiled, and shook her head—and disappeared.

Mr. Plumley was extremely anxious to know if Matilda was among them; and not thinking it well to go in himself, being known to Blackbourn, he called Mr. Kwack and asked him to go into the saloon and see if the lady passengers of the Wanderer were there.

Mr. Kwack very soon obeyed, and walked round and round, and peered into every lawful, and a few unlawful places, to endeavor to find them; but he nevertheless ultimately returned with the opinion, that they had either not gone in, or else that they had incontinently vanished on getting inside, since he could see nothing whatever of any one of them, with the exception of Messrs. Bolton and Growley.

Simon, however, knew very well that the "little lady" passenger had gone in; and he kept his eyes fixed upon the boat until it began to move away.

Why, that was she surely at the cabin window! Yes, there she stood; and her eyes were still turned towards him. She waved her little hand, and put her handkerchief to her eyes; and the tears filled his own as he strained them in pursuit of her receding form. The boat turned in her course; he lost sight of her again—and for many a long day.

As Mr. Plumley's reserve funds were becoming smaller by degrees (and rather long degrees too) and miserably less, the moment he had seen his wife and family settled for the time being in a boarding-house at the east end of that lively locality known as Griffintown, he sallied forth into the town to look for employment. He was absent several hours; and when he returned there was a gloom on his countenance, which, being interpreted, signified that ill-success had attended him, and that he had returned accompanied by a very small amount of hope of the success of any series of similar attempts protracted through any series of the periods into which time is subdivided.

"Well, Lizy," he said, "I am sorry to say that things is looking very bad. There don't seem to be any work to be got in the town. There appears to be so many of my trade emigrated here in the last month, that every chance is filled, and there is a good many out of employ too. So I hardly know what we shall be able to do, Lizy."

"Well," said Mrs. Plumley, who always managed to be cheerful and hopeful when her husband was worried and distressed, although to be sure she would sometimes be a little downcast when there was less real cause,—"well, we must hope for the best, George dear. I begin to like the country better than I did; and do you know, George dear, some how or other I've got a present'ment that something good is going to happen—I have indeed, and there's no accounting for one's feelings you know. And there's Mr. Worzel [Joe]—oh, here he comes—says he's got employment, and he's going, in a day or two, a long way off to work on a farm: and so I really do think that something will turn up."

"Bless you, bless you, Lizy, that's all I can—say," said Mr Plumley, proceeding nevertheless to add, "if it wasn't for you being always so hopeful and 'couraging in all difficulties, why, by George, I should have sunk under it long ago—that's what I should."

"Now that's all good, kind nonsense, George dear," said Mrs. Plumley, shaking her pretty little countenance at him in deprecation of the nonsense; "because you know I'm always so opposite, although I try not to be. But still I *do* think, for all that, that something is going to turn up. Well, Mr. Worzel, and are you really going?"

"Yers, Mrs. Plumley, oi think oi'm going," replied Mr. Worzel. "Oi think oi've got a purty good offer, too. There's a capital lot orf land—a hundred acres, and some orf it cleared, too, for oi've seen the plan orf it—for which oi'm going to pay thirty poun' down; and then oi'm to have six months' work with a neighboring farmer, who jurst happened to be in Morntreal, and he says it's foin land, and he'll give me a dollar a-day, and help me to clear my own land and put in the crops as wurl. Oi think that's a purty good bargain, Mr. Plumley—hoi?"

"It seems so," returned Mr. Plumley. "I suppose they're respectable people that you've made the bargain with?"

"Oi think soa," replied Mr. Worzel, "they seem like that. Mr. Sorftish intro——"

"What! you don't mean Mr. Slicker?" cried Mr. Plumley.

"Why—why—why ye-yers!" stammered Mr. Worzel, startled by Mr. Plumley's manner.

"I hope you haven't paid the money!" said Mr. Plumley.

"Noa—not yet," gasped Mr. Worzel, staggering to a chair; "but oi've signed a paper."

"Dear me, I'm sorry for that," rejoined Mr. Plumley. "I am afraid this Mr. Slicker is a dangerous man. The Agent at Quebec particularly cautioned me against him. I'm afraid poor Mr. Sorftish will find it out when it's too

late. I spoke to him about it, but he seemed to think as I was a interferin' with what I had no business, and said he knew Mr. Slicker very well, and that he was a old friend of the family; so what could I say? But I wouldn't advise you to buy any land of him, unless you had very good advice to do it. I hope the paper you've been and signed aint of much account?"

Mr. Worzel waited for no more, but seized hold of his hat, together with an immense ash stick which he had imported into Canada from Hampshire, and started off in search of the Yankee Agent with an amount of determination depicted on his countenance and manner, that it had never occurred to them had entered into the constituents of his composition.

On the following day, as Simon was going round the town accompanied by Timothy—who was looking for employment, and rushing into every store and offering himself, as he said, at a downright sacrifice just for the sake of getting a footing—he espied a lady coming down the street towards him whom it instantly occurred to him he had seen somewhere before, and not in Canada. She was an elderly lady, and, as Simon thought, looked very much distressed and careworn. She passed without noticing him, although she appeared to be casting a feverish glance at everything and everyone that passed along the street; and although he could not at that moment recall to his recollection who the lady was, he felt an irresistable inclination to follow her and observe where she went.

"Tim," he said, "I think I know that lady. I feel sure I've seen her in London. Let us follow a little way and I shall think directly perhaps who she is."

"I tell you what, Simy," replied Timothy, moving off with him, "it 'curs to me (although to be sure this here one's a little advanced) that you've been a followin' the ladies pretty well o' late years—pretty well for yer age like. But there, it only makes my words good as I always said on yer. If you aint born to be ahead of the age, I shud like to know what yer *was* born for. I've allers said it since that blessed night. Lor, I never heered anything so nat'ral! There, I b'lieve as there's many a youngster act'ly breeched as couldn't ha' cried with that there nat'ralness as you did on that very night!"

"Oh, nonsense, Tim—what stuff!" said Simon. "You're always talking like that. I can't think what you mean."

"Well, them's my opinions," said Timothy; "and o' course opinions *is* opinions; or if so be as they aint, what *is* they? And I can't help a sayin' as when I seed you a carryin' on the sweet along with that there tip-top little hangel on board, I jest felt as if it wouldn't ha' taken half a squeeze more to ha' made me jump reg'lar overboard with the raptures—that's what I felt. But look, she's diwergin' to the right."

The divergence to the right brought the lady to one of the new streets running towards Beaver Hall; and here she presently stopped before a neat private house, wherein she presently disappeared.

Simon passed after she had entered, and in doing so he caught sight of another face at the window, which he recognized, and which at once served him as an index to the name of the lady whom he had followed without being exactly clear in his own mind as to his reasons for doing so. After this discovery, he hastened home as speedily as possible to communicate the intelligence to Mr. Plumley.

"Father," said Simon, as soon as he had arrived home, "I've seen Mrs. McCameron and Miss McCameron."

"Eh, what! you don't say so," said Mr. Plumley, in some surprise. "Mrs. McCameron! well that's strange. I'm sure as she never came out with Mr. McCameron. Which Miss McCameron was it?"

"I think it was the youngest. The one with the curls," replied Simon.

"Dear me, do you hear that, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley, looking with astonishment at his wife.

"Bless me, how ever could the poor dear lady come out here!" said Mrs. Plumley.

"Well, there, I suppose she couldn't bear to be left behind," said Mr. Plumley. "Well, I always have said that they was the most affectionate family that ever I saw. I think I ought to go and see them—just to tell them about Mr. McCameron, in case anything should happen they aint seen him—don't you, Lizy?"

"O yes, George dear. I'm sure they won't be offended. And then it would be so cruel not, you know," replied Mrs. Plumley.

After some little deliberation, Mr. Plumley put on his hat and procceded at once to the house to which Simon had so singularly followed Mrs. McCameron a short time before. In reply to his enquiry for Mrs. McCameron, the servant said she didn't know if there was any one of that name in the house, but a new

lady had come in that morning and she'd go and enquire; and having done so, she returned and requested him to,

"Work in!"

He accordingly followed her to a small back apartment; where, to his surprise, he at once found himself *viz a viz* with the object of his visit.

"Why, bless me, Clara, it is Mr. Plumley!" cried Mrs. McCameron, falling back in her seat with surprise. "Dear me, what a providence!"

"I beg your pardon ma'am," said Mr. Plumley, "but my little boy told me as he had seen you, and I thought I ought to call like, ma'am."

"Oh, it is very good of you, Mr. Plumley," returned Mrs. McCameron. "Clara, dear, *do* find Mr. Plumley a seat."

Clara looked anxiously up in his face as she rose and offered him a chair; and he mechanically shook his head in reply—for he knew intuitively what she wished to ask.

"Well, Mr. Plumley," continued Mrs. McCameron as soon as he was seated, "I am sure you have come to tell us all about Mr. McCameron and my poor dear girl. *Are* they quite well? —are they in Montreal?—can you take us to them, Mr. Plumley?—pray tell us where they are."

"I'm sorry to say, ma'am," replied Mr. Plumley, "that I can't tell you exactly where Mr. McCameron is at present, or Mrs.—Miss McCameron, ma'am; but I think they was both quite well the last time as I saw them. I was in hopes you had seen them, ma'am."

"Oh Clara, whatever will become of us!" cried Mrs. McCameron, the tears standing in her eyes. "Poor dear papa! nobody knows where he is! and Tilda! Oh it was all my fault, it was all my fault. Oh, Clara, whatever will become of us!"

"Oh, pray dont cry, ma," said Clara, "perhaps we shall soon find them. Do tell us all you know about pa—will you, Mr. Plumley?" she added, casting her full, bright, tearful eyes upon him.

Mr. Plumley at once told them as plainly and carefully as he could, all that he knew;—when he had last seen them; the chances he thought there were of Mr. McCameron's having overtaken the party after leaving in pursuit of them from Quebec; the instructions he had left with him about letters; and also what had occurred at the boat on the previous morning.

"And you really know no more, Mr. Plumley?" said Mrs. McCameron, who gradually became more collected as she perceived, from what Mr. Plumley could communicate, how much the unfortunate position in which she was placed required it.

Mr. Plumley was sorry that he did not.

"Do you think it likely that any accident has happened to them, Mr. Plumley?" asked Clara.

"I'm sure I should hope not, Miss," said Mr. Plumley.

"I feel sure you will do all you can to assist us to find them, will you not?" added Mrs. McCameron.

"I shall be very glad, ma'am—very glad to do anything at all in my power," replied Mr. Plumley.

"I dare say you think it very strange, Mr. Plumley," continued Mrs. McCameron, "that we should leave home alone and come all this long distance. But we couldn't stay at home. We tried, but it was worse than everything else we could endure. You know what such anxiety is, Mr. Plumley—it is not like an ordinary separation. And as Mr. McCameron thought he might possibly remain in this country altogether, and send for us if he thought the climate would agree with us, we thought to come at once, while it would spare us the pain of so long a separation, and would at the same time not be interfering with any of Mr. McCameron's arrangements. We came by the last steamer, which arrived here this morning; but unhappily, you see, too late. The Captain was kind enough to recommend us to these apartments, and I think they seem very comfortable. I really thought it was he that had called to see us when you were announced, Mr. Plumley. He was very kind to us during the voyage too—very kind, was he not, Clara? Oh, but," cried Mrs. McCameron suddenly relapsing into her former symptoms, "I am afraid we have done wrong! Whatever will become of us, Clara! Papa is nowhere to be found. Oh, if we should never see him again—in this wild terrible country too! Oh, Clara, we ought to have remained patiently until papa sent for us—I see it now—we have done very, very wrong. Oh, whatever will become of us!"

It was some time before this burst of grief had sufficiently subsided to enable the poor unhappy lady to arrange her plans for employing the services of Mr. Plumley with a view to obtaining information of her husband; but when it had once again passed away, and she began quietly to reflect on the importance of taking some immediate steps in the matter, she became once more calm, and collected, and thoughtful.

She had already made enquiries at the post-office, and had left letters there addressed to both her husband and daughter—in fact, it was in returning from this errand that Simon had seen her; but she had been unable to make enquiries at the hotels and boarding-houses—where it was just possible he had put up; and this she requested Mr. Plumley to do for her, as well as to enquire at the wharf and the booking-offices connected with the different boats and conveyances. This he promised immediately and strictly to perform; and it need not be added that he lost no time, after taking his leave of the afflicted wife and daughter of his best friend and benefactor, in putting his promise into the most rigid execution.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE YANKEE AGENT AND MR. SORFTISH.

As Mr. Slicker was conducting his friends, after quitting the boat, through the lower part of the town, and just as he had reached the Bonsecour Market, he was met by a small, sharp-edged individual in a white hat and Yankee "fixings," who, the momen the espied him, gave a sudden, spasmodic twist to his body, designed apparently to indicate about the last degree but one of astonishment, and then, making an affectionate rush towards him, grasped him by the hand, and for the space of about a minute and a half gave way to all the excess of emotion that might be supposed to be engendered by the sudden and unexpected meeting with an old and valued friend.

"Calc'late I'm tarnal glad to see yeou, Mr. Lecute!" said Mr. Slicker; "so unexpected tew."

"By thunder!" said Mr. Lecute, making a sound very much like the creaking of a small cart-wheel out of grease, "if this aint an unlooked for pleasure, spleice me!"

Mr. Slicker immediately introduced him to his friends. And perhaps anything approaching the warmth of feeling with which he grasped their hands, one after another, and the placid smile that played around his features as he almost welded poor Mrs. Sorftish's five fingers together with the heat and pressure of his parched hand, has not often been excelled if even equalled.

"Slicker," said Mr. Lecute locking himself affectionately to the other's disencumbered arm, "I spec'late yeou're the man I've been looking for. There's a trifle of business in your line I want fixed up—a little smart tew, if there's no splurge about the terms."

"Sh' say you know me, Lecute," replied Mr. Slicker with feeling. "Pretty up and down straight, b'lieve."

"By thunder!" returned Mr. Lecute striking the palm of his hand as a sort of chastisement for having implied so much as the shadow of a doubt, "confounded preoud, I guess, to have the honor tew—that's what I am, Slicker—no tarnal flies 'bout that!"

Such being the case, Mr. Slicker magnanimously invited him to breakfast with them at the hotel at which they had by this time arrived; and Mr. Lecute as magnanimously accepted the invitation.

"Any intelligence from the gover'ment yet, Slicker, 'bout those lands on the Ottawa yeou were speaking 'bout," said Mr. Lecute in a somewhat confidential tone as soon as the party were left to themselves at the breakfast table.

"No, I reckon not," replied Mr. Slicker. "The Canadian Gov'ment so tarnal slow, I guess yeou don't put them in a hurry mighty soon. Spect yeou'll feind that, Mr. Sorftish, if ever yeou get connected with the Gov'ment o' Canada."

"Well, yes—a—I dare say—a," said Mr. Sorftish. "Inexperienced—a—I shouldn't wonder—a."

"Well, Slicker," resumed Mr. Lecute leaning both elbows on the table, and fixing his "'cute," cat-like orbs on his friend, "about that bit of business. Guess I've been up to see that little hundred-acre lot in the Ottawa district yeou were speaking to me about in the winter; and by thunder I'm free to say it's confounded feine land—if it aint spleice me! And I reckon here's you're man that'll strike the bargain, and no tarnal flies 'bout it."

"Why, by Jup'ter, that's your plot, Mr. Sorf-

tish," cried Mr. Slicker throwing a glance of unmingled astonishment on that gentleman, which,however,was at the same time consoling. It assured him that he (Slicker) was invincible —it was *his* plot per agreement, and nothing should ever move him (Slicker) from his word. No; he should have that plot come what would.

Mr. Sorftish looked a little astonished too, and said what an extraordinary co-incidence it was. But Mr. Lecute was not going to relinquish such an eligible opportunity quite so easily. He was determined to make a struggle for it; and he proceeded to say,

"Slicker, I guess I've always found you a man of your word. Now perhaps you can tell me what passed between us in this town last February month?"

Mr. Slicker was evidently concience-stricken. He confessed to having promised the lot in question to his esteemed friend Lecute. But then again he had unwittingly made a second promise of the same valuable lot to his affectionate friend Sorftish. What therefore was to be done? Couldn't the two gentlemen settle it amicably between themselves.

"I tell yeou," said Mr. Lecute, "if it hadn't been such confounded feine land, and such a splendacious p'sition tew, I'd ha' given it up slick; but consider's tew good a thing to let slide easily—so that's plain spoke, b'lieve."

Mr. Sorftish couldn't deny it; but nevertheless he should be glad if an arrangement could be entered into.

"Well, there's not much mistake 'bout me, friend," said Mr. Lecute,producing a large flaming-red pocket-book and slapping it down on the table. "There you are, Slicker; I'm money down."

Mr. Slicker turned to the bewildered Sorftish and nodded emphatically as though he would have said, There, you see what a man he is; and what can a frail mortal like myself do with such an argument before him?

"That's certainly doing the thing slick off," said Mr. Slicker, "there's no mistake about that; and when a man gets the money put down spank on the nail, why it's tarnal hard lines to resist, I guess, even for a downright friend."

"Well—a—as far as that goes—a," said Mr. Sorftish, "although I *did* wish to see the land first, I suppose I can pay the money down—a —if that's all—a."

"Then by the tarnal fates!" cried Mr. Slicker at once dissipating every obstacle with a tremendous blow on the table, "the land's your's! Lecute, I guess you consider I wish you no ill; but fact is here's an old friend—a Britisher; and I reckon this is the only little lot I know of that'll fix him off first-rate; so if he comes down with the ready, calc'late he'll get the land."

"Spleice me!" said Mr. Lecute dealing the table a counter-blow with his pocket-book, "if there wont be a splurge then. I 'spect you aint going to let a splendacious lot like that slide to a Britisher, if I'll give you half a dollar rise on the acre deown?"

Mr. Slicker's ardour received another shock; and he put it to his friend Sorftish in another confidential nod, if he (Lecute) wasn't a "hard case." Mr. Lecute proceeded confidently to count out his notes upon the table. Mr. Slicker beheld this proceeding with a certain amount of horror; and he cast a look at Mr. Sorftish that seemed to beg, to implore him not to allow his future prospects to be blasted—nipped in the very bud so to speak, for the sake of a paltry half-dollar per acre.

"How much is it, Slicker?" asked M.rLecute.

"Well it was to be a pound an acre for the hundred acres, I guess," replied Slicker.

"That's about the thing," said Mr. Lecute laying down a parcel of notes, "four hundred and fifty dollars—that's one peound tew and six, b'lieve. Now, Slicker, spose you hand over."

"Stay—a—I think—a—I'll give the extra half-dollar—a," stammered Mr. Sorftish.

"You will?" cried Mr. Slicker. "Then by Jove the land's yours. Lecute, I guess I'm a man of my word. The land's his, and you'll see he'll have it tew."

Mr. Slicker was right. In less than an hour from the utterance of that prophetic remark, Mr. Sorftish had paid into his (Mr. Slicker's) hand the stipulated sum of four hundred and fifty dollars, and had received in return the title-deeds of the contested lot.

The change that was almost immediately effected in the manner of Mr. Lecute was remarkable. The very moment he saw the money paid-in to the hand of his friend Slicker, he became magnanimously reconciled to his loss; in fact Mr. Sorftish was somewhat surprised at the good-natured and exemplary manner in which he sustained the defeat, as well as the fast friendship that he expressed for himself, who had been his only antagonist in a matter which only a few minutes before had appeared to be the very darling of his heart. Neither did it seem to sunder the friendship existing between himself (Lecute) and Mr. Slicker, but

rather to cement it closer and yet closer still; for they straightway agreed on every other point, and even moved about together wherever they went, as one man. They were evidently philosophers—but whether natural or *un*natural Mr. Sorftish had yet to learn.

Being anxious to see the nature and extent of his possessions as speedily as possible, Mr. Sorftish received his instructions from Mr. Slicker, together with the plans and landmarks whereby to find them, and, taking Philip with him, started off the same day.

Mrs. Sorftish was left behind, very much against her inclination. She had in fact entreated her husband to take her with him, or to leave Philip behind with her; but to both entreaties he was alike deaf; and she was left alone, a stranger among strangers—and such strangers as were necessarily both repugnant to her feelings and a constant terror to her mind; for being fresh from the seclusion and reserve of English society, even the civilities of the class of persons to be found at a third or fourth class hotel in Canada, were the source of the greatest distress and uneasiness to her in every possible way; and the state of her mind during the whole time her husband was absent was in the highest degree pitiable.—But it was only the beginning of the end.

The land of which Mr. Sorftish had become the proprietor was situate in the county of Prescott, in the Ottawa District, and somewhere about ten miles inland from the chief town, L'Orignal,—which at that time consisted of about twenty or thirty wooden shanties, and lodged about a hundred souls. His instructions were to take boat up the Ottawa to L'Orignal, whence he was to proceed by land direct to the spot.

The sail, or rather the steaming up the sixty miles of the Ottawa to L'Orignal was, as far as the wild magnificence of the forest scenery was concerned, everything that the heart of man could desire, and very much more than his imagination would ever be able to picture to himself without the assistance of the original. Arrived at L'Orignal—which was accomplished towards the evening—they landed; and it at once occurred to them that it was certainly a pretty original place—at any rate that it was decidedly primitive. And when they looked around on the dark interminable forest that stretched away on every side—behind and before and away up the banks of the Ottawa as far as the eye could reach, they began to feel somewhat awed by the solemn loneliness of their situation, and to wonder whatever could have been the original object of L'Orignal's existence, so far removed from the great world, and hid away in an impenetrable region of wood, water, and solitude.

As their destination lay inland, and the road thither, being entirely through the forest, was none of the best—as they were informed by the landlord of the inn; and their ideas of traveling through a forest being immediately and only associated with the zoological collection in Regent's Park, loose, hungry, and impartial; they decided to remain in L'Orignal over night, and to start for the scene of their future prosperity in the morning early. They accordingly made arrangements for the vehicle to be in readiness at an early hour; partook of a light supper of pork and eggs; and having assured themselves, through the medium of the landlord, that the croaking of the bullfrogs in the neighbouring pools and marshes was not the production of wild beasts approaching from the distance, they retired to rest—not without some slight misgivings, but nevertheless feeling comparatively secure.

In the morning, after a repetition of the pork and eggs, they started again upon their journey in a vehicle which was certainly remarkable for anything but elegence and ease—which Mr. Sorftish ventured to hint to the driver as they jolted over the wood and mud and complication of difficulties that constituted the road.

"Never see te better," said the driver, who was a Frenchman.

This was essentially true, inasmuch as, having been born and educated and developed to his present state of perfection in the woods, and never having been out of them, his observation had been limited, in the matter of conveyances, to the peculiar and unpretending style of the one of which he was then the master.

Now, to say that Mr. Sorftish was perfectly at ease, either in mind or body, as he jolted through this portion of the world, would be to convey anything but a correct idea of his actual mental and physical condition. His mind, to tell the truth, was beginning to get a little uneasy. There was a certain formidable character about this style of country that he had scarcely bargained for when he put down his one pound two and sixpence per acre. He was certainly prepared to rough it, and to turn his hand to anything; but there appeared to him to be a *something* required here that had never entered into the largest catalogue of any-

things that had ever occurred to him. And further than this, from what he had gathered at L'Orignal, there appeared to be an additional peculiarity about the particular plot he had taken to himself—indicated by the villagers by a solemn shaking of their sympathetic heads—which produced a direct tendency in his mind to the most painful developments of doubt and perplexity.

"Do you know this part of the country, Mr. Driver?" he said, drawing the driver's attention to the "Description" on the deed.

This was perhaps the longest sentence he was ever known to produce without the introduction of a long, drawling *a;* an eloquence which, for the time being, seemed to be entirely freightened out of him.

"Know all te country, m'sieur," replied Mr. Driver.

"Can you form any idea what sort of land this particular lot is?" added Mr. Sorftish.

The driver listened attentively to the description, and then, eying Mr. Sorftish with the most comical of expressions for several seconds, shook his head, whipped on his horse, and said,

"Ve ten miles from tare."

"Confound the miles!" said Mr. Sorftish, breaking entirely loose from his usually drowsy mood. "What sort of land is it? that's what I want to know."

"Can't tell exact vot sort land," replied the driver, eying him nervously.

This was the substance of all the information he was enabled to produce from his French guide; who, after these few remarks, appeared to have imbibed an instinctive dread of the subject altogether.

Their way lay a little to the south of L'Orignal, in the direction of the far-famed Caledonian Springs, but not so much to the southward—the plot being situated on the river Petite Nation, a few miles below the village of Hattsville. The road was, for the most part, through a dense wood, with here and there a small clearing, displaying one or two rough, wooden shanties, and two or three rough, sunburnt, swarthy men and women, and shoeless and almost clothesless children—that looked to be sure like the real denizens of the woods—born and trained and developed in the hard school of toil—possessed of robust bodies and the forest-wealth of sinews—but little else. It was all they needed; all their lonely, toilsome, solitary life demanded,—they knew, nor cared, nor aspired to ought beyond it,—they were happy in their toil, independent in their seclusion, and the great world beyond them, with all its tumults and cares and vexations, troubled them not.

But still, to an effeminate mind and a sickly body like that of Josiah Sorftish, it is not surprising that the very contemplation of scenes so rude and uncultivated, should have been accompanied with anything but pleasurable emotions—in fact, that they should have inspired him with feelings of indescribable horror—especially when he reflected on his own qualifications for such a life.

After travelling about an hour and a half in this way, and when they were not more than two or three miles from their destination—in a densely wooded part of the country—they came upon a cross road leading southward to Caledonia, and northward, through the black, interminable forest, to the Ottawa. As they were in the act of crossing this road, they espied two vehicles, which appeared to be of a rather superior description for that part of the country, coming from the southward; and as the driver's curiosity was no less excited than their own, they drew up and waited for them to pass.

"Why, Josiah," cried Philip, as they came near enough to enable him to discern the faces of the occupants, "do you see who they are? The saloon passengers."

"Heavens, what are they doing here!" said Josiah.

"Look," continued Philip, as they passed close by them, "there are the two ladies—and look, there's the servant, William—he's nodding to us. How strange!"

Yes, it was they.

With the exception of William, they all passed on without taking the slightest notice of the Sorftishes. They were too much occupied with their own gloomy reflections—with the contemplation of the dark prospect that surrounded them, and the ominous future that loomed down upon them from the distance like a dark and leaden cloud. The brothers watched them, as they rolled away into the darkness, with strange feelings of interest. They saw them gradually diminish and disappear—away among the lofty pines; the giants of fabled terror threw their impenetrable mantle around them; they vanished from their view; the deep, dark forest engulphed them—and they wondered what the beauty, the gentleness, the tender offspring of the luxury and ease of the dreamy city that they bore away

in their train, could find congenial to their gentle souls in so wild and rude and melancholy a wilderness.

Yea! Oh Alice! Oh Matilda! we too wonder what ye shall find congenial in your new and terrible home; and what sorrows are in store for you in that stern, untrodden path of forest life! The good angels of your strange and trackless destiny be your guardians through the days of trial that are before you; and may they bring you at least to that happy, quiet home whence a strange fatality has torn you!

Another hour's drive through a somewhat variable country, in which the forest assumed a variety of appearances, indicating a swampy, sandy, clayey, and rocky soil alternately; and they arrived at their destination on the banks of the Petite Nation. It was a small, solitary clearing, with three small, solitary shanties looking out upon the river and the woods on its opposite banks, on the one side; and hemmed-in by the low, shaggy, irregular forest, which usually indicates a wet unprofitable soil, on the other.

Altogether it was perhaps one of the most desolate and melancholy looking spots that has yet been revealed to human ken; and Mr. Sorftish hung down his head and ground his teeth in silent disgust as the dismal revelation opened before him.

On making enquiries at one of the shanties, (the owner of which was an Irishman, who seemed to have settled in the woods with all the kind and good and generous qualities peculiar to his race, and to have left behind him the grosser matter,) they ascertained that the lot referred to in the deed was situate about half a mile lower down the river. The good-natured Irishman offered to row them down in his boat; but like the people of L'Orignal, he shook his head when asked about the nature of the land, and seemed afraid to approach the subject.

As they descended the river, they found that the land got lower and lower, until it stretched away in a broad marshy plain which was almost entirely overflowed by the river. After about half an hour's row, their guide, availing himself of a point where the land was unusually low and the water sufficiently deep to carry the boat, turned out of the river's course and paddled away into the land. It was now plainly visible that he was becoming uneasy. He rowed about for some considerable time without any apparent object, dodging in and out of the cedars and hemlocks with which the swampy country for miles round was studded; and at length he stopped, and, casting an anxious look at the driver, who had accompanied them, requested Mr. Sorftish to read the description again. When he had done so, he said somewhat impatiently,

"Well, now—where is it?"

The Irishman dropped his paddles, fumbled about with his hands, looked the very picture itself of distress, but seemed totally unable to speak.

"Why, what's all this about?" cried Sorftish, letting loose his passion. "Where is it—that's all we want to know?"

"Fa—fa—faith," stammered the poor fellow, "and I'm 'fraid it's rowing over it we are!"

"What!" cried Sorftish, springing to his feet and nearly capsizing the boat; "you mean to say I've paid above a hundred pounds sterling for this confounded swamp?"

"Faith and you've been swindled, sir," said the Irishman.

"I vos 'fraid of dat," said the Frenchman shrugging his shoulders, and looking comically round on the prospect.

Mr. Sorftish thrust the deed into his pocket, and, throwing a savage glance upon things generally, sunk down in the boat, and requested the trembling Irishman to row them back again as soon as he pleased; and with a few violent imprecations on the Yankee Agent and his "cute" friend, and a second batch against the country generally and its multifarious contents, he settled down into a sullen, stoical silence, which he uninteruptedly maintained until he again presented himself before his anxious wife in Montreal.

"Oh, Josiah," cried Mrs. Sorftish running to meet him as he entered the room, "I am so glad——"

"Well, that'll do," he said interrupting her and pushing her from him. "There's nothing to be glad for. We're ruined. That swindling Yankee has ruined us. So I suppose you'll be very glad to hear that."

His wife looked at him in silence for some moments, and then burst into tears. Philip went towards her and would have said something, but a savage look from his brother prevented him.

"Well, I thought that wouldn't please you," said Josiah, with reckless unconcern. "I tell you what, this won't do for me. I have had enough of it. I have done it for the best, and it has failed; and I am not going to stand any reproaches from you."

"Oh, I'm not reproaching you, Josiah," sobbed his wife.

"Oh, aint you," returned Josiah, who was evidently boiling with chagrin at his own ignorance and credulity, but lacked the moral courage to own it. "Then all I can say is, I am not going to stand it—and that you will find before very long."

So saying he bounced out of the room, and repared to the bar; where he remained smoking and drinking the best part of the night. But notwithstanding this, the next morning, much to his wife's surprise he was up and out by day break. They awaited breakfast for him, but he did not return. The dinner hour came, and still he was absent; and as both Mrs. Sorftish and Phillip began to feel alarmed at an absence so unusual, they went up stairs together to see if they could find any solution of the mystery in his room; when to their utter astonishment, they found that two carpet-bags were missing, and that almost every valuable they had possessed was gone, with the exception of ten English sovereigns which were left in a small cash-box wrapped up in the following note:

"As I don't intend to brook reproaches from any one, it is more than probable that you will not see me again. I dare say you will get on quite as well without me as with me—at any rate, you seem to think so. If I am successful where I am going, you may hear from me before long; if not, I dare say you would just as soon not. In that case, you had better go home as soon as possible.—You have a home to go to—I have none.

Good bye,
JOSIAH SORFTISH."

They were both completely thunderstruck as this extraordinary conduct became apparent; and Mrs. Sorftish, without waiting for bonnet or shawl, and despite all that Philip could say or do to detain her, rushed out of the house and fled for consolation direct to Mrs. Plumley, before whom she presently arrived in a most pitiable state of distress and dishabille.

CHAPTER XV.

PROSPECTS FOR ALL.

MRS. SORFTISH found her friend a good deal downcast with her own troubles and disappointments; for Mr. Plumley had not, up to that time, been able to find any employment whatsoever, and they were beginning themselves seriously to wonder whatever would be done, seeing that nothing whatever was to be got to *do*. But she nevertheless sympathized with her in her distress, and expressed all the complete surprises, and utter astonishments, and perfect bewilderments that were due to such a melancholy occasion; and she was just on the point of saying, that really if anything at all had turned up—if it had only been the merest thing, by which they could have kept even a roof over their heads, she was sure they would have been very happy to have done anything in their power to assist her until Mr. Sorftish returned, which she felt sure in her own mind he would do before very long;—when Mr. Plumley came rushing into the room—snatched up his little daughter in his arms, kissed and deposited her on the table—made a similar assault upon his wife, and wound up the performance with a terpsichorean feat.

"Why, George dear, what has happened?" asked his wife.

"All right, girl—by George, it's all right!" replied Mr. Plumley, stopping short on perceiving for the first time the distressed appearance of Mrs. Sorftish. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Sorftish; but one can't help being a bit elevated like when a thing like this comes at the very last moment, so to speak. Why, the fact is, Lizy, I've been and got some work; and what's more, I expect as it's perminent for the whole summer—if something else don't turn out of it for the winter, which the gentleman I'm going on for says he'll do his best to make it. It's not in my line, but there that's nothing—as Mr. Sorftish used to say, we must do anything that comes to hand, and be very glad that we can turn our hand to it. It's to work down upon the wharf; and it's a dollar and a half a day, Lizy girl—so that is as much as I could get at home at the best of times."

"Oh, how providential!" cried Mrs. Plumley. "There, I was sure, George dear, that something would turn up. Now didn't I say so?"

"Say so!" said Mr. Plumley; "but I tell you, Lizy, seriously," he added lowering his voice and changing into a more serious mood, "if it hadn't been for you—for the downright encouraging way in which you spoke this very morning before I went out, it's my firm belief as I shouldn't ha' come home with the news as I have at the present moment; for I'm certain satisfied I shouldn't ha' had the heart to ha' gone about a fiftieth part as I did—that's what I'm certain of."

"Oh, George, I'm sure that aint right," said Mrs. Plumley, whose eyes nevertheless sparkled very prettily as her husband spoke, "because you are always so very persevering you know."

"Ay, that's only what she says, Mrs. Sorftish," said Mr. Plumley; "but if I am, it's all her own doing. Why, but you don't look well, Mrs. Sorftish. I hope there's nothing amiss. How's Mr. Sorftish?"

Mrs. Sorftish shook her head and burst into tears.

"Oh, George dear," said Mrs. Plumley, "it's very wrong of us to be so pleased. Poor Mrs. Sorftish has got *such* a trouble. You wouldn't believe it—oh! it's so dreadful! But Mr. Sorftish has been and gone away and left her. And the poor dear creature is left without anything; and no one but young Mr. Sorftish to take care of her. Oh, isn't it dreadful!"

Mr. Plumley stood in the centre of the room with his mouth wide open, and his eyes fixed upon his wife in a state of semi-stupefication.

"Well, to be sure," he said at length, "that's what I never thought of Mr. Sorftish. By George, I never thought that of Mr. Sorftish. But he can't be gone away altogether—that's impossible—there's no man could do it. Has he gone for long then, Mrs. Sorftish?"

Mrs. Sorftish again shook her head, and handed him the note.

Mr. Plumley drew a chair to the table, spread the piece of paper carefully out before him, and proceeded to read it with a succession of mysterious nods, which seemed to increase in volume with the addition of every sentence.

"Well, but this don't seem *natural!*" he said, appealing to his wife for a confirmation of the sentiment, as soon as he had finished. "Mr. Sorftish isn't likely to do a thing of this sort in a kind of a joke like, is he ma'am?"

"Oh! no, no, no. He is gone—I shall never see him any more," sobbed Mrs. Sorftish.

"Well, dear me, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley, "this is beyond everything. I never would have believed that of Mr. Sorftish. A nice, respectable man as he seemed to be. I can't understand that ever a man should do a thing of this sort—that's what I can't make out. However, let us hope there's some mistake—I seem to think there *must* be."

"But whatever is the poor, dear child to *do*, George dear?" said Mrs. Plumley, putting the thing emphatically to her husband in so many words.

"Well, I can only say," replied Mr. Plumley, "that I'm going to take a small cottage directly, somewhere here in town—it won't be very large of course—but I'm sure if Mrs. Sorftish would accept of it, and you can make any arrangements, Lizy, just to accommodate them, in a friendly manner like, just till Mr. Sorftish returns, or something can be done; why, there, I needn't say that you're free to do it, and I should be very happy, I'm sure. There's Mr. Philip, I'm sure I respect him as much as any one I know—that I'm sure I do."

"Oh, you are very good," sobbed the poor, helpless girl. "I dare say I could get some fine needlework or embroidery, or something to do to repay you. I should be very glad to try, I am sure."

"Well, you see," said Mr. Plumley, "as far as that's concerned—anything done in a friendly way, is *done* in a friendly way, that's all—and there's an end of it. But there, Lizy girl, it all rests with you."

Oh, Mrs. Plumley was sure that she should never forgive herself, to her dying day, if she didn't do everything in her power to help a friend in such a shocking, dreadful trouble. And Mrs. Sorftish ultimably left the house in a very much happier state of mind than she had entered in; for she belonged to that class of frail humanity (a very pretty, inoffensive little class in their way) whose emotions and feelings and soul are all on the surface—just a few inches of Aspen leaf spread over a nerveless, insentient, soporiferous arrangement that is always the immoveable same under all influences; so that the slightest possible breeze is sufficient to shake the whole of the shakeable portion of the whole of the structure, while all the thunderings of the hurricane could do no more.

"Oh, bless me!" cried Mrs. Plumley, on looking out of the window after the departure of Mrs. Sorftish, "whatever is the matter with Tim? only look at him."

In another moment Tim burst into the room after the manner in which William usually makes his appearance in Black-Eyed Susan—that is to say, with a hop, step and a jump, and sundry artistic flourishes of his cap, which he holds in a peculiar manner by the crown.

"Blest if I aint been and done it now, mum," cried Tim, as soon as his breath was sufficiently at his disposal. "I've been and got a reg'lar first-rate place, to attind to a gentl'm'n's store, sir—down in St. Paul Street, sir—and what do you think I'm for to get? Why a dolar a day!—that's smmmit, isn't it, sir? I don't know 'xactly how much it be, but it sounds to me like a reg'lar sum. So I hope, mum, as you'll begin to cheer up a little."

"Why, you're a very fortunate fellow, Tim," cried Mr. Plumley; "that's five shillings a day."

"Blest if I didn't think as it was summut of that sort," cried Tim, in greater ecstacies than ever. "Lor, who'd ha' thought that this here country was like that? Why, mum, that's—let me see—five and five, that's ten—and five agen, that's, that's fifteen—and twice that—why, let me see,—that's jest thirty shillin's a week, mum. Well, certainly, it's time as I begun to bring in something. If I aint been reg'lar 'shamed—that's what I has, for the last—well I'm feerd to say how long—that's what I am."

"I tell you what, Tim," said Mr. Plumley, "it won't do, your talking like that there. I'm quite sure you've been a working for us long enough, without any remuneration; and it's nothing but right, now you're able to earn a little money again, that you should keep it and put it by for a future day."

Timothy's hilarity was gone. He sank down at once into a state of comparative wretchedness, as he listened to the propounding of this extraordinary doctrine.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," he said, turning his hat about in his hand after the manner of "William" discomforted, "if I've bin and giv' any 'fence, sir. I didn't mean for to do it, if I have. And I'm reg'lar sure——"

"Why, my fine fellow," cried Mr. Plumley, grasping his hand, "here, none of this, by George! What I meant was, that it was our duty to one another like—that's the thing Tim."

As Timothy's ideas of duty were somewhat limited, and never for a moment extended to himself, it was some considerable time before he could be made to understand that there was anything due *to* himself *from* himself; and it was only by a compromise arrangement, by which Mr. Plumley agreed to take care of all moneys that should come into his (Timothy's) possession, and do as he thought best with it, that he was made to believe that he had not committed some direct and flagrant offence, for which Mr. Plumley's proposal was the punishment to be inflicted.

A few days after this, the Plumley's established themselves in a neat little cottage in the upper part of the town, and commenced a perfectly new era in their existence; in fact, so agreeable, and happy, and comfortable was the change, that Mrs. Plumley declared, that to her the whole affair presented itself in the perfect similitude of a dream; and that she found it perfectly impossible to believe that she shouldn't, some how or other, wake up all of a sudden and find herself in the three-pair back, in that terrible street situate near and running out of the New Cut in the Borough.

Mrs. Sorftish and Philip were immediately received and welcomed as members of the family circle; and by the direct instrumentality of the indefatigable and loquacious Timothy, who had brought his eloquence to bear on the subject with his master, in a few days after Philip obtained a situation as assistant in the same store, in St. Paul Street, and was thereby enabled to make things generally independent for Mrs. Sorftish and himself: and now that he was left to be his own guiding star, and had to trust to his own resources, his intelligence and spirit and activity gradually developed themselves, and very soon rendered him both prized and esteemed, alike by his employer and his friends.

In the meantime, the movements of Messrs. Kwack and Albosh had not been without their interest—although the same ratio of success had not been awarded to their praiseworthy exertions, as had fallen to the lot of their less-gifted and more steady-plodding, every-day frends.

Mr. Kwack had made several attempts to arouse the "Griffintown Boys," and the citizens generally, to a sense of their own degradation, and the great national chaos in which they were found wallowing, as well as to astonish them with his oratorical powers; but unfortunately with but an indifferent amount of success, since all parties appeared to be tolerably well contented with things as they were, and by no means astonished by any quantity of the Johnsonian phalanx that he

could possibly contrive to concentrate before them: one reason possibly being, that on the first occasion he had only five people for an audience; and on the second, an assemblage of not more than three, inclusive of two Frenchmen, who unfortunately were totally unacquainted with both Johnson and his language.

"Well," said Mr. Kwack, on returning from this latter essay, "and so we are to call this a country, are we?—a *new* country! Well, it may be new certainly, for to be sure there are a few things in it that are contumaciously new to me. But if ever the inscrutable Fates hovered over an unmitigated bit of sterility in the shape of wood and water, why, in my opinion, this is the spot. It's something like the blasted heath of the immortal Bard—a place only fit for witches and sacridotal imbicilities: and it strikes me I shall just leave it to go its own rig. And if I do, just take care—just take care I don't renounce the title of Englishman altogether, and turn a regular contumacious Yankee. At any rate, there's a free country for anything white, whatever it may be for the darker shades: and that's a question I should say that would bear agitating a bit. Universal Emancipation. Well, to say the least of it, there's scope for oratorical skill. Yes; when a man is rejected by his own country and kin, let no one blame him if he foreswears his patrimony. It's not my doing, mind that—don't say that I did it; but I believe before another week is round upon us, I shall bid farewell to the Canadian shores: and then let them retrograde to inscrutable incomprehensibility, if they like."

Mr. Albosh had been equally indefatigable in his exertions, but, alas, equally unsuccessful with regard to results. He had made discoveries and improvements in almost every public and private scheme afloat in the whole city; and had either waited on or written to the principal in every instance. But owing to a certain dormant, unenterprising spirit that pervaded the whole mass, he was totally unable to inspire them with anything like confidence in himself, or with a conviction of the importance of his schemes: and he was therefore left, at the end of a week's untiring exertion, precisely in the same position whence he started. His last resource was to write to the Mayor, propounding a scheme for the total remodelling of the town, and the improvement of the streets and highways (certainly a desideratum); but either the document miscarried, or the Mayor was of the opinion that in such matters two heads were *not* better than one, or the scheme was somewhat too comprehensive for the Corporation to digest; for that answer, which was at once to have raised the projector to an elevation, second only to that enjoyed by St. Patrick's steeple in the same town, some how or another never arrived; and both geniuses were reduced together almost to a state of desperation and despair; when an incident occurred that brought about a change in their prospects for the better—although not exactly in a way congenial to their high aspirations, or in unison with their philosophical turn of mind.

It happened that during a visit—by means of a "complimentary order"—to one of the performances of an Ethiopian Troupe that was then serenading the town, that it suddenly occurred to Mr. Albosh that a lamentable deficiency became manifest in the construction of that superb combination of parchment and cat-gut—the banjo; and he straightway introduced himself to the leader of the troupe, and offered a suggestion; and although that suggestion was not immediately adopted—since it involved a total metamorphosis of the instrument in question uutil it assumed something of the character of a compromise between a trombone and a Jew's harp—it lead to an intimacy between himself and the leader; which led to the introduction of Mr. Kwack; which led to an engagement between the parties; which further led to an announcement from Mr. Kwack to Mr. Plumley, the same evening, in the following terms:

"Well, Plumley, we're off—Albosh and I are off. Canada has lost us; and let her take care—let her take care it is not for good. I feel assured, Plumley, that you can feel for men reduced like us to dire necessity. We have joined them Plumley—the Ethiopian Minstrels. Henceforward we may appear before our fellow cosmopolitian brethren with blackened faces, (an ignominous degradation of the physiognomy of a psychological being no doubt); but I trust the face may be besmeared, and the soul still retain her immaculate ascendency and shine forth refulgent with all her pristine puissance. Albosh, don't be discouraged. As there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, so there is but one gradation from the ridiculous to the sublime. We shall now have an opportunity of perambulating throughout the length, breadth and circumference of this mighty continent; and while the musical, and I may say the ultra-comical ascendencies with which nature has endowed us, will be the means of providing us

with the dross of power, we shall have an opportunity of feasting our souls on the transcendent fundamentalities of a categorical elucidation. Plumley, when you think of us wandering through the untrodden labyrinths of this mighty wilderness of civilized humanity—driven by the direst vicissitudes to disguise even our patrimonial lineaments,—remember us, Plumley, as we *have* been; and think that the hearts of your old and, I may say, valued friends, are still beating with the same free and friendly pulsations; while their souls have still the same worthy aspiration—the same unsophisticated moral ascendency, notwithstanding that the inscrutable vicissitudes of a sacridotal destiny have thrown a transcient mantle of degradation over their physical fundamentalities, that are neither homogeneous nor categorical."

Mr. Kwack, having concluded, dashed a tear from his eye, embraced his companion in adversity, and seated himself in profound silence.

"Well," said Mr. Albosh, "as my friend has observed, although this is not the path of public duty or of private emulation that we should have chosen for ourselves—having been driven into it, in the impressive words of my friend, by the direst necessity; yet it opens up a field for discovery, enquiry, and enterprise that can scarely be over-rated, and that can by no means came under the denomination of a bagatelle. I enter upon it with hope, with confidence in its ultimate results, and I trust, considering all the circumstances of the case, with the entire approbation of my friends."

The parting of the Ethiopian converts and the Plumleys, which took place on the following morning, was effecting in the extreme. Notwithstanding their peculiarities, there was a something about the two friends that had made them decidedly liked by the whole family at the Plumley's, and they parted with them, not knowing that they might ever meet again, with feelings of sincere regret. But the intensity of the feelings of the gentlemen themselves would perhaps, by a lively and symphathetic imagination, be better (according to a popular notion) imagined than described.

Mr. Kwack made a short but impressive speech—the inference being, that on this occasion his feelings took the place of his tongue; saluted the whole female portion of the family with a tear standing out upon either eye; embraced Mr. Plumley, and even attempted the same demonstration with Joe, although with indifferent success; and then, with one desperate effort, rushed precipitately from the house before his manhood became fairly and completely prostrated—and was seen no more.

Mr. Albosh followed in the footsteps of his friend, and was obliged to confess, with an ocular demonstration in his philosophic eye, that with all his powers of discovery, he had been unable to find a remedy for the then overflowing of his soul; and to assure his friends that the then state of his feelings could find no expositor whatever in the significant term, "a bagatelle."

They left! they departed on their wandering expedition; and were not seen again by their friends for many, many a long day.

"Wurl, it seems that we're all to be surperated loike," said Mr. Worzel, calling on the Plumleys a day or too after the departure of Messrs. Kwack and Albosh. "Oi'm going away now for certain. Oi've gort a place orf work on a farm, about a hurndred moiles up the courntry at forty poun' a year and board; and soa I'm going to-morrow, furst thing."

"You've bought no land this time, Mr. Worzel, I presume?" said Miss Plumley.

"Noa, tha-at I haven't," replied Mr. Worzel, casting a strange glance at the spinster. "I was very glad to get out orf the other so easily. If that rascal hadn't run orf in such a hurry with poor Mr. Sorftish's money, I doant expect I should oither. This is only a place of work."

The next morning Mr. Worzel took an affectionate leave of his friends and departed on his way.

There was one incident connected with this departure which—while we would desire not to approach it with levity, nor to expatiate too freely on its significance—it would perhaps be a laxity of duty to pass over altogether unnoticed. We refer to the expressions of eternal friendship—the bewildering combination of feeling and sentiment that obtained on that occasion between Mr. Worzel and the amiable spinster.

Having, however, hinted this much, we would fain throw a shroud, or rather a veil, around the emotions, the tender aspirations, the gentle flutterings of that sensitive composition on that touching occasion; and allow the soft secrets, therein emblematically shadowed forth, to rest unruffled and unveiled in the gentle bosom that gave them birth. Suffice it to say then, that they parted, and that they met not again for many a weary year.

"Lizy," said Mrs. Plumley a week or two after they were settled in their new abode, "our prospects seem brightening on all sides; I've got constant work for the present, and there seems every chance of something else as soon as that's ended; and so I think out of the little we're able to put by, as we ought to manage to give the children a little more edyercation. There's Simon, he seems regular taken to study, and I shouldn't wonder if he wasn't to make a great scholar one of these days. And then there's little Lizy—I would like to edyercate them so as they wasn't ashamed like of one another. What do you say, Lizy?"

"O I'm sure, George, dear," said Mrs. Plumley "the money couldn't be better spent. And then how delightful it would be to make Simy a scholar! And little Lizy—she *is* so lady-like too—isn't she, George dear?"

"And you see, Lizy," continued Mr. Plumley looking earnestly on his wife, "they aint brother and sister. And—and I'm sure as I never saw two children that loved each other more. I think it's our duty to edyercate them both, Lizy—that's what I do."

"Yes—I know what you mean, George dear," replied Mrs. Plumley thoughtfully; "but then—well it would be very delightful wouldn't it? Oh, only to think! And nobody knows what Simon may come to in this country. There seems to be so many great people that come act'ly from nothing. I'm sure the grocer was only telling me this very morning that the Honorable Mr.—Mr.—well, I forget his name,—but he's a great man now—and he used actually to carry fish about on his head in this very town—only to think! and I'm sure Simy will never want to do that, will he, George dear?"

Mr. Plumley thought not; and both being agreed on the main motion, the children were straightway sent to the best school that their means would allow; and Simon, whose ambition had been fired in a manner and to an extent that would have insured success to a much meaner capacity, was not long before he began to distinguish himself, and to attract the notice and esteem of his master and fellows, as well as the admiration of his dearer friends.

But they saw not the image, nor heard the still small voice that went before him; nor knew they that his aspirations, his energies, and his successes were inspired and realized through the influence of an unseen spirit,—that the magic that excited and impelled him onward was contained in the words that were ever ringing in his ears, 'You don't seem like a poor boy to me.'

All attempts on the part of Mr. Plumley to discover the whereabouts of McCameron were entirely unsuccessful; and to the great distress of Mrs. McCameron and her daughter Clara, nothing whatever was heard of him for upwards of a month, and they had begun almost to despair of ever again seeing him, when, to their delight and astonishment, he suddenly made his appearance among them. But he was haggard, emaciated, and completely incapacitated both in mind and body; and he brought no tidings whatever of the dear object of all his trouble and anxiety. With all their care and solicitude, it was some months before he was again restored to anything like his former self; and then all his anxiety and distress at the unhappy situation of his child returned, and nothing could change his determination to seek her—and to seek her until he found her, against all the perils in which his own life was involved in the attempt. On learning from the younger Sorftish that he had seen the party on his way from L'Orignal, as noted in the foregoing chapter, he made an excursion into the woods, and scoured the country round—far and near for upwards of a month; when he again returned completely enervated and prostrated, but still without any satisfactory clue to the object of his search. This he continued month after month, extending his route at every successive essay, until, after so many repeated attempts without success, he began to fear that they had quitted the country altogether, and that his daughter was irretrievably lost.

And thus the time is rolling away, month after month, year after year; and while changes and counter-changes are influencing the fortunes of all the subjects of these Adventures, we draw around them the curtain of a long obscurity; and when we raise it again, behold a change has passed upon the image of our dream—the wizard of wizards has been at work—and, says the man of obtuse science, another planet is watching over the destinies of our sublunary puppets, and a new scroll of mystery is unrolled.

CHAPTER XVI.

EVE OF THE TWENTIETH.

Seven summers, and seven long, dreary winters have passed, and it is again the time of snow. No longer the St. Lawrence rolls down her torrents to the ocean—the hoary giants from the north have bound her in her course, and while she slumbers in their iron grasp they spread out their wintry mantle about her, and throughout the hundreds and hundreds of miles of her great highway—along the plains and through the hills, and down between the mountains and the rocky heights that bound her,—she is wrapped in her wintry down—a long, monotonous, melancholy shroud of snow. The land of rivers, and lakes, and forests, and boiling cataracts is transformed altogether into a land of snow. Snow upon the mountains, on the hills, in the valleys, and away upon the plains and the meadows and the hedgerows,—it is all snow. Snow in the city, on the housetops, in the streets and in the highways and byeways—snow everywhere—nothing but snow. In the great forest—away for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of weary miles, it is all snow; snow upon the tree tops, upon the wood-bound plains, upon the swamp and the river and the lake—there is nothing but snow, all snow—a great white world—a world of snow!

Away in the deep forest—far away from the habitations of men—in the thickly wooded territory of the Ottawa—on the banks of the Opeongo Lake, which lay quietly slumbering before them beneath its broad white mantle of printless snow—in the dead of night, when the deep stillness that pervaded the impenetrable regions around them was broken only by the howling of a hungry wolf or the distant growl of a solitary bear,—there stood two men. By the light of the pale moon that shed its sickly light over the surrounding whiteness and into the dark depths of the forest that rose up behind them, a wild, trackless, melancholy solitude—it could be seen that a heavy gloom was on their countenances, which were swarthy and haggard and distorted, while their bodies were bent forward like men that had sustained a long fatigue. They were each covered with a loose bear-skin which was rent and torn in different places, while the rest of their clothing, with the exception of the coarse moccasins on their feet, was little better than a compilation of rags. Each carried a rifle in his hand, and from the restless manner in which their eyes wandered about at intervals, it was evident they were not without some expectation of being called upon to use them. They had stood with their eyes turned upon the lake, in silence, and apparently in deep reflection for some time, when one of them, laying his hand on the other's arm and directing his attention to the upturned trunk of a tree that lay at a little distance, remarked in a low guttural tone,

"William, *you* may see the light of day again away from this wilderness, but *I* shall not. I want to speak a word to you. Let us sit down. I am very much exhausted."

The speaker was Bolton. But in those swarthy, distorted features, and that strangely clad form, and that guttural tone, there was little to identify him with the Bolton of seven years ago.

William—for the person addressed was he—started at the strange sound of the other's voice in the midst of the vast solitude, and, looking earnestly in his face, he grasped him kindly by the hand, and seated himself beside him. He too was stamped with the outlines of the hardships they had suffered together in the wilderness, although he appeared perhaps less distorted and weather-beaten than his companion.

"You observed me writing yesterday, William," said Bolton, speaking in the same low guttural tone, and looking abstractedly out upon the lake; "you know the meaning of it. I have long told you what would follow on that event.—The time is come."

"No, no, my dear fellow!" said William again grasping his hand and looking anxiously into his cold sunken eye: "if it is only for the sake of those poor dear creatures, you must let it be. Let it be, Bolton, whatever you do!"

"You are mistaken," replied Bolton. "There is but one hindrance to your quitting the woods altogether with them, and saving them and yourself from hopeless starvation; and that

hindrance must be removed. If it were only for that, I should do it. But I have a stronger reason."

"No, no, Bolton," cried William, "it would kill me and them too to be left alone in these maddening woods; and without you we muse starve outright—you know we must, Bolton. For poor Growley is near his last: I can set he'll never rise from where he is again, poor fellow. Don't do it, Bolton, I entreat you."

"William!" cried Bolton starting to his feet and stretching out his hand towards the forest on the opposite side of the lake, "to-morrow is the twentieth! The time is come. Two men will go into that wood to-morrow and will never return. You hear, William.—It is so."

He seated himself again, and, after a pause in which his eyes had continued to wander abstractedly to the opposite shore, he resumed in a calmer tone,

"William, while *he* is about you, would you not all remain here and die?"

"I verily believe we should, Bolton," replied William. "But——"

"When he is removed," continued Bolton, "you will make a struggle to reach the civilized world again; and I doubt not will do it. *I* wouldn't leave this place now, William, if I could; and I never intend. There is nothing to prevent *you;* but every thing to urge you to it, as speedily as possible. It is the question of the loss of two or of all—all, William; you know it. Therefore leave it alone. I am determined: nothing will prevent me; and it will be to-morrow."

William leaned his head upon the other's shoulder, the tears stole down his face, and he sighed heavily, but remained silent.

"William," resumed Bolton, after a pause, "I have this favor to ask of you. Here is what I was writing yesterday; with one or two other papers. Will you take care of them, and if you should ever get fairly out of this wilderness with Alice, will you give them to her. They are matters which are only interesting to her and to another whom she knows of: and if anything should happen to her before you can convey her out of this, destroy them.—I may trust you?"

William took the parcel and grasped his friend by the hand; and no more was said upon the subject.

"Well," said Bolton rising, "that will do. Be silent, William, and when you see that neither of us return, lose not a moment, but try to conduct them out of this at all hazards —it is the only hope. Come, let us move forward. They will be expecting us, although we have little to greet them with."

William rose and walked in silence by his side, and they at once plunged into the forest and proceeded along a partially trodden trail in the snow, whichwas their only guide through the trackless darkness in which they were presently enveloped.

After winding their way through the intricate labyrinth of pines and oaks and fallen trunks, for upwards of an hour, Bolton touched his companion lightly on the arm, and pointing before him said,

"There's the light, William. Remember—be prudent."

A solitary light gleamed faintly through the darkness, and was seen at intervals between the black group that surrounded them, until they suddenly emerged from the close forest into a small, desolate plot of open snow, studded here and there with the black stumps of fallen trees; and in one corner stood a low, melancholy looking, wooden shanty, from which gleamed the faint, solitary light. The opening was perhaps a little more than an acre in extent, and was entirely surrounded by the tall forest, which wrapped it in a perpetual and melancholy night.

"Look," said Bolton, directing his companion's attention to a tall, black, motionless figure, which gradually became visible as they neared the shanty: "he is in one of his dark moods again. It will be his last."

It was the haggard, attenuated form of Blackbourn. He was wrapped in an old worn-out blanket-coat, his head was bare, notwithstanding the intense cold; and he leaned upon the muzzle of a rifle—the butt end of which was planted in the snow—with his chin resting on his hand, and his eyes fixed immovably upon the dark forest before him, as though he were following one of the old phantoms of his imagination through its impenetrable depths. Although the two friends passed so close as almost to touch him, he appeared not to observe them; for his eyes were glaring upon the darkness with a wild unnatural light, while his whole body was trembling and nervless with the strange emotions that were working within him. They passed on without attempting to disturb him, and, quietly lifting the rude latch of the door, they entered the solitary dwelling. The interior was a little less rude than the exterior. The furniture—if so it might be called—was all of the most primitive

description, and had doubtless for the most part been put together on the spot from the rude resources of the forest. There was a small fire burning on the open hearth, which was however far from sufficient to drive out the piercing cold that poured into the inhospitable hovel at the endless cracks and crevices that either neglect or want of means had left open to the common enemy.

"Oh, it is you, William! I am so very glad you have returned," said a sweet, plaintive voice, that contrasted strangely with the rude, savage character of the place, as they entered.

"Thank you, Miss Alice," said William, placing two or three small birds upon the table. "I wish we had more to give you cause, I'm sure."

Yes it was Alice; but it was not the little girl with the pretty curls that had so singularly inspired our young hero on board the Wanderer. There was the same gentle, tender, loving countenance still—the same clear, calm, but pensive smile—the same gentle soul beaming in her full, bright eye; but they had passed from the simple levity of the child, to the quiet composure and serenity of the woman. There were some sad signs of the influence of the long, dreary sojourn in the wilderness, so far away from the refinement and luxury of the city, to be sure: a deeper shade had gathered on her cheek from exposure to the scorching suns of summer; the beautiful curls that Simon had so much admired were gone, and her attire was miserably old and in tatters in various parts—having apparently been patched and repaired until the needle had lost its virtue and its rottenness had defied the power of stitches—while it was of the coarsest material, and seemed to struggle in unison with the rude, uncongenial atmosphere that pervaded the place to reduce the gentle form that it shielded from the winter cold to a common level with the wilderness and desolation in which she moved. But there was a fair and spotless soul beneath that rude forest covering, that the scorching heats of the summer sun could never parch, nor the stern severity of the winter frost, with all its complication of terrors, congeal in the fountain, until the heart which it animated should cease to beat.

"How is poor Growley to-night?" asked Bolton as he removed the bear-skin from his shoulders and laid it against the bottom of the door, under which the snow was drifting into the room.

Alice shook her head.

"I fear he is no better, Mr. Bolton," she replied. "One of the Indians called in to see him to day, and he says he is much afraid, after so long an exposure to cold and hunger, and his mind being so much affected, that he can never recover. Won't you go in and see him?"

Bolton tapped lightly at the rude door leading to the adjoining apartment, and in a moment a light step was heard within and the door was opened gently by a female hand.

It was Matilda. She appeared to have suffered something more from the severe ordeal of seven long years in the woods, than had Alice. There was a heaviness in her once clear, full eye, that made up a long sum of grief; and the calm, pensive look that she had carried with her into the forest, had deepened into a look of intense sorrow. Her cheeks were discolored and sallow; her body had become thin, and weak and emaciated; and in her coarse, unsightly attire, she looked indeed an unhappy contrast to the fair girl that the forest had received her. But there was still there the same goodness and affection and love, that had ever pervaded her gentle spirit; and since the unfortunate member of their company had been ill, she had attended on him night and day with the most unweared solicitude.

The invalid was lying on a rude couch constructed of logs and branches of trees, with a rough blanket and a buffalo skin for a covering. It would have been impossible to recognize in that skeleton face, those deep-sunken eyes, and that unnatural, death-like palor, the smallest resemblance to his former self.

Bolton looked at him, and laid his hand upon his bony wrist; but there was little sign of life to be traced in those almost imperceptible pulsations; and he shook his head and nodded his conviction silently to William, who had followed him into the apartment.

"It is nearly over with him, poor fellow," he said.

"Yes, yes; I could see that," returned William, "I felt sure of it when he was brought in, poor fellow. I'm afraid we're all doomed to follow him,—I am, Bolton. Good God! Bolton! it's too much—it's too much for any one to bear up under," cried the poor fellow pacing up and down the room in a paroxysm of grief.

While out on a hunting expedition some five weeks previous, Mr. Growley had by some means or other lost sight of his companions, and being left in the depths of the forest without anything whatever to guide him, he had

wandered about, day after day, for nearly a month, supporting existence as long as he was able, on the few wild roots and berries that the forest at that time of the year afforded, until he had become so completely prostrated both in mind and body that he had sunk down in the snow, and would probably never have been heard of again, had he not been discovered a few hours after by a party of Indians, to whom he was known, and who kindly conveyed him to his friends. But his mind was already gone, and the little life that remained in his emaciated body, had been lingering on for several days; and despite all the care and attention that his friends could bestow, he was gradually breathing out the few drops of vitality that remained.

For the last year and more, it had been a custom with Blackbourn—who had gradually become more and more wild and unnatural in his demeanour during his sojourn in the woods—to wander about the forest alone, and frequently in fine weather, for days and days together; when he not unoften returned in a state of partial insanity, which displayed itself in a moody, sullen, unnatural fierceness that made him a terror to every one of the unfortunate creatures about him. On the morning following our entrance among them, after making the usual preparation for his daily excursion into the woods—contrary to his custom, since he usually moved moodily away without a look or a word to any one, and latterly not even to Alice, for whom he nevertheless appeared to entertain the same strange fondness—he stood at the door-way of the hovel, with his face turned towards the room, leaning on his rifle, and watching the movements of Alice, who was alone in the room, with an anxious and troubled countenance. He stood thus with his eyes fixed upon her, and following her mechanically about the room until he appeared to have become completely abstracted and totally unconscious of what he was doing.

"Alice," he said at length, without removing his eyes or changing his position; "would to Heaven, I had never brought you here. I had no intention to harm you, Alice. Do you forgive me?"

Alice raised her eyes to his in astonishment, and, after apparently struggling to speak for several seconds, she burst into tears and burried her face in her hands.

Blackbourn moved slowly to her side, and taking her hand gently in his own, he continued,

"I am going into the woods, Alice. I am troubled—fearfully troubled, Alice. You forgive me?"

Alice pressed his hard hand, and made him understand, as well as she was able without the use of speech, that she accused him of nothing.

"The forest looks very dark to day, Alice," he continued. "There is but one link between my soul and madness. Tell them, Alice, I was poisoned when a boy. I was young—a babe, and it coursed through every vein. There was no medicine could remove it: my very soul was poisoned; and the venom passed from me to the world in which I moved, and the good and the innocent caught the contagion with the rest: I would they had escaped; but I had no power to control it so. You forgive me, Alice? Good bye—good bye!"

He bent down and kissed her forehead, and was moving away, with his head still turned towards her, when a singular change seemed to come over her as she raised her tearful eyes to his haggard countenance. The color left her cheek; she trembled violently; her lips were tightly compressed for a moment, and starting as if with a sudden fright, she said,

"*Good bye!*" and instantly fell back insensible into her chair.

Blackbourn staggered back at the sound of her voice as though he had been shot; but he almost instantly recovered himself, and, after watching her unconscious form for some moments with a calm, sorrowful countenance, he laid his rifle on his arm, and again kissing her marble forehead, he turned and walked slowly and thoughtfully away.—He entered the forest, and with a slow and measured step he disappeared among the gloomy giants that brooded over the death-like stillness of that vast solitude.

He had scarcely disappeared when Bolton emerged from the back of the house with his rifle on his arm and otherwise equipped for a journey into the woods.

"For Heaven's sake, Bolton," said William, who had followed him, laying his hand on the arm of his friend, "let it alone! *Do* let it alone, Bolton!"

"I have told you, William," returned Bolton grasping the barrel of his rifle and striking it against the snow on the ground, "the time is come. It is to day: we shall neither return. You will yet have cause to be thankful that this day arrived. Good bye, William. God bless you all."

William grasped his hand; and the tears gushed into the eyes of each as they gazed on each other for the last time. Bolton laid his rifle on his arm and moved hurriedly away towards the opposite angle in the clearing to that at which Blackbourn had disappeared a few moments before. William watched him with a sorrowful countenance until he had fairly disappeared, when, in the excess of his grief, he threw himself upon the snow and sobbed aloud.

That night the occupants of that solitary dwelling watched long and anxiously for the absent ones; but they did not return. Alice, remembering the extraordinary incident of the morning, was doubly alarmed; for although Blackbourn was the strange being that he was, she could not bear the thought that any harm should happen to him, and more especially while they remained in that desolate wilderness.

It was long after midnight, and a solemn, unbroke silence reigned throughout the great solitude that surrounded them, when, as they were all sitting together around the smouldering fire on the hearth, they were suddenly startled by a piercing cry from the adjoining room; and they had scarcely recovered from the first effects of the shock, when they were doubly horror-stricken to hear the door of the room open, and to behold the ghostly figure of the dying man before them. His eyes glared with an unnatural fire, and staggering towards the opposite door, he shrieked, in a terrible, unearthly voice,

"Help!—to the forest! Save him! No!" he cried starting suddenly back, "it is too late!" and uttering a frightful scream he fell lifeless on the floor before them.

The terror that seized upon the poor unhappy spectators of this frightful scene, was so intens that they sat with blanched faces, and rigid bodies gazing abstractedly on one another for several hours before they were able to move or to articulate a sound.

Alice was the first to break the silence, and when she did, she spoke with a start as though it were the sudden expression of the thought that had fixed itself upon her mind at the moment of the occurrence, and that the time that had elapsed between was an unrecognized blank.

"God preserve them!" she said, and saying so burst into tears.

It was not until the day had fairly dawned, and the light of heaven shone into the chamber of death to reassure them, that they could summon sufficient fortitude to move; and then William—while his two gentler companions availed themselves of the dawn to breath again the refreshing air of the guiltless day—removed the body into the adjoining room and spreading over it the buffalo skin, closed and fastened the door upon the unwelcome sight; for the apprehensive state of his mind was perhaps, if possible, worse than that of his more sensitive companions—for he knew more.

"Mrs. Blackbourn, I want to speak a word to you seriously if you please, and you Miss Alice," said William towards the evening of that day, when it was seen that neither Blackbourn nor Bolton returned.

"Well, William?" said Matilda, "we will listen."

"The fact is," continued William, "I have reason to know that neither of them will return. I am sorry to say I know it. I can't tell you the reason now, but I may some other time. But I assure you ma'am it is so; and it is necessary for us to act according."

"Oh, William, what has happened?" said Alice exchanging a look of alarm with Matilda.

"I hope you'll excuse me, Miss," returned William; "I really can't tell you now—I can't under any circumstances. But I will tell you all I know about it at some future time: if you will please excuse me. But what I want to press upon you is this, that we must leave this place immediate—that there aint an hour to lose or else—or else—well I'm sure, Mrs. Blackbourn and Miss Alice, you don't need me to tell you what the consequence must be. What little provision there was is nearly all gone; and its literal impossible to find anything in the woods that would even sustain life. For I'm sure if you hadn't been so good (if you'll excuse my mentioning it) to part with almost everything to the Indians, who have certainly been very kind, we never could have lasted out so long as we have. And when I tell you that it is a positive, certain fact that neither will return here, I'm sure you will agree with me that it is the only way to leave here directly and trust to Providence to get to some place before the worst really comes. I've got a compass as a sort of guide, and I think I know the best way to go; and I feel sure if we was to start with a determination, we might do it. I hope you'll think as I do, Mrs. Blackbourn and you Miss Alice; and if you'll excuse me, I would certainly advise that we start with the first dawn to-morrow so as to have all the day before us."

There was an earnestness, and an appearance of sincerity in these remarks that almost forced the conviction of their truthfulness upon his two fair listners; and when Alice reflected on the strange occurrence at Blackbourn's departure the morning before, and also on the terrible scene of the previous night, and the forcible impression that it conveyed to her mind at the moment, she was the more disposed to believe that whatever might be the cause, it was really as William had affirmed. But notwithstanding the many perils that surrounded them in that remote wilderness home, so full of terrors, it had been their home for many, many a long day, and they had heard of so many dangers and horrors connected with an uncertain journey through the forest, that it was with great reluctance, and heavy hearts, and many sad forebodings, and only after a serious reflection on the utter hopelessness of escape if they remained where they were, that they were enduced to follow the advice of their only remaining protector, and to make preparation for the journey.

As the light dawned on the morrow, they emerged from their rude home—which however had shielded them from many a storm, and had been a rough but a good friend against the bitter severity of the elements;—they were all equipped for the hazardous journey as suitably as their limited means would supply them; and William carried the whole of the remaining provisions that their stores had contained and that he was able to support.

They moved away: they turned their anxious and tearful eyes for the last time towards their forest home—they should see it no more—a dark labyrinth of terrors lay before them, and they wondered if they should ever find another: and wondering and doubting and weeping together, they glided away into the darkness, a little trio of insignificant atoms—a precious nothingness in the midst of the myriads of giants that peopled the surface of that vast and inhospitable region.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PART OF BOLTON'S PREDICTION IS FULFILLED.

Following the intricacies of the forest with a dexterity acquired by long custom, Bolton pursued his way through the woody labyrinth for several hours without falling upon the track of Blackbourn; but still from the direct course which he pursued, it was evident he was pushing on to a specific destination. Towards noon he emerged from the woods, into a long, narrow track of open snow, and, after following this to the northward for about an hour, he came upon the Opeongo Lake and stood upon the spot at which William and he had held their conference the night before. Taking a sweep of its banks as far as his eyes would carry him on either side, he shook his head, and seated himself with a heavy countenance on the gnarled trunk that lay behind him.

He had sat there for several hours almost motionless, and with his eyes wandering at intervals along the distant banks, but more especially to a particular point which rose up from the opposite shore and stretched some distance into the Lake; when a small black object, that looked in the distance like a solitary bird, appeared upon the margin and glided slowly to and fro upon its smooth white surface. Bolton started to his feet as this object caught his eye, and, having watched its movements for a few minutes, he darted off again under the cover of the forest towards the head of the lake, in the direction from which the point projected. Having arrived within a mile of the spot on which the object was still visible, he re-entered the woods and proceeded along the inner margin until he again emerged immediately opposite the point. From this position the object, which still remained wandering slowly up and down, became more distinctly visible, and presented the outline of a man. Here Bolton again seated himself on the upturned root if a tree, and watched the movements of the figure before him with a heavy countenance and a contracted brow for a considerable length of time without attempting

to put himself in closer communication with it, which would have been easy of accomplishment. But there he sat hour after hour, apparently totally unconscious of the bitter intensity of the atmosphere; and it was past night fall—and the pale moon had began to shed her sickly glare over the broad white lake, before he rose and shifted his position. The figure had wandered to and fro in its solitary promenade for the last time, and had commenced to retrace its steps towards the woods. Bolton fell back under the cover of a hugh pine, and watched it until it had disappeared; when he instantly plunged into the labyrinth on its track, and proceeded to follow it through the windings in the darkness by the trail which it left behind it in the deep snow. As he proceeded he perceived that the trail became more and more irregular, and in some places flew off into all kinds of intricate windings, now moving round and round in a complication of irregular circles, and then darting off again in a straight line, and then again winding and whirling about like the evolutions of a maniac. Several times he quickened his pace and hurried forward until he came almost in close contact with the strange being whose trail he was following; but as often he fell back again almost terror stricken, for he could perceive that the figure was glaring wildly and savagely about, and throwing his arms frantically in the air, and striking at phanton objects with his rifle, in the manner of a confirmed lunatic. And thus he continued, hour after hour, following through the solitary wilds, until it was long after midnight, and the moon, which had hitherto pierced the darkness here and there with its sickly rays, began to wane. When, while following a long, straight line of unbroken foot-prints, he suddenly found himself within a few yards of the object of his pursuit. He had stopped, and stood leaning on his rifle, with his eyes glaring abstractedly in the direction from which Bolton was approaching. But he nevertheless appeared not to observe him. Bolton instantly diverged a little in his course, and gliding stealthily round under the cover of the thickly set trees, placed himself in his rear. He stood watching him at a little distance for a few minutes, and then, moving noislessly towards him, he laid his hand upon his shoulder. The figure started, and, uttering a wild exclamation and staggering forward a few paces, seized his rifle by the barrel and swung it round and round in the air with terrible violence.

"Blackbourn," said Bolton, thrusting his hand into his breast and clutching nervously at the pistol which was there concealed, "you see who it is."

Blackbourn dropped the butt-end of his rifle in the snow, and stood glaring on him in a wild abstraction, but made no reply.

"Blackbourn," continued Bolton, and it could be perceived that his voice trembled as he spoke, "I am not here without an object. The last fifteen years that I have followed you about the world, have been all pointing to this night. Your seeming lackey has not served you so well and so long, without an object. You have yet to learn who I am: my name is McCameron. Where is my *sister?* Her blood has been crying from a watery grave, for eighteen years, to be avenged.—The time is come!"

Blackbourn staggered back with a demoniacal grin as he heard this, and clutched fiercely at the barrel of his rifle.

"It was a foul murder!" cried Bolton, drawing the pistol from his breast. "There is no room for parley; let your black soul answer it. I have sworn to avenge her—she was my sister —my sister!"

His voice had scarcely ceased, when the report rang through the solitude. But his hand trembled; he had missed his mark; and Blackbourn stood still before him. He fell back a few paces when he saw that the shot had miscarried, and raised the weapon again to its mark; but before his trembling finger could discharge the contents of the remaining barrel, Blackbourn sprang forward, and, swinging the rifle fiercely in the air, he held it quivering over his head for an instant, and then, whirling it round with a terrific force, he brought it against the bared head of his trembling victim; and without uttering a cry or articulating a sound, he staggered back and fell lifeless upon the great white pall, that lay ready to receive him.

Blackbourn cast his eyes down upon the bloody corpse, that looked, as it lay embedded in the pale white snow, a gory blotch upon the blanched features of nature, and redoubled its horrors by the strange contrast; his countenance changed—he groaned fearfully, and, looking afrighted behind him, he uttered a wild, piercing cry, that woke up the solemn stillness with unearthly terrors, and rushed frantically from the spot, brandishing the blood-stained weapon in the air as though he were chasing a legion of phantoms before him. He rushed on —dashing through the labyrinth of pines and oaks, and upturned roots, and scattered branches, like one with a charmed life.

Hour after hour he continued flying before the phantoms that his stricken soul had created about him, until he suddenly burst upon a long narrow, circular opening, bestrewed with fallen trunks and upturned roots, and branches of trees in all directions—the effect of a recent storm; and at the same instant a hedious howling broke upon his ear, and a pack of wolves came rushing furiously towards him from the opposite side of the opening.

He stood still and contemplated them, apparently with the utmost unconcern, until they were close upon him, when, throwing his arms in the air, and brandishing his rifle, he shouted,

"Off! off!"

And in an instant the whole pack, as if struck with terror at the sound of his voice, diverged in their course and rushed furiously past him, with a terrific howl, like things that were scared. The moment they were past, he uttered a demoniacal laugh, and, turning round, rushed furiously after them, yelling and yelping, and throwing about his arms in a wild, exultant manner, that sufficiently proclaimed the terrible change that had come over his mind.

He had pursued the affrighted animals for a considerable distance, when they suddenly set up a long, low, sorrowful wail, that rang through the forest like a death-knell; and as it reached the infuriated maniac, he stopped, clapped his hands upon his ears, and, re-echoing the cry, turned round and flew before it in the opposite direction; and as he rushed again through the snow, and between the close trees, he turned his head and cast a terrified glance behind him at almost every moment; and when he had gone until his supernatural strength was almost exhausted, he turned round, and, raising his hands as though he were driving a wild herd before him, cried, in a maniac scream,

"Back! back, I say! You are all fiends!—'Twas not I?—*you* told me—a little boy!—Back! back, I say! Don't hunt me down—a poor, witless child! Back! back! You wont? Come on, then, if you will—come on! No! no, no! I'm a child—a child—a little child!"

He turned round, and, with another wail, rushed franctically away with his hands upon his ears, and his eyes glaring with a terrific look behind him;—on again through the deep snow, and over the gnarled trunks and upturned roots—away through the blackness, fiercer and faster, until he stumbled and fell; and then he clutched furiously at the snow and dragged himself forward on his knees, and his glance towards his phantom pursuers became more frequent and more terrific as his progress became more and more impeded. He scrambled again to his feet and staggered forward a few paces; but his strength failed him—he whirled round, and, throwing up his hands as if to ward off a blow, and uttering a low guttural cry, he fell back insensible on the snow.

After lying here for several hours, he rose again, apparently totally unaffected by the long exposure to the intense cold, but only to renew his wanderings and his ravings, and to fly anew from the terrors which the fire of his own brain had kindled.

For two days and nights he continued roving about the snow-clad wilderness, without either food or sleep; sometimes stalking along in moody silence, and apparently unconscious of even his own existence; and at others raving and tearing about in all the wild excitement and agony of a phantom-hunted maniac.

Towards the night of the third day, and while in one of his raving fits, he suddenly emerged from the woods into the small clearing in which stood the solitary shanty which had been his home. But although it had been entirely deserted by its former inmates, who were then far away in the depths of the forest, there was still a light gleaming through the casement. In order to account for it, and for what is to follow, it will be necessary for us to step forward some hours in advance of his arrival on the spot.

It was at about three o'clock in the day that a solitary figure emerged suddenly from the southern end of the wood, and, on seeing the small, wooden shanty before him, fell instantly on his knees and clasped his hands fervently together. He was a tall, slim, swarthy-looking man, wrapped in a close over-coat, with fur-cap and cape, and carried a rifle in his hand. He walked noiselessly to the back of the dwelling and listened for sounds from within; but hearing no sounds from that quarter, he moved round to the front; and after carefully reconnoitering the windows, he cast a look of disappointment round the clearing and knocked at the door.

Receiving no answer after several repetitions, he gently lifted the latch and entered. It was easy to perceive, from the deserted appearance and the confusion that pervaded the place, that it was tenantless, and that it had been finally

abandoned; and as this conviction seemed to force itself upon his mind, he clasped his hand to his forehead, and exclaimed, in a tone of the deepest distress,

"Gone, gone! Oh, God! it is vary strange! Oh, my daughter—my child—it is vary, vary strange!"

Yes, it was the unhappy Scotchman; it was McCameron. By the assistance of a party of Indians, with whom he had long been in communication, he had been enabled to trace his daughter at last to her forest prison-house; but alas! he had arrived too late. He fell into one of the rude seats, and for a long time gave himself up to his heavy grief. By the time it had somewhat subsided, it was growing dark; and he rose to search for the means of procuring a light, and to make a survey of the place. A small lamp, and the other necessaries, had been purposely left behind by William, either in the faint hope that Bolton might return, or thinking they might be serviceable to the Indians, who frequently visited the place; and having discovered these, he commenced his examination of the rude dwelling.

In the chief room he could find nothing to lead him to suppose that his daughter had ever been there at all; and when he noted the very rude character of everything about him, his heart sank within him at the thought that such had been the case. It was with some difficulty that he made his way into the adjoining compartment, for the fastenings with which William had secured the door, to shut more effectually from his sight the dead body of his companion, had never been removed—for although he could have wished to have seen it interred, the shock he had received had so completely unstrung his nerves, that nothing could induce him to re-encounter the sad spectacle after he had once shut it from his sight. There was nothing in the room but the rude bedstead and the body, which lay concealed beneath the buffalo skin, almost immediately opposite the door.

It was of course the first object that attracted McCameron's notice, and, with a feverish and trembling hand, he removed the covering, for a fearful thought had flashed across his mind.

He started involuntarily as the ghastly features became exposed to his view; but when he saw that they were those of a man, and that he had been some time dead, his natural fortitude returned, and, after examining the countenance more closely and finding that he was totally unable to recall any one feature to his remembrance, he replaced the covering as he had found it, and returned to the other apartment, re-closing the door upon the unwelcome sight.

As it was already dark, and he was greatly fatigued by a long day's journey in the woods, and also having some faint hope that the place might be re-visited by some of its former inmates, he resolved to take shelter in the rude hut for the night; and having kindled a fire on the hearth, he drew his pistols from his breast and laid them on the table beside a small pocket-compass, which he took from the same pocket, and, drawing forth a small Bible, which had been his only companion for many, many months that he had wandered alone through the forest, he sat down to pass the dreary, solitary hours in communion with Him who is present in the vast solitudes of the forest as in the peopled city.

He had been so engaged but a short time, when he was startled by the sound of a man's voice from without, and in an another instant the door was thrown violently open, and in rushed the poor unhappy maniac whom we left on the margin of the wood, exclaiming,

"Shelter—shelter, Alice! Hark! the whole of this great city is full of bells, bells—all bells! And, hark! there! they are jumping into the water—and they say it is I! No, no! no bells! Alice. Ah," he cried, as his fiery eyes fell upon McCameron, who had risen to his feet and stood back against the wall with a pistol grasped fimly in each hand, "another fiend—ah, ah! I know you! Another, another!"

And so saying, he turned and rushed frantically again towards the door; but he had scarcely placed his foot upon the threshold, when he darted back and slammed the door quickly to, and clasped his hands upon his ears, and, lowering his voice to an unhearthly whisper, said,

"Hark! they're ringing still—they want to come in here, Alice, as if I did it. They say it's their sister, Alice—sister. Well, come then, we'll all die together. No!—no shots! I'll not be assassinated—never. Ah," he cried as his eyes fell upon McCameron again, "have you a sister, too? 'Twas not I, then. So, no shots—I'll not be assassinated—never!" he continued, raising his rifle in the air and glaring demoniacally upon McCameron.

McCameron stood speechless and horror-stricken at this terrible spectacle; for he soon perceived that it was a raving maniac that

stood before him; and although it was the author of his own ruin and the destroyer of the happiness of his child, his heart involuntarily softened towards him, and he contemplated him with an eye of unmingled compassion.

•Blackbourn stood with his rifle raised over his head, and his eyes flashing and darting about as though he expected to be attacked, and was waiting for his signal to strike; but after standing so for several minutes, he gradually let fall his arm, and his eyes became fixed upon the seat that McCameron had just vacated, and he started again, exclaiming,

"Don't ask me why his seat is empty! I tell no tales. *Sisters* indeed! No, no, Alice, don't you frown—you have no *sisters!* No, no, don't drive me out! I am cold and hungry—don't drive me out! Hark! bells, bells, bells! No, I'll not go to the bridge—I've no busines there—not to the bridge, I say! No, Alice, don't glare upon my hand! Stay, stay!" he cried, turning suddenly towards the door, "don't fly from me, Alice—I shall go mad. My brain—my brain! Oh, Alice, save me, save me!"

Thrusting out his hands imploringly before him, he rushed out of the hovel, away across the clearing, and dashed madly into the opposite woods, crying and shouting out the name of her who would still the tumult of his intoxicated soul no more.

McCameron instinctively followed him, and plunged into the forest upon his trail, keeping him in sight as long as he was able, and then following by the snow-track; for the thought suddenly flashed across his mind, as he darted from the house, that he might possibly follow him to their present retreat; which he felt sure could not be at any great distance, from the short time that appeared to have elapsed since the shanty had been deserted.

For a considerable time the track continued as straight as the intricacies of the forest would permit, and he followed on with renewed hopes; but, after a time, he found that it began to diverge and wind about, until it ultimately wheeled into all sorts of eccentricities, and he became perfectly bewildered in attempting to follow it.

And now he heard in the distance a long, low, wailing sound, that gradually and rapidly increased, and came nearer and nearer, until it suddenly, and almost before he comprehended what it was, burst into a howling hurricane, that uprose, as it were, by the power of a great magic, and came sweeping down through the solitude with an irresistable violence—carrying huge trees, and broken branches, and hillocks of snow before it in one immense and overwhelming cloud, that nothing could resist; and he had but just time to take shelter under a clump of gigantic pines that happened to be by, when it swept past him in all its fury—making the very earth tremble as it rolled along its surface.

It lasted, without any apparent abatement, for upwards of an hour, when it suddenly ceased altogether, as unceremoniously as it had commenced; and, in a wonderfully short time, it had left everything as still and calm and silent as before.

But on emerging from his shelter, McCameron was bewildered, and even terrified, to find that the track which might have led him back to the shanty, was entirely obliterated, and that he was everywhere surrounded by an undulated sheet of drifted snow, bestrewed in all directions with the leafless branches and broken fragments of the forest. And in addition to this, it suddenly occurred to to him, that, in his haste to follow the lunatic from the shanty, he had forgotton to take up his compass from the table where he had placed it.

And there he stood, in the midst of that vast ocean of snow and wood and wilderness, without a beacon, or a land-mark, or a solitary foot-print to guide him for a single step.

Although for the last few years he had spent a great deal of time in the woods, he had gained but little of that dexterity in following their eccentricities peculiar to the native Indian; and his acquaintance with their vast extent, and their unfathomable character, only served to inspire him the more forcibly with the terrors of his situation.

Oppressed and utterly dejected, he seated himself upon a gnarled trunk that the storm had but just uprooted from the earth, and his manhood well-nigh failed him altogether, and he almost plunged into the last depths of despair, as his mind wandered through the strange complication of distresses and misfortunes and disappointments that had crowded around him in the last eight years.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WANDERERS IN THE FOREST.

Directing their course to the southward, after quitting their forest home, the three wanderers trudged along, hour after hour, through the deep snow, contending resolutely against the intense cold and the severe toil, until the two weaker members of the party were compelled to call upon William, who was tramping on before them in order to mark-out the track, to stop.

"Oh, William," cried Matilda, "we are feeling so fatigued and so distressed with the cold! We are almost frozen. I am afraid, William, we shall never reach any inhabited place. Don't you really think we had better return?"

"Well, ma'am," replied William, looking anxiously from one to the other, "it's a sad thought to think of that, ma'am. I never would have advised leaving at all, if I had thought there was the leastest chance of living out the winter; but I'm certain sure, ma'am, and you, Miss Alice, that you must see it's literal impossible. But, however, I shouldn't wonder if we aint much further from a habitation of some sort, if we go on, than what it would be to return, ma'am. I'm sure I wish I could do something to help you, ma'am, and you, Miss—I'm sure I do; but there, it's no use—I can't. But still, I hope you'll be able to hold out a little further, ma'am, and then we'll try and find a sheltered place to rest at for a time, and I think that'll revive you, ma'am. An astonishing effect a little rest has, ma'am."

"Yes, I think, William, if we could get a little rest in some warm place, it would revive us," said Alice. "Don't you, dear?" she added, turning to Matilda.

"Well, it is very horrid to think of returning too, Alice dear," replied Matilda. "I think we'll try, William."

"I'm very glad to hear you say so, ma'am," rejoined William. "I really do believe, Miss Alice, with a little perseverance we shall get out of it all. So I hope you'll cheer up, ma'am."

"But, William," said Alice, as he turned to lead the way again, "pray don't walk too fast—there's a dear man."

"I hope you'll be so kind to call to me, if I do, Miss," returned William.

"Matilda," said Alice, lowering her voice almost to a whisper, when William was sufficiently far to be out of hearing, "William is a very good, kind fellow? He has been very much altered, (and so indeed have we all," she said, shaking her head sorrowfully,) "since he came into the woods; but he was always very good to me. What a blessing it will be, Matilda, if we should get out of the woods altogether. Even though it looks so dreary now, I really hope we shall. Don't you, dear?"

"Yes, Alice, I am sure I *hope* so," returned Matilda; "and hearing you say so makes me hope the more. I think I could now die quite happy if I could only see poor dear papa and ma again, Alice."

"Yes, but you musn't talk like that, Matilda—you know you musn't, dear," said Alice, coaxingly.

After another hour's walking, in which they had endeavored to cheer each other with conversation, they were pleased to see their guide stop, and turn off towards a gigantic oak, that stood on a rising ground a little to their right, and which he instantly pronounced to be the proper resting-place. The tree was perfectly hollow, and a comfortable room was left inside, which would have afforded ample accommodation for a party of treble their number.

William removed the bear-skin which was about his shoulders, and made-up a sort of seat with it for them in one corner, and then covered them almost completely over with a huge buffalo-skin, in which he had packed the provisions and made into a large bundle with a two-fold view to their comforts. These arrangements, with the refreshments which he very soon prepared, had a wonderful effect in reviving both their spirits and their energies; and after an hour's enjoyment of the almost unhoped-for luxury, they announced their readiness to re-continue their journey.

William was highly pleased at the success of his prescription, and they all started off again in comparatively good spirits. But it was not long before the effect of the extreme cold, and

the labor of wading through the snow, began to re-appear; and long before night-fall they were compelled to halt again. And as the night was fast approaching by the time they were again sufficiently recovered to make another essay, and as no arguments on the part of William could induce them to venture on their journey after the darkness had set in, it was thought advisable to take up their quarters where they were for the night.

William collected a few armsfull of sticks and bark, and succeeded in kindling a fire in front of the opening in the tree in which they were ensconsed, for the two-fold purpose of bringing into use a small iron kettle which formed part of his stores, and of keeping at a safe distance anything that might happen to be prowling about in the neighborhood; and while the very sight of it inspired his frost-bitten companions with fresh animation, it was only surpassed in its beneficial effects upon their spirits, by the warm decoction of dandelion roots that succeeded it,—a beverage which they had come to regard as a luxury equal to the finest Old Mocha of civilization.

The night passed in broken slumbers and troubled dreams, occasioned by the exposure to the chill night air; and when they were aroused by William at day-break, they found it nearly impossible to rise; and it was not until they had partaken of the warm distillation that he had already prepared for them, that they were enabled to regain their feet or to make the smallest attempt towards locomotion. But a little determination, and a great deal of encouragement from William, once more established them on their journey, although the progress they were able to make was immeasurably behind even that of the previous day.

"Oh, Alice," said Matilda, after they had been stumbling on for several hours, "I begin to feel so very ill. I feel such a terrible giddiness in the head, Alice dear. I think it must be occasioned by sleeping out in the cold air. Oh, whatever shall we do, Alice dear? I fear I shall not be able to accompany you much farther."

"Oh, you musn't say so, dear," replied Alice, turning to her in alarm. "Oh, dear, I am afraid you look very unwell. Shall I call to William?"

"No, not yet, I think," said Matilda. "I will try to go a little farther. This would be a terrible place to die in, wouldn't it, Alice dear?"

"Oh, pray don't talk so—there is a good dear Matilda," said Alice, imploringly. "We have come a very long way, you know; and William says he is sure there must be people living at a very little distance off now. So I am sure we will be able to reach them, after coming so far. I know you will try—won't you, Matilda dear?"

"Oh yes, Alice, I'll try," replied Matilda.

But her voice faltered, and she had scarcely moved forward a score paces, when she suddenly laid her hand on Alice's arm; and on turning round, Alice perceived that she was looking up vacantly into her face, and was apparently unable so speak.

"Oh, William," cried Alice, "do come—quick!"

William turned instantly, and he saw that Alice was with difficulty supporting her unconscious companion in her arms.

"Heavens!" cried William, rushing to her assistance, "we've come too far, Miss Alice, without resting. Whatever was I about?—Poor lady. It's the cold, Miss Alice—I know what it is. Do you think, Miss, (I wouldn't ask you if I could possibly help it,) but do you think you could carry this bundle a little way?"

"Oh yes," said Alice, taking the bundle, which was the smaller of the two with which he had burdened himself. "Do try and carry her to some warm place, William—there's a dear man."

"Oh, all right, Miss Alice, if you'll be good enough to follow me," said William, moving off with his burden. "Don't be alarmed, Miss. I know what it is—it's the cold, that's what it is, Miss. Here, I think I can see a nice place down here. Don't be alarmed, Miss—it's only the cold."

He had descried a small, close thicket, from which the snow was excluded, and which formed a pretty secure shelter from the weather; and spreading the bear-skin in the furthermost corner, and placing his unconscious burden on it, and leaving Alice by her side, with the buffalo encasing both, he immediately set about kindling a fire, and preparing the only cordial for which his stores provided the ingredients—the dandelion tea.

Their patient, however, was restored to consciousness before the decoction was fully prepared; and after drinking the hot tea, she seemed considerably revived, and even expressed a hope that she should soon be able to proceed again upon the journey.

William collected all the wood he could find

and made a roaring fire, which added very much to her recovery, and so improved her spirits that she began to talk quite cheerfully; and they were all again re-inspired with fresh hopes.

"There," said William, "I was telling Miss Alice, ma'am, not to be alarmed, because I knew what it was, ma'am—it was the cold, that's what it was, ma'am. I shouldn't wonder if you ain't all the better for it, ma'am, after this and one thing and another, ma'am."

At about noon they again started; and for more than an hour Matilda was able to keep up to her companion without much difficulty, while she joined pretty freely in the conversation which Alice kept up with the view to keep them in spirits. But after that the giddiness began gradually to return, and she replied less and less to Alice's remarks, until she finally ceased replying altogether.

They had walked on some considerable distance in silence, when William was suddenly startled by a scream from Alice, and on looking back he saw that her companion had sunk down insensible on the snow. He rushed back to her assistance, and raised her again in his arms, and looked about for a shelter.

It was a long time before he could alight upon a convenient spot, and, from sheer exhaustion on his part, he was ultimately compelled to halt at a spot which afforded but an inferior protection from the weather, and that was but ill-adapted to shelter his invalid burden. But it was the best that appeared to be within their reach, and he deposited her again upon the bear-skin, and set about preparing it for her reception.

"Oh, William," said Alice, "she is looking very ill. I begin to fear we shall never survive all this terrible exposure. I am afraid I am going to be ill myself. I feel very giddy."

"Oh, pray don't say so, Miss Alice," said William, "pray don't say so. I feel sure, if you can only hold out a little longer, we shall be out of it—I feel sure we shall. Pray don't say so, Miss. Don't be alarmed at Mrs. Blackbourn—it's cold—that's what it is, Miss—it's only cold, Miss. There, I think that's pretty comfortable considering. Will you come and sit down by Mrs. Blackbourn's side, Miss, and take a little rest while I just get a few chips together and make-up a fire. I think you must want something warm, Miss—that's what it is."

Although William tried to cheer his young mistress as well as he was able, he could see by her countenance that she was really becoming ill; and the sad conviction had the effect of rendering him so agitated and nervous, that he rushed to and fro completely bewildered, and was perhaps, in consequence, nearly double the time that he would otherwise have been in administering to their relief.

"I think, William," said Alice, after she had been seated beside her unconscious companion a few minutes, "it will be better for me to keep moving about. I seem to be growing weaker and giddier every moment that I remain here. I think I will try and assist you to gather the sticks."

"Oh no, miss, thank you," said William, "I'm sure you can't do that. But if you think you would be better walking about, perhaps it might be as well—just while I'm getting something warm."

Alice rose, and William watched her as she came out into the open air. He could see that her cheek was very much blanched, and that her eyes looked vacantly about; and he stood still and watched her with an anxious expression. She staggered forward only a few paces—he saw her turn her head and cast an imploring look towards him—she uttered a feeble cry, and he had just time to dart forward and catch her senseless form before she fell. He carried her in and placed her by the side of her fellow-sufferer, and immediately gave way himself to a paroxysm of grief.

He threw himself upon the snow and clutched at it with his hands, and tore his hair, and sobbed and cried like a child. But in the midst of his grief, he suddenly bethought himself of the better office, and he leapt upon his feet and piled-up the sticks upon the fire which he had already kindled; and in a few minutes he had prepared a hot decoction of the dandelion roots, and was endeavoring to administer it to his patients. But it was a hopeless task. They were perfectly unconscious, and their lips appeared to be frozen together; and to all that he could say or do, they only replied with a short, vacant, pitiful look, that seemed to implore him not to disturb them.

"Good God!" he cried, springing to his feet and dashing the cup upon the ground, "they'll die—she'll die! Mercy, what can I do! Here! help! help!"

And shouting frantically in this manner, he darted out from the cover, and plunged through the snow with the recklessness and fury of a madman. For nearly an hour he continued rushing on, awaking the solitude with his cries,

and piercing the forest in every direction with his burning eyes, until he suddenly stopped, and, looking about him with a wild admixture of pleasure and surprise, exclaimed,

"Good Heavens, what's this ?"

The mark of the axe, and the partially obliterated footsteps of a human being, became visible, in a long, direct line before him ; and to his infinite delight he perceived that he had struck upon a blazed path, and that, however distant it might be, he had discovered a direct road to a human habitation. The joy with which he was seized at this discovery, was almost as ungovernable as had been the grief which had led to it; and it was some time before he could sufficiently collect his thoughts to decide on the best course to pursue.

He hesitated for some moments as to whether he should push forward for assistance, or return. But on looking up to the sky, he perceived that heavy clouds were beginining to gather overhead, while he could feel the wind gradually increasing and the snow beginning to drift; and as the thought occurred to him, that if the wind should get up, the trail which he had left in the snow, and which was the only guide to the precious charge that lay beyond it, would soon be entirely obliterated, he turned round and plunged again into the snow-trail, with even more desperation than he had displayed in making it.

Arrived again at the spot, he found that the snow was already drifting in upon the two fair dreamers ; and he lost not a moment in making preparations for his contemplated movement. They were still entirely unconscious, and he entertained no hope of again restoring them until he could convey them to a more hospitable shelter. He removed the buffalo, and, placing them gently on it, he adjusted the bear-skin coat firmly to his own person, and having made a small parcel of the principal necessaries contained in his travelling stores, he fastened it securely round his shoulders ; and he then stood contemplating the fair objects at his feet with a look of perplexity. But arousing himself and looking out upon the gradually increasing weather, he stooped down and raised them carefully, one in each arm, bringing up the buffalo robe at the same time so as to form a covering. He stood irresolutely under his burden for some time, and then, shaking his head despondingly, he was compelled to replace them on the ground. It was more than his enfeebled strength could sustain : and he stood over them again with a countenance full of the most poignant grief, and he pulled savagely at his hair and stamped upon the ground with his foot as he exclamed,

"I can't do it—I can't do it. And they'll die ; I can see they will. Good Heavens, what's to be done !"

He came out and walked up and down before the opening, swinging his arms about and exclaiming in an incoherent manner, and appeared several times on the point of rushing off again as he had done before ; but after a time he became more composed, and, removing the bear-skin again from his shoulders, he re-entered the cover and arranged it again in the corner best protected from the wind. He then replaced the sensless form of Matilda on it, and drew the buffalo robe carefully around her. He next proceeded to secure the weather-opening as well as he was able with broken branches and snow ; which being done, he planted a quantity of sticks in a peculiar manner about the spot with a piece of rag attached here and there, to attract attention in the event of any one passing the spot—for he was aware that the Indians not unfrequently followed out of curiosity such a trail as they had made for the last two days —and they were every one of them both known and respected by all the principal Indians in the district. These arrangements completed, he re-entered the cover, and, taking a long melancholy look at its inmates, he raised the dearer object of his solicitude in his arms ; and with the tears in his eyes he salied forth with his burden, and proceeded to follow the trail which he had twice trod.

The wind was gradually increasing, and the further he went the more indistinct the trail became; but he hurried on faster and faster as he came towards the end, and to his infinite joy he ultimately reached it in safety. Arrived at the blazed path, he seated himself for a few moments on the trunk of a tree, and rested himself as well as he was able with the unconscious girl still supported in his arms ; and he then pursued his journey along the blazed path with renewed hope and vigour. He walked on, exerting every nerve of his strength—for the night had already closed-in and the light of the moon was greatly obscured by the heavy clouds—for upwards of three hours ; when his labor was rewarded by the appearance at a little distance before him of an extensive clearing, and the more welcome token of life and comfort and hospitality—a light. He almost danced with joy, encumbered as he

was, as this welcome sight opened on him, and he involuntarily exclamed.

"Good Heavens, Miss Alice!—we're saved!"

He now found himself in a main road, which ran crosswise with the path by which he had come; and he could distinguish through the darkness the outlines of several small houses in different directions, from each of which gleamed cheerfully out upon the cold white world around the welcome indication of a *home*. There were two small shanties close at hand in a clearing on his right, but these he instinctive-passed, for he could discern the outline of a larger tenement raised upon a gentle elevation at a little distance on the opposite side of the road. To this he immediately bent his course; and on arriving in front of it, he found as he had anticipated that it was a good, substantial farmer's house, standing in the midst of a clearing of considerable extent. He hesitated for a moment before entering the gate, for he felt somewhat doubtful as to the reception his wild and destitute appearance, as well as that of his unconscious burden, would be likely to gain for him. But it was no time for the exercise of doubts, and he thrust-open the gate, and, mounting the flight of wooden steps before the door, he knocked as confidently as his courage would allow him.

"Is the master or mistress in?" he enquired of the small handmaid that replied to the knock. The handmaid however made no reply; for she no sooner caught sight of the strange object which the light in her hand revealed to her, then she darted back again into the house calling aloud for "mercy."

"Why, Betty girl, what's amiss?" cried a man's voice as its owner rushed out from one of the side rooms.

He was a tall, red-faced, well-clad, thorough-going Canadian farmer.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said William moving forward into the passage, "but might I ask for a shelter, sir, for this poor lady. I've just brought her from the woods; and she's very ill."

"Eh, what?" said the farmer, "the woods—a lady—ill! Here, Betty! quick, bring a light! Bless me, a lady did you say? You don't say so!"

At the sound of her master's voice Betty instantly re-appeared, light and all, followed by a neat, plump, round-faced little body, who was the perfect model of a farmer's wife.

"Bless me, what a sight!" cried the farmer's wife, who had doubtless heard the last remarks of her husband, and instantly ran forward to ascertain the nature of the case. "Oh what a lovely, lovely face!—poor thing. Do let her come in and ——"

"Yes, will you bring her in here, if you please?" interposed the farmer, leading the way into the front room.

It was a capacious, well-furnished apartment, with a large wood-fire blazing away upon the earth; and everything in it looking cheerful and comfortable, including a remarkably handsome young man and a still more remarkably handsome girl of about eighteen or nineteen, who were seated at the table reading together. Altogether it presented a wonderful contrast with the bleak, inhospitable wilderness which he had just quitted, and William deposited his precious burden on the sofa as directed, and fell on his knees by her side and burst fairly into tears.

The young man rose from the table, and, perceiving that his fair companion was looking at him in some alarm, he took her affectionately by the hand and led her towards the couch. But his eyes had scarcely fallen upon the upturned countenance of the unconscious girl, as she lay there before him with her rough protector weeping by her side, when he instinctively dropped the trembling hand that he held, and, with such a sudden jerk that the girl started and uttered a faint cry, while he staggered back exclaming,

"Good Heavens! is it possible?" and he stood gazing on her in rapt astonishment.

This exclamation aroused William from his grief, and he started almost instantly to his feet, and, after looking round the room with a half-bewildered gaze, he said,

"I'm sure you'll be good enough to take care of her, until she recovers, if I leave her here. I'm sorry to say that I had two under my charge—both ladies; and they were both taken ill together after toiling through the forest for two days, and I've been compelled to leave one poor dear creature back nearly ten miles in the woods. I must return and see if ——"

"Why bless me! what do you say, sir?" exclaimed the farmer who had been absent from the room, and had just returned in time to hear the last portion of William's remarks. "A lady in the woods—now—such a night as this! Good Heavens! what's to be done? Who'll go? Here, some one fetch something for—for—some beer and meat, quick! why we mustn't lose a moment. We must all be off instantly. Bless me! poor creature! actually in the woods. Whatever will become of her!"

"Why, dear me, this is very strange," said William who had been eying the excited farmer with a look of supreme astonishment during this ebullition. "It's a long time ago, but to be sure I've seen you before, sir. Why, didn't you come here seven or eight years ago in a ship called the Wanderer ?"

"Why, yes, that's true—we did. But I am sure I don't remember you, sir," replied the farmer, eying his strange visitor from head to foot.

"No, no," returned William, "I'm wonderfully altered, I know. But might I ask your name ?"

"Why, my name is Plumley," replied the farmer; and sure enough Plumley it was.

"Yes, to be sure I remember you now," cried William delighted to have found an acquaintance. "I dare say you'll remember me when I tell you. You used to know me by the name of William. I came out with the saloon passengers."

"Why, then, by George!" cried Mr. Plumley staggering back as though he had been shot, "why, why, why then who are these ladies? Who's the lady you've in the woods. Good Heavens! its never poor Miss McCameron, Mrs. Blackbourn—never, never, is it ?"

"Yes—yes," stammered William; for he was bewildered by the intense excitement which the other displayed.

"Why, why, why, Simon, Timothy, Lizy, quick,—every one bring—get some—here, I'll go!" exclaimed Mr. Plumley rushing out of the room.

"Come, sir, let us be off. I'll go with you," said the young man,—who was of course our hero Simon—starting from the reverie into which he had fallen in the contemplation of those too-well-remembered features. His little Lizy—who was little no more—had fallen on her knees beside the couch and was weeping over the unhappy girl.—Her tears had a two-fold theme.

In a few minutes Mr. Plumley returned with four or five blankets and two or three buffalo robes; and Mrs. Plumley followed him with a variety of mysteries for the fair sufferer; while Betty brought up the rear with a large jug of beer and a large joint of meat for William. But William would not wait to take anything but the beer, and a hunch of bread and meat which he carried in his hand to dispose of as he went along.

"Will horses be of any service ?" asked Mr. Plumley.

"Yes, I think they would, sir," said William, "a considerable part of the distance, at any rate."

"Come along, then," said Mr. Plumley, "we'll soon have them. Are you going, Simon?"

"Yes, yes," replied Simon, loading himself with some of the buffalo robes, "I will accompany you."

"That's a fine lad," said Mr. Plumley. "Why, bless me," he added, taking a glance at the couch as he was going out, "and so that's the poor, dear little lady, as we used to call her. Well, this is sad, sad, *sad*. Take care of her, Lizy, girl. Timothy is gone for the Doctor. It's some distance down into the village, Mr. William, but I hope he'll not be very long before he's here."

Mr. Plumley led the way to the back of the premises, and the horses were very soon procured—one being borrowed from a neighbouring farmer—and they started off to the rescue of the lost one in the wilderness, against the bleak wind, through the deep drifting snow, and pressed forward their steeds to the uttermost, for they began to fear that the increasing wind might obliterate the trail, and thus cut them off almost hopelessly from their object.

O, what very finite mortals we are!—but a few short miles lay between them, and they scampered away, doubting, and hoping, and fearing, and praying—they thought only of the trail, and beheld not the unreal phantom they were pursuing beyond it—that the reality, the object of all, had already flown.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH MR. WORZEL RE-APPEARS AND MAKES A DECLARATION.

Both Mrs. Plumley and her daughter watched by the bed-side of their unconscious patient that night, and their anxiety was divided between her and the object of so many years of their concern who was then being sought-for in the depths of the inhospitable woods. Hour after hour rolled away—midnight, one, two, three, had come and gone, and still there were no signs of their return; and the good little farmer's wife began to be both anxious and alarmed.

"Oh Lizy, child," she said, in a whisper, as her anxious eyes caught sight of the first gray streak of the distant day from the well-curtained window of the invalid chamber, "it's certainly morning; and they've been all night in the woods, and that poor dear, dear creature, and there aint the least shadow of a sign of their coming even now. Bless me, Lizy, child, what ever can be the reason? Oh, only to think if they've missed her! and then if they should be lost, too! Oh, only to think, Lizy child, how dreadful!"

"Yes, but you must'nt think so, ma, dear," said Lizy.

Stay! "*ma*, dear!" It used to be "mudder" and "mothy," and "fathy" and "daddy," and little unpretending simplicities of that sort. *Ma*, dear! why, how is this, Lizy child? Well, well, to be sure, when we look at you again we see a wonderful change in other respects too. You are certainly no longer that weasen little atom of simplicity that used to indulge in those vernacular abbreviations. No; there is a great change. We see plainly the direct foreshadowing of all the mysterious influences of the whole academic programme—French, music, drawing, writing, arithmetic, Berlin wool, and crochet; together with certain serious indications of toilet mysteries, through the medium of which we have no difficulty whatever in arriving at the genealogy of *ma, dear*. But still we would just put it to you tenderly, Lizy child, whether all this is exactly—mind we say *exactly*, child—the thing for an embryo farmer's daughter? Well, well, we see how it is. You don't *exactly* want to be an embryo farmer's daughter. It is just possible that you might one day be an embryo gentleman's little wife. Very well; you shall have it your own way, Lizy child. Any thing euphonious and affectionate; so "ma, dear," let it be.

"Yes, but you mustn't think so, ma, dear. I am sure that nothing so dreadful as that will ever happen. It is very difficult, I dare say, travelling through the snow; but, oh ma, they never could lose their way—do you think they could?"

"Oh, I hope not, Lizy child," replied Mrs. Plumley, "father and Simon have often been out in the woods together for a whole day, to be sure. But don't you think, Lizy, you had better get to rest? You are looking so very pale. I will sit up with her—poor dear young lady; and besides the doctor says there's no danger, you know, Lizy child."

"Thank you, ma, dear, I think I would rather remain up," replied Lizy. "I feel so anxious about Miss McCameron. And—oh look," she said, lowering her voice to a whisper and drawing Mrs. Plumley to the bed-side, "she is moving—she is opening her eyes."

Alice opened her eyes and looked eagerly round the room, and then, fixing them on her two watchful attendants, she smiled faintly—very faintly, and gradually closed them again, and fell into her former unconsciouness, although it now became more and more like the unconsciousness of sleep. She was fast recovering; and by the time the morning had fairly dawned, the blood had again begun to circulate through her cheeks; and when her eyes again opened the dreamy film had almost disappeared, and she seemed to contemplate the objects about her with a mingling of surprise and gratitude. As Lizy watched her with anxious eyes, she observed her lips move, and bent down her ear to catch the sound.

"Matilda," she said; "is Matilda here?"

Lizy was fearful of disturbing her mind with the terrible fact, which became the more and more so as the time advanced, and she signified as well as she could that she should see Matilda as soon as she was well enough; and with this assurance she gradually fell again into a calm sleep, which lasted for several hours; and she

was still slumbering on when the feeble rays of the morning sun were beaming upon her placid features, and the watchers were summoned by the small handmaid, Betty, to breakfast, which was prepared below.

"Well, Lizy," said Mrs. Plumley, "she seems very comfortable, and I think we may leave her for a little time, while she's sleeping so sound. You must be very tired too, Lizy child."

"No, not very, ma," replied Lizy. "I would rather sit here until she wakes again; and if you will send me up a cup of tea, I think I shall be quite revived. But pray don't you stay, ma, dear."

"Well, if you would rather stay, *do*, child," said Mrs. Plumley, "and I will send you up a cup of tea and a slice of toast. Oh, what a blessing it is to be so kind, Lizy! I'm sure you will be rewarded one day. But I am so anxious about father, Lizy, and poor Miss McCameron. What a dreadful time, isn't it? Where's Timothy, I wonder?"

"Here's me, mum," said Timothy, meeting his mistress on the landing, where he was feeding a large Canadian "fire-box" with wood.

"Oh, Timothy," said Mrs. Plumley, "can you conceive whatever has become of your master? He's never lost in the woods, is he, Timothy? Do you think you had better go and see if you could find them: would that be any use?"

"Well, you see, mum," said Timothy, who was precisely the same natural curiosity in fustian, without detriment or detraction, as when we last left him in Montreal, or when we first found him in that wild, adventurous night on London Bridge. "Well, you see, mum, there's a sort o' difficulty as makes it reg'lar hard to say what is or what isn't the cause of the relay. And then as to my goin' arter 'em, there's a sort of difficulty there too—not but what I hope you know, mum, that I shouldn't think much about bein' buried in the snow for the matter of a day or two, if so be as that could be of any service. But, in the first place, I don't think as master's exactly the sort to go for to lose himself in a bit of a wood, mum; and if they aint lost, mum, why, yer see, they're likely to be home just as soon without me as with me; and if so be as they *is* lost, yer see, mum, (which aint a bit likely, I can 'sure yer, mum,) why, if I was to go arter 'em and even for to find 'em, as I don't know about the woods no more than them, why, it 'pears to me that we should all be lost together then, mum, and not a bit the better for it—don't you see, mum? Not but what I'll go, mum, immediate, if so be as you think it's desirable, mum."

"No no; never mind, Tim, we'll wait," said Mrs. Plumley. "Is Miss Plumley down stairs, Tim?"

"Miss Plumley's below, mum. Excuse me, mum, but I hope the young lady's doin' tolerable, mum?"

"Oh yes, I think she is doing nicely, Tim."

Mrs. Plumley repaired to the breakfast-room, and there she encountered the plaintive features of her amiable sister-in-law—Miss Plumley—the victim of former years.

Now, with regard to the general appearance and effect of the gentle spinster on this the occasion of her re-appearance on the stage of these Adventures from the oblivion of seven long years, there is room for the introduction of a solitary remark, which may be appropriately prefaced with the intimation that it refers to a still solitary object. Now the tendency of our observations among the gentler halves has been towards the conviction that the solitary condition does *not* tend to promote the development of wrinkles nor the undue protrusion of eyebones, nor the acidification of tempers, to a greater extent than is found to obtain among the individual atoms of the matrimonial amalgam. But nevertheless we confess it is with some astonishment we find ourselves called upon to record the fact, that, notwithstanding the sensitive and susceptible nature of the solitary object of these remarks, the frightful lapse of seven whole years had not only failed to establish so much as one individual additional wrinkle upon her intellectual front, but that the old outlines had well-nigh disappeared—that the flesh had gathered upon her once sunken cheeks—that her impressive, not to say sparkling, eyes had come forward from their dark recesses and unmasked their native comeliness, and that the perfect semblance of a smile had thrown its gladdening mantle around her classic features; and notwithstanding that she was attired in a loose morning habit, and that the profusion of curls which she had successfully cultivated had not yet emerged from their nocturnal wrappers, she unquestionably presented a happy contrast with the disconsolate victim of former years.

"Dear me, Lizy, how fatigued you look," said Miss Plumley. "How is *she*? What a strange coincidence, to be sure!"

"Yes, very strange," said Mrs. Plumley. "Oh, she's much better, poor dear, I think."

"Yes, it *is* very strange," added Miss Plumley, in a little mystery to herself. "You are quite sure, Lizy, she is what she represents hersef? It is very odd that George don't return. You have never been made the victim of an imposition, surely, have you?"

"Bless me, Selina, what a funny idea," said Mrs. Plumley, incredulously, "she's quite a lady; besides I should have remembered her face again anywhere. And then William. Don't you recollect William on board the vessel?"

"Yes, I think I have a faint recollection," said Miss Plumley; "but it is very faint. You must remember, Lizy, I was a great sufferer during the voyage—a complete victim. I am sure I hope for your sake, Lizy, there is nothing wrong; but really in this world we are never sure?"

And Miss Plumley cast up her hands and her eyes ceilingward to imply the mutability of all things.

"But I am sure there is nothing wrong, Selina—it aint possible. She's quite a lady—she is, really. Wont you go up to see her?" said Mrs. Plumley.

"Well, I'm afraid I shall not have time," replied Miss Plumley. "The children will be here presently; and then, you know, I am so engaged."

This latter remark about "the children" requires a word of explanation. From her early days Miss Plumley had always had a yearning desire toward the mental, moral, physical, and general culture of her infantine brethren—or rather sisterhood; and on her brother's location on his present estate, she had, very much to her gratification, discovered an opening. The hopeful and well-to-do parents residing in, and in the vicinity of, the village, like themselves, had one and all observed the unmistakable amount of refinement and "ladylike" grace that Lizy Plumley had brought with her into their midst; and a very laudable ambition was straightway excited in their breasts that their beloved offsprings might shine forth in the world with the same unmistakeable effulgence. This was the opening that Miss Selina discovered; and she therefore immediately set her to work and issued her prospectus, announcing the highly satisfactory fact that she had opened a "Seminary for Young Ladies." To her entire gratification this announcement was immediately followed by a general rush from the whole upper ten thousand—or rather the *ten* without the thousand—of the village; and her seminary was at once established on a most respectable and satisfactory basis—Lizy Plumley being the model to which each and every of the "young ladies" was to be moulded. And considering that one was afflicted with an hereditary hunch on her innocent little back; and another was supported on a club-foot and lisped; while a third carried about with her the signs of her mamma's frailty in the shape of a hare-lip and a somewhat unpromising squint,—it is due to Miss Selina to state that she commenced her labors with the most praiseworthy self-denial and the utmost purity of purpose.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of the day in which she re-appears upon the face of our narrative, that Miss Selina stood in the centre of her scholastic sanctum, which was the back parlour, and, looking round upon the small congregation of ten hopeful little souls who were each and all submerged in the mysteries of Berlin wool and crotchet cotton, she remarked,

"Jemima, child, have you finished that cat's head on your sampler?"

"It ith verthy nearthy done, mum," replied Jemima, which was the child with the compound foot and imperfect vernacular.

"Make haste then, child," said Miss Selina. "Girls, pray be attentive. Angy [short for Angelina], how are you getting on with your mamma's night-cap?"

"Oh why, I aint getting on at all," replied the little Angel, with a little of sublunary tartness; "as fast as I goes to drop one I drops two, and then I drops 'em altogether, and then it's a reg'lar mess."

"Silly child—very silly child," said Miss Selina, reprovingly. "Why, bless me, you've been and tied it all in knots."

"Yes, mum, that's what I've been and done, mum," replied the Angel.

"O silly, silly, silly," said Miss Selina, tapping the Angel lightly on the left shoulder. "How ever could you be so foolish? Now, girls, you are not to laugh. Janey [short for Jane], why have you put down your work, child?"

"Cos I'm tir'd," replied the laconic Janey.

"Oh, naughty, naughty girl," said Miss Selina, "how can you be tired, child?"

"Cos I've worked," replied Janey.

"Oh, for shame, Miss," said Miss Selina, distributing an admonitory glance among the remaining nine; "Janey, for shame."

But Janey didn't appear to see any shame at all about the matter, and she therefore at

once threw a counter-glance round upon her fellows, which, having for its component parts a comical distortion of every individual feature of her comical little countenance, set them all a giggling, and immediately involved the spinster in a complication of distresses which might possibly have ended seriously for the youthful offenders, had not Betty, the little handmaid, entered at the moment, and effectually distracted her mistress's attention from this insubordination in her pupils.

"Betty," said Miss Selina, "who was that you just showed into the parlor?"

"Gentl'm'n, 'um," replied Betty.

"But what gentleman, girl?"

"Mr. Weezle, 'um."

Miss Selina lowered her voice to a whisper.

"Who did he ask for, Betty?"

"Mast'r, 'um, but 's not t'ome, 'um."

"No one else, Betty?"

"Goin' to see missus, I b'lieve, 'um. He sed 'spose misses 'ud do, 'um, so sent him into the pullar, 'um."

"Oh, dear me, Betty," said Miss Selina, raising her voice to its natural tone, "how sadly inkirect you do speak! What bad pre*noun*cination! How is it, Betty, that you never lernt to speak better?"

"Mother died when I's a little un, 'um, and father used get drunk, 'um, and so 's never teached nothing, 'um," replied the illiterate Betty.

"And did you never go to a Siminiry, Betty?" asked the affectionate spinster.

"Wint to the Dead Man's Simitry once, 'um, but couldn't read the 'scriptions, 'um," replied the hopeless.

"Oh, how very deplorible," said Miss Selina, casting her eyes compassionately on the untutored handmaid. "Girls, don't laugh. Only think what a blessing it is that you can go to school! Now if you are all very good children for the next ten minutes, I shall let you home an hour earlier. So be very good, now."

If the girls thought it a blessing to be allowed to go *to* school, it was very plain, from the expressions of countenance with which they received this gracious announcement, that the next best blessing would be to let them *out* of it; and if anything was wanting to confirm that impression, the deficiency was amply supplied when the stipulated ten minutes had elapsed and they were allowed to go free, by the unmistakeable demonstration of delight with which they broke the blessed bonds of their scholastic captivity.

The girls being gone, Miss Selina immediately took a private survey of the front parlor through the keyhole, and then flew straightway up stairs to her own private sanctum—whither we follow her not. But suffice it to say, that in a few minutes she returned with a purple tint upon each cheek, indicative of recent ablution; an extra lustre upon the facial ornaments that gathered about her ears, indicative of grea—no, pomade; and a general display of all those artistic touches of feminine ingenuity and taste, that "bewilder while they please," inclusive of nature's brightest handiwork—a smile, which played around her features in all its native purity.

Surrounded by the whole of this imposing accumulation of nature and of art, she proceeded straightway to the front parlor, and presented herself in full blaze before the admiring but slightly-bewildered gaze of Mr. Worzel; to whom Mrs. Plumley was just recounting the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours, and deploring the still unaccountable absence of her husband.

"Oh, Mr. Worzel, how do you do?" said Miss Plumley.

"Wurl, oi'm purty wurl, thoink you, Miss Plurmley," replied Mr. Worzel.

And, to be sure, he looked pretty well without the smallest particle of doubt about it. Although he had unquestionably brought to the Canadian shores a very ample coporeal development, there nevertheless appeared to be a considerable increase in the general extent of surface; and, from the jolly expression of his jolly-looking countenance and the highly respectable appearance of his general exterior, it was abundantly evident that he had found favor in the land of his adoption, and that to all intents and purposes he had flourished like a "green *maple* tree."

"I have just been telling Mr. Worzel, Selina," said Mrs. Plumley, "about last night, and about Mr. Plumley's being away in the woods so long. He don't seem to know what to think of it, Selina."

"Noa, it seems very stroinge," said Mr. Worzel. "But still there's noa doubt something's detaining orf 'em. Oi doant think they'd ever goa for to lose themselves—oi can't think that. Burt it's a dreadful thing for the poor young lady, Miss Plumley."

"Oh, very dreadful, very dreadful," said Miss Plumley. "I hope there is nothing wrong, Mr. Worzel; it is so shocking to think of."

"Oh, I begin to be so frightened," said Mrs.

Plumley. "Only to think! all night in those terrible woods! Oh, I am getting quite distracted. Will you stay a little while with Mr. Worzel, Selina, while I go up stairs to see how the poor dear young lady is? I think Lizy must be very tired. She has not had more than one or two hours' sleep since last night. You will not go yet, Mr. Worzel?"

"Wurl, o'im in noa hurry, Mrs. Plumley," said Mr. Worzel, casting a nervous glance towards Selina."

"Oh, I am glad of that," said Mrs. Plumley, as she left the room, "because they may soon be back, and then we shall hear all the news, you know."

"Wurl, Miss Plurmley, this is rather sad, it appears," said Mr. Worzel, by way of successfully breaking the ice, as soon as they were left alone.

"I really fear so," said Miss Selina, producing the ever-cherished "cambric" from her pocket, as a safeguard against any inelegant wanderings on the part of her hands. "Kindness is so often imposed upon, is it not?" added Miss Selina placing the cambric sweetly between her fingers.

"Wurl, it be; but it's a pitty," said Mr. Worzel, fumbling somewhat vacantly in his pocket. "You're quite well, I pursume, Miss Plurmley," added Mr. Worzel, fixing his eyes intently on the tip of the spinster's toe as it peeped modestly out from the surrounding mysteries.

"Oh, I'm quite well," replied the spinster, with a gentle application of the cambric to the right-hand corner of her neatly chiselled mouth.

"Oi hope nothing 'll be amiss, oi'm sure," said Mr. Worzel.

"I hope not," said Miss Selina.

"It would be very misfortunate," said Mr. Worzel.

"Very," said Miss Selina.

"Miss Plurmley," said Mr. Worzel, raising his eyes for an instant to the countenance of the spinster, and then dropping and concentrating them again on the personal fragment before alluded to, "Oi'm—oi'm thinkin' orf leaving this part orf the courntry, Miss Plurmley."

"Indeed," replied Miss Plumley, taking a firm hold of the cambric, and producing the appropriate expression.

"Yers," continued Mr. Worzel, "oi've sold moi farm roight out, and oi'm goin' to boi anorther down about the part that Mr. Plurmley's torkin orf going to, close to Mr. Seek's place, Miss Plurmley. But afore oi settled loike, the—the fact is, Miss Plurmly, oi—oi wanted to ask you a—a—that is, oi was thinkin' that—that—was that anyone at the door, Miss?" said Mr. Worzel, breaking off in some degree of embarrassment.

Miss Plumley was already seized with a fit of indecision, not to say nervousness, and she rose and fluttered towards the door, and, finding that the apprehension was groundless, fluttered back again.

Mr. Worzel had instinctively raised himself from his seat and thrust his hands deep into his breeches' pockets to ensure solidity of purpose; and there they stood, side by side, with their respective eyes transfixed upon the flaming logs upon the hearth at their feet, the very foreshadowing of mystery and emotion.

"Miss Plurmley," said Mr. Worzel, removing a fire-brand into a peculiarly eccentric position with the assistance of his boot, and speaking almost in a whisper, "I don't know whether we exac'ly urnderstan' each—a—a—that is, whether you—you—or, rather oi think we might loike a thing if it was agreeable loike!"

Miss Plumley removed the crystal drop that had gathered on her virgin brow, and, enshrowding herself in all the becoming modesty of maidenhood, remained silent.

"The fact is," pursued Mr. Worzel, still playing with the logs, and piling them up into all kinds of odd positions, "oi've been a goin' to speak to you, Miss Plurmley, for a lorng time past, but oi wasn't sure loike if—if oi ought: but wort oi wornt to say is, that—that—why there, Miss Plurmley, oi can't say fairer," continued he, kicking over the flaming pile at his feet with a sudden burst of resolution, and agonizing his features into about the expression with which a man might be supposed to sign his own death-warrant, "oi'll marry yer!"

The fair spinster's position on the hearth-rug had already become painfully uncertain, and, as these last words fell upon her bewildered ear, she began straightway to oscillate to and fro, and to describe certain undefined outlines in the air—the crystal dew stood out upon her marble brow—her eyes began to wander into unknown regions, and the gallant Worzel was just turning to her with the usual "Will you be mine?" upon his lips, when, behold, her fragile form gave way, and, measuring a "bee-line," came plump into his arms, and lay passively against his stalwart breast.

This situation was, no doubt, something new under the sun to the untutored Worzel; and there he stood in a state of pretty considerable bewilderment for several seconds; which was scarcely improved by the sudden opening of door, and the appearance of Timothy and the small handmaid with a fresh supply of fuel for the fire.

"Oh, beg pardin," said Timothy, retreating a step as his eye took in the general aspect of affairs. "I say, here's a go," he added, in an "aside" to Betty. "Fetch a pail of water and the winegar—here's the misses a tryin' on the mele-drematic."

"He—he—here, Timothy," stammered Mr. Worzel. "Do—don't go. Miss Plurmley's took ornwell. What's to be done?"

"Well, I'll call misses," said Timothy, moving off and adjusting his hand to his mouth for the better conveyance of the contemplated sound.

"No, no, no, thank you," stammered Mr. Worzel.

"Oh, dear," gasped the oblivious spinster, "th—the sofa."

This suggestion threw a new light into the bewildered perceptives of Mr. Worzel, and, in something short of a twinkling, and without much regard to either gallantry or grace, he proceeded to deposit his fair burden upon the couch.

In the meantime the illiterate Betty had not been indolent; for besides alarming her mistress, and shouting out "fire" from the back door, she had succeeded, in conformity with Timothy's instructions, in securing a five-gallon pitcher full of water and a quart bottle of vinegar, with which restoratives she now presented herself before the imperfect vision of her maiden mistress.

But the process of recovery was such as to dispense with the use of any such potent regenerators. A little casting of the eyes upwards—a few spasmodic gasps, accompanied with the usual "oh dear" and "bless me," and she was beginning again to smile incredulously on things generally, when the sudden appearance of Mrs. Plumley brought her to an instant perpendicular, and effectually restored her to her wonted serenity and composure.

"Oh, bless me, what's the matter?" cried Mrs. Plumley. "Is any one hurt?"

Mr. Worzel looked supreme confusion, and turned imploringly to the innocent cause of his discomfiture.

Miss Plumley struggled with her emotions for a brief space, and then burst into tears.

Mr. Worzel felt several degrees more embarrassed than ever; and he was just on the point of stammering out an explanation in reply to Mrs. Plumley's gesticulations, when the unpleasant office was spared him by the sudden appearance of Timothy, who rushed into the room exclaiming,

"Here they are—here they are!"

All parties immediately made a rush to the window, and, as Mrs. Plumley joyfully exclaimed,—yes, there they were, sure enough.

CHAPTER XX.

THE STRANGE PASSION.

It was the arrival of their friends from the woods that created the little excitement among the Plumleys with which the last chapter concluded.

Mrs. Plumley rushed instantly to the front door to receive them, and, to her sad disappointment and alarm, she at once perceived that they had returned unaccompanied by the dear object of their journey. They were all looking haggard and worn-out, and William in particular seemed the very picture of wretchedness.

"Oh, bless me, George dear, you've not brought her!" said Mrs. Plumley as her husband ascended the steps after giving his horse in charge to Timothy.

"No, no, girl, Providence is agen it; we've not brought her," said Mr. Plumley, with a melancholy shake of his good-natured head. "Hi, William, come inside, man—you're cut-up, I can see that. Well, we must hope for the best. Come along, Simon," he added, leading the way into the parlor.

"Oh, Simon," said Mrs. Plumley, looking

anxiously from one to another as they removed their outer garments, "do tell me what has happened."

"She was gone, mother—gone before we reached the spot," replied Simon, who stood with his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the fire. "How—how is your patient, mother?" he added hesitatingly and without raising his eyes from the hearth.

"Oh, she is wonderfully better—nearly well, Simon dear," replied Mrs. Plumley. "But whatever has become of the poor dear lady?"

"Well, you see, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley, "we first—why, Mr. Worzel, I'm very glad to see you," he added, interrupting himself on seeing Mr. Worzel, who had ensconced himself in the least conspicuous corner of the sofa, Miss Plumley having retired precipitately to her own apartment. "This is a very sad business, Mr. Worzel. Well, you see, Lizy, we first of all had the misfortin to lose sight of the track in the snow, which the wind had nearly entirely 'bliterated, and there we was a groping about all night, and it's the greatest wonder as we hadn't 'tirely lost sight of it altogether. But, hows'ever, when the morning came, and we had the light to assist us, we succeeded in finding just the faintest traces of it. And after that we managed to follow it pretty reg'lar until we came right upon the spot. But, 'las! there we was—the poor lady was gone. There was the place where she'd been—there was the sticks as Mr. William had placed 'em, and everything as it might be, but no Miss McCameron—she was gone. William's more used to the woods than we are, and he seemed to think as he could trace the marks of the snow-shoes of the Indians; but they was very faint if it was them, and we could trace 'em only a few yards from the spot. But, however, if the Indians has found her, William seems to think as she's perf'ctly safe—Heaven send as she may be. But, hows'ever, we've been a wandering about all day trying to find a trace of some sort that might give us a clue to what had act'ly become of her; but there, that seems hopeless—literly hopeless. It 'pears to me, Lizy, we might act'ly wander about for months without coming a bit nearer to finding out where she was—that's what it 'pears to me."

"Oh, how very dreadful," said Mrs. Plumley. "Are the Indians very savage, Mr. William!"

"Oh, no, ma'am—not at all, ma'am," replied William, "quite the contrary, in fact. We've found them always very kind."

"And do you really think it's them that have found the poor dear creature?"

"I really do, ma'am," said William. "It's literally astonishing the knowledge they seem to have of everything that's going on in the woods—astonishing, ma'am. I shouldn't be the least surprised if they don't trace me here, and bring Mrs. Blackbourn along with them, ma'am—not the least."

"Well we must hope for the best, Lizy girl," said Mr. Plumley. "I suppose you have not seen Mrs. McCameron, Lizy?"

"No, George dear."

"I think I ought to run down and break it to the poor lady as favorably as I can, like. What do you think, Mr. Worzel?" said Mr. Plumley.

"Wurl, oi should say it would be best. Poor Mrs. McCameron's very anxious, I know—'specially now Mr. McCameron's away. Oi should say it would be best, Mr. Plumley," replied Mr. Worzel.

"And perhaps that dear old gentlemen, Mr. McCameron's brother, might be able to tell you what's best to be done," said Mrs. Plumley.

"Yes, perhaps so—I'll go directly," said Mr. Plumley. "And so, Lizy, the little lady is getting better?"

"Oh, wonderful," said Mrs. Plumley. "She's been talking so cheerful. But she's been so very anxious about Miss McCameron, I'm afraid it will almost send her ill again when she hears what's happened."

"Does she know where she is—in what house?" asked Simon, who had remained silent and thoughtful during the foregoing dialogue.

"Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Plumley, "Lizy has told her all about it; and she seems so very pleased to think she is not among strangers altogether. How very strange it was too, Simon dear, wasn't it?"

"Mother," said Simon, rising from his seat and looking at her with some agitation, "it was very strange—very strange, indeed."

He shook his head, and, with a countenance full of distress, moved slowly from the room.

No wonder that his mind was troubled. The fair vision that had gone before him for seven long years—the flame that had kindled his aspirations—the inspiring genius of all his successes, had again assumed its reality and stood before him, no longer a day-dream and a shadow, but the substance of all his hopes and fears and speculations for seven years. But her coming was too late—the time had

gone-by when he could welcome her as that dear object to which his dreams had pointed him; and he saw in her presence only distress and perplexity for himself, and sorrow for those whom he much respected and loved. No wonder that his mind was troubled.

On leaving school, he had, at the suggestion and through the influence of his master, by whom he was much respected, entered the office of a barrister in a small though flourishing town in a Western County some forty or fifty miles from Toronto, as a copying clerk. And partly through the superior facilities afforded in Canada for advancement, although perhaps equally as much by the aid of his own abilities and untiring energy, he had gradually advanced step by step over the rough road of the law, until, at the termination of his articles, which were now pending, he bid fair to become a partner in the concern of which he had already the major part of the management.

Besides this, as a first stepping-stone towards the political goal to which his aspirations directed him, he had become a part proprietor and editor of the chief political journal in the town; and whatever might have been the effect of the sound judgment and argumentive force displayed in his articles upon the political community at large, it is at any rate certain that they had already gained for him a numerous circle of adherents and friends, among whom were numbered some of the most wealthy and influential men in the county, and perhaps in the country.

He had begun young, but he had begun well; and it only remained for him to go on as he had begun, to carry out the policy that he had already adopted, in order to raise himself to almost any position to which a laudible ambition might lead him to aspire.

With a view to the happy termination of the love that had manifestly existed between them from their cradles, and for which they devoutly hoped, the Plumleys had been careful to educate their daughter that she might in that point at least be an equal "match" for their foster son, whom they easily perceived, in a country like Canada, and with the little education they were happily enabled to afford for him, would be certain to raise himself at least to a highly respectable position.

And although Simon had not yet thought it necessary to make any formal declaration, he had long been satisfied in his own mind, that, with one strange and solitary exception,—the reality of which, however, he had never hoped to meet again,—his heart was every atom the property of his affectionate little Lizy; and perceiving that it was the desire of his good, kind friends that it should be so, he had lost no opportunity, during the last year or two, in encouraging the attachment on both sides. His little Lizy had been inundated with presents and letters and kindness, and it was tacitly understood by all parties that they were finally and conclusively "engaged"; and the two principle parties at least were supremely happy in the understanding.

But the sudden reappearance of Alice had rekindled in his mind, with all its bewildering accompaniments, the strange aberration of his affection which had marked the first dawn of their acquaintance as children when they sat gazing on each other on the deck of the Wanderer. The more he struggled and reasoned with himself, the more he saw how weak and ineffectual were all the controlling powers which he possessed against the strange passion with which she inspired him.

No wonder that his mind was troubled. He was no more than that frail, fickle, unstable compilation of incongruities—a man; and surely *he* was never made to be constant where women is the subject: but anon the waverer shall speak for himself.

The following day was Sunday; and Alice being sufficiently recovered, was allowed to leave her room, and soon after breakfast she made her appearance in the parlor. She was neatly attired in a dress with which Lizy had kindly provided her, and it would perhaps have been difficult to say whether the deep tinge that the forest had imparted to her cheek, detracted from or added to her natural beauty; but whether or not, the visions which Simon had pictured to himself of his little lady matured to womanhood, could scarcely have surpassed the reality that was before him.

Simon held her hand in his, and they looked at each other in silence as when they had last parted, and the tears stole gradually into their eyes. Lizy being engaged about the domestic matters with Mrs. Plumley, they were left alone for some considerable time; and after a long pause, Simon broke the silence by remarking,

"This is a sad, strange meeting, Miss—Miss ——," he stopped short and looked enquiringly into her tearful eyes.

She understood him. He had not known her by any other name than Alice, and she replied,

"It *is* very strange. Can you not still re-

gard me as a friend? Might not you still call me Alice as a friend—would that be improper?"

"I have had many good and kind friends," replied Simon, looking something more than kindness, despite of resolutions to the contrary; "but although you may have known it but little, I have had none truer nor better than you, Alice!—to call you Alice requires but your permission, and after that I shall never be able to call you any other. We *are* friends, Alice—we can still be so—and may we be so long."

"Thank you—thank you," said Alice; "but how can I have been a friend to you?—it was such a very—very short time, and how very long ago!"

"True," said Simon, "true; but the impressions of those few days have been with *me* the impressions of seven years. I had scarcely hoped to meet you again, Alice; but the little lady who was so kind to the poor little boy on board the Wanderer has never been fairly out of my mind for a single hour to the present moment. Circumstances have wonderfully changed with me; but had I never seen you I should never have been what I now am. Although absent, Alice, and so long, you have been my good angel, who has always gone before me and marked out my course to what I now am."

He felt from the very bottom of his soul the truth of what he was saying, and he spoke with all the fervour and feeling that the conviction engendered. Alice looked at him, and marked, with eyes beaming with gratitude and pleasure but full of tears, the earnestness with which he spoke.

"It is very kind of you to say so," she said, "very kind; but although the remembrance has been mutual—although I have never forgotten those few short days, and my one desire in quitting the woods has been that I might meet you again and renew our friendship—I cannot tell how the thought of me should influence you so much. It is very kind of you to say so."

"And in saying so, Alice," said Simon, "I only say what to me is a sacred truth. You have hitherto been my good angel, Alice; but—" he stopped short with a perceptible start, and turned his eyes confusedly towards the door, where they fell upon the pale features of his little Lizy, who had just run in to remind them that it was drawing close to the hour for church. She, however, did not observe his confusion, or else designedly passed it over, for, shaking her curls at him good-humoredly and laughing away the pallor from her cheek, she threw her arms around Alice's neck, and, looking up into her face, said in the most charming of all charming little voices,

"Now, little lady, I am afraid you've been a very naughty girl for a very long time not to go to church. Oh, what a long time it must be since you even saw a pulpit. Now, do you think you are well enough, you naughty, naughty girl, to come and hear a sermon?"

"Oh, yes, I should be so delighted," said Alice.

"There's a dear," said Lizy. "The sleigh's nearly ready. So come along and get your things on; and then Simon is going to drive us both down. I never ask him, you know, because he always does it, whatever it is, if I say so—don't you, sir!" she said shaking her curls at him and running off with her friend without waiting for a reply.

Simon's heart smote him as he saw the generous struggle with which she strove to disguise the conviction and the distress that his conscience told him must have been forced upon her already by his strange and unworthy conduct. Her generous goodness was more his accuser than were all the principles of rectitude and honor and conscience with which he was endowed. He jumped to his feet as his eyes followed her from the room, and continued pacing hurriedly and feverishly up and down, reproving himself in the most exemplary manner until he had created a thorough reformation in his unstable mind, and inscribed therein a series of determined resolutions which were to set everything right; and when Lizy returned, accompanied by her friend encased in fur, he took both her hands in his, and was just endeavouring to *look* what his feelings would not allow him to express in words, when his eyes wandered over her shoulder into the countenance of Alice,—they fell—the look gave way, and his reformation and resolves were at once a failure.

The drive to the village church, which was about a mile distant, along a road studded with farmers' cottages on either side, from which the blue smoke curled up in all kinds of fantastic shapes and rolled away upon the bright clear atmosphere to the distant forest, was all pleasant enough. The girls found a sufficient subject for the excercise of their innocent little tongues in the wild scenery on all sides, and the quaint tenements, and the endless groups of little urchins who were scampering about them in the snow; and they exercised them accordly, in conformity with their usual custom.

But Simon, despite of every effort to throw

off the depression and join them, became irrecoverably silent and thoughtful, and more than once elicited an anxious glance from his fair companions; and it was consequently a great relief to him to arrive at the church, where his silence would not be conspicuous.

The whole service, from beginning to end, was of course one direct condemnation of him and his conduct. The text, "No man can serve two masters," was of course selected with a special view to his particular case—for to be sure it would have been difficult to have found two more direct, or more thoroughly tyrannical masters than were the two innocent little creatures who were at that moment hemming him in on either side. They were masters who would take no warning—from whom he couldn't run away—who were not to be exchanged—in fact, the most arbitary of masters that he was ever likely to be brought within the jurisdiction of.

But still it rang in his ears at the end of every climax, "No man can serve two masters"; and he felt that the great Christian problem therein involved was very much his own; for there he was plunged head and ears into the very midst of the forbidden mammon—it was in him, and round him, and of him, and had well-nigh swallowed him up altogether, and yet he was forbidden to touch it, to see it, to think of it, or even to be conscious of its very existence. It was too much for his frailty to cope with, and he returned home as silent and thoughtful and perplexed as he had gone.

In the afternoon, as they were all sitting round the parlor fire together, and just as Mr. Plumley was in the middle of a minute description of their expedition into the woods on the previous day, their attention was suddenly attracted to the garden gate, before which a heavily-laden sleigh had just brought up; and Lizy, starting from her seat and darting towards the window, exclaimed, "Oh, ma, here is Mrs. McCameron !"

"And young Sorftish, I declare," added Simon rushing to the front door. "Hi ho, young fellow, here you are, then," he cried throwing open the door and tumbling over the steps towards the sleigh.

"Yes, here we are," said young Sorftish grasping his friend by the hand.

The sleigh contained exactly four souls. In the front sat Philip Sorftish and Clara McCameron; and in the back, Mrs. McCameron and an elderly gentleman who looked like one of the first order of Canadian farmers, and of whom a word anon.

"Well, Clara," continued Simon, "you've had a glorious ride—eh? Yes, of course you have—that's right, Mrs. McCameron—all well? Well, come in, come in; they'll all be delighted to see you. Look, here they are all rushing out after you."

This was exactly what they had done; and a general round of affectionate greetings straightway took place upon the door steps, and in the passage; and they were all ushered into the parlor through a very atmosphere of welcomes and cordialities.

"I say, she is looking rather well to-day," said Philip taking Simon by the sleeve and speaking in a confidential whisper, while he gave the smallest possible fraction of a nod towards Clara as she disappeared through the passage by the side of her friend Lizy.

"'Gad, you're right," replied Simon throwing up his head and elevating his eyebrows as though he would have said "*divine*." You are a lucky fellow, Phil."

"Yes—there's a pair of us," said Phil throwing another fraction of the nod in the same direction.

"Well, I don't know," replied Simon lowering his voice into a very ominous whisper; "there has a very extraordinary affair happened."

"Ay?"

"Yes; but I'll tell you about it by and bye. In the mean time keep your eyes open. She's gone up stairs now—I'll introduce you when she comes down."

"Ay, what is in the wind?"

"Never mind—nothing. Don't be too curious, young fellow. Come along,—we shall have them looking after us."

Seven years had evidently done the proper thing by Mr. Philip Sorftish. From a rather questionable stripling, they had transformed him into a well-shaped, active, thorough-going young man, with qualities for which every one admired, respected, and esteemed him. He still remained in the service of the merchant with whom we left him in Montreal; but had been advanced to the management of a branch concern in the city of Ottawa, where he at present resided with his sister-in-law, the deserted Mrs. Sorftish,—no intelligence whatever having hitherto reached them of the fate or whereabouts of the fugitive Josiah.

"Well, now, Mrs. Plumley," said Philip on entering the parlor, "I've got a little matter that I have come up here almost expressly to

settle, and I want your assistance. Shall I have it?"

"Oh, bless me, it depends what it is, I'm afraid," said Mrs. Plumley.

"It's a laudable object," said Philip.

"O, then I think you had better ask his *lord*ship, in that case," said Mrs. Plumley, referring him to her husband.

"No, no," returned Philip, "I want to *carry* the object you understand."

"In that case, then," said Mr. Plumley, "you are quite right in going to the ladies."

"So I thought," pursued Philip. "Well, of course, Mrs. Plumley, it is understood that I am to have your co-operation?"

"Well, perhaps you are," said Mrs. Plumley; "but I must know what it is?"

"It is just this, then," said Philip; "I have come up here for the purpose of taking you all —all, that is every individual one, of course—down to Ottawa with me to-morrow morning. There now, you are actually throwing out signs of dissent—that is not the thing now, Mrs. Plumley. You understand, I say, that I have come up for the purpose of *doing* it. It is going to be a bit of a holiday with us, and in the evening there is to be a glorious Indian entertainment. And so I think, on the whole, we may be able to manage it, Mrs. Plumley—eh?"

"Oh, I don't know, I am sure," said Mrs. Plumley. "It's very kind of you, I'm sure. What do you think, George dear?"

"Just what you think, my dear. Ask them all round and leave me out. I shall find myself somewhere among the crowd when you've started, I'll be bound. So just please yourselves. It's my opinion that they mean to go, Mr. Sorftish. But here come the girls—ask them. They must decide it. Miss Clara won't go, I know, will you, miss Clara—go down to Ottawa with Mr. Sorftish?"

Clara, who had heard nothing of the foregoing dialogue, and perhaps slightly mistaking the nature of the proposition, blushed very prettily, and, running forward and placing her finger on his lips, said in just that tone in which we all like to be scolded, "You naughty man. Why did you single out me the moment I came in, eh?"

"Well, well, it was only a jest, Miss Clara," said the culprit. "After all, perhaps I oughtn't."

After Alice had been formally introduced to Mrs. McCameron, who came almost expressly to see her, and the elderly gentleman, and Philip, the question was put to the girls to decide, and it was accordingly arranged, in compliance with the rule prescribed, that it should be thought over between this and then, and that of course it all rested on the respective mammas. With which answer Philip seemed perfectly satisfied and contented, and he simply remarked to the elderly gentleman,

"You see that is just what I said, Mr. McCameron: I came here for the purpose of taking them down."

"To be sure; I congratulate you on your success," replied "Mr. McCameron," who however was not our old, unhappy friend of that name.

When McCameron was quite a young man he had lost sight altogether of an elder brother, who had been for some time residing on the Continent; and he had long since numbered him with the dead, and forgotten him as the dead are forgotten. It happened about two years after his arrival in Canada, while passing through the village on the outskirts of which Mr. Plumley had now taken up his quarters, in one of his periodical expeditions in search of his daughter, that his curiosity was excited by being referred to a person of his own name as a likely party to furnish him with information about the neighbourhood, being an old resident. He accordingly waited on him, and, to his great astonishment, almost instantly recognised him as the brother whom he had so long lost sight of. The recognition was of course mutual, and at once awakened in the breast of each all the emotions of regard and affection that had been slumbering for so many years; which ultimately led to the removal of McCameron's family to the ample residence of his brother, who was, a widower, and only too delighted at the change. It appeared, that, having met with some heavy misfortunes, both in his business and his family, about ten years previously, he had quitted Europe for America, and had taken-up his abode where he now was, with the view of being removed from the things that haunted his recollections in the busier portions of the world; and here he had lived unmolested and unknown, and gradually increasing in wealth with the gradual increase of the settlers around him, ever since. It was through his influence and advice that Mr. Plumley had purchased the farm on which he was at present located, and where he had now been thriving prosperously for several years. He was a man of between sixty and seventy years of age, with a grey head, and a tall, muscular figure, which, however, had become considerably enfeebled by age and hard work.

It was observed that on the entrance of Alic

into the room he had started in some apparent surprise, and stood gazing on her, when she was presented to him, with a bewildered countenance, that showed she had awakened in his mind some slumbering emotions of bygone days —some sad recollection that seemed to trouble him; and after calling Mr. Plumley aside and conversing with him in an under-tone for several minutes, he retired, and motioned William to follow him, and they were both absent for some considerable time. When he returned, his countenance appeared heavy and troubled, and he seated himself in silence; and for the rest of the day his whole soul seemed absorbed in the contemplation of the beautiful girl whose appearance had so moved him; his eyes were scarcely removed from her for a single moment; but his thoughts and his emotions were his own, for his tongue was silent.

In the evening, at the request of Mrs. McCameron, who was deeply interested on account of her absent daughter, Alice was prevailed-upon to give them an account of their sojourn in the woods. There was a great deal in her story that was eminently distressing—an additional pathos being imparted to every hardship and privation and suffering that the melancholy history involved, by the uncomplaining simplicity of the narrator. While every one of her listeners was sensibly affected by the sad story, there were some upon whom the effect was more marked and more observable, and who appeared, as she proceeded, to lose the entire control of their feelings, in the pain and distress which her simple narrative occasioned them. The old man, who was seated opposite her, followed her with the intensest interest through every incident; and before she had concluded, the tears were rolling down his cheeks in a continous stream, and he appeared to have become oblivious to everything but the voice and the sufferings of the gentle being before him.

Simon and Lizy were seated together at the opposite end of the table, and the former continued for some considerable time to show his interest in the narrative only by sympathetic gestures to his companion at particular points; but as it proceeded, he gradually became more and more absorbed—he leaned forward on the table with his chin resting in his hands, his companion became entirely forgotton, and before it was concluded the tears were in his eyes, his countenance had become flushed and excited, and he was altogether as oblivious to every other object in the room as was the old man in his tears. Lizy took no notice of his abstraction for a considerable length of time, until his cheeks became so unusually flushed and his countenance evinced an intensity of emotion that the circumstance seemed scarcely adequate to inspire; when her thoughts became gradually distracted from the subject of the general attention, her eyes began to wander from him to the object of his excitement, until they ultimately became rivetted on him altogether, and were not again removed until the narrative was closed. She then rose silently from her seat, and, hurrying from the room, repaired to her own apartment, and, falling into a chair, buried her face in her hands and burst into tears. She was still crying bitterly when she felt a hand laid gently on her shoulder, and on looking up she perceived that it was Alice.

"I know why you are distressed, Lizy," said Alice stooping down and putting her arms affectionately about her neck; "can you trust me?"

"*Do* you know, Alice?" said Lizy looking at her earnestly through her tears. "I am not angry with any one, Alice dear."

"No, no; you are too good," replied Alice; "but you will trust me—you will believe me your friend—your *dear* friend, wont you, Lizy?"

"I know—I know you are," said Lizy; "and I know I am very silly, but—" she checked herself and burst again into tears.

She would have said, But the heart is very treacherous, and love is a strong passion, and before it our virtues, our friendships, and our best resolves are only wax.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHICH INTRODUCES THE GREAT INDIAN CHIEF CHACHINHAWCHA-CACHAWACHAGA.

It having been arranged between the Plumleys and their friends to accept Mr. Sorftish's invitation to accompany him to Ottawa on the following day, the sleighs were procured, and, after an early breakfast, it being a considerable journey to the city, the whole party of eleven souls, and pretty cheerful souls too, with the exception of Simon and Philip, were snugly placed in their respective positions, and the whips cracked, the bells began to ring, and off they started upon the journey. Mr. Plumley undertook the reins of government of sleigh No 1, with Mrs. Plumley by his side, and the three girls, Lizy, Clara, and Alice, behind him; while Mr. Worzel, who had turned-up spontaneously for the occasion, conducted the movements of No. 2, with his fair enslaver at his elbow, and Timothy and William in his rear. Simon and his friend, having horses of their own, had determined to go on horse-back. But despite himself, Simon was heavy and thoughtful. He engaged in a most determined struggle with himself for the purpose of getting-up the necessary amount of animation among the girls as he cantered along by their sides; but it was not in him. He was hopelessly dull; and hopelessly dull was all he could say or do: and after a variety of fruitless attempts to appear what he was not and at that time couldn't possibly be, he hastily excused himself from their company, promising to join them again at the next halt, and, motioning to Philip to follow him, put spurs to his horse and galloped forward in advance.

"Hi, young fellow, stop!" cried Philip after they had been plunging through the snow at a break-neck pace for something like a couple of miles. "Why, Sim, what on earth is in the wind now?"

"Hi ho, we've been going it, haven't we?" cried Simon reining-up and looking behind him for the sleighs.

"Something remarkably like it, I should say," replied Philip.

"The fact is, Phil," said Simon, "I am pretty considerably bewildered."

"Well, upon my word, you look so," said Philip. "But what's the matter, my dear fellow?"

"What's the matter!" returned Simon. "Well, that's cool certainly. I thought I had enlightened you a bit upon that point already. But however I suppose you have forgotten all about it. You have been to sleep since; but as I haven't, you see it is fresh in my memory still."

"Well, well," said Philip, "upon my word it is a rather serious business if it hangs about you like this. But you must shake it off—you must, my dear fellow, indeed."

"Yes, that is what you said last night, I believe," said Simon; "but you forgot to tell me how to set about it. But the fact is, Phil, you know me too well not to see that this is something beyond a jest. I don't think I am particularly weak-minded in matters of this sort, but this time I seem to have lost mind and purpose and principle, and everything else. And, upon my word, what can a fellow do? He can't alter his nature, and drive his mind and desires and likings and dislikings in just whatever channel he pleases. I have seen a theory somewhere propounded to the effect that it is impossible to be genuinely in love with two objects at the same time. But that is all bosh. For if ever a fellow was desperately and seriously and irreparably in love with a pair of heaven's own angels, I am he. Very well, it is wrong—by all the rules and regulations of society I am condemned—every one condemns me—I condemn myself, and yet there it remains nevertheless an unsophisticated fact. Here I am, *to* myself and by myself I say and know it is a great impropriety; and yet every faculty and feeling, and every instinct that I possess, is urging me into it; while there isn't an atom of any counteracting principle about me to render me the smallest assistance to get free of it."

"Well, but you must get free of it some how or other, my good fellow," said Philip. "What can you do?—you can't marry both."

"Phil," continued Simon, "you are as wise as the world generally. They can all tell us what can't be done; but the thing I want to

know is, what *can* be done. I believe it has occurred to me, perhaps more than once, as you sagely observe, that I can't marry both. But unfortunately I am afraid that is the malady, and not the medicine."

"I should have thought Lizy Plumley would have been an invulnerable antidote," said Philip.

"Against a whole world," replied Simon; "but this is the one great exception. It is a strange infatuation, that has lasted already for seven years; and I am sure I can't tell where or when it will end. With my present state of mind, I can no more give up the one than the other. Good Heavens! we are strange creatures!"

By this time the sleigh-bells were heard close behind them, and the conversation dropped.

It was about noon when they drove into the city, over the bridge, down into the lower town, and drew-up at Mr. Sorftish's establishment, which was a somewhat extensive store at the upper end of Rideau St. A small regiment of the knights of the counter came instantly to the rescue of the vehicles and horses, and to redeem the bets which they had contracted among themselves during the morning upon the daring feat of being the first to say the gentle thing to the prettiest feminine fragment of the party, which they had been led to expect would contain at least one decided attraction; but when they found themselves called upon to confront the direct blaze of *three*, and three such bewitching little non-suches as their daring had never dreamt of, they found their gallantry oosing-out at the very end of their toes, and their respective bets from the loop-holes of their pockets. But there was more than this to lose: there was caste to be lost—caste among their brethren—their reputation on the marrow-bone of their existence was at stake; and as this conviction with all its concomitant horrors presented itself to their minds, the three foremost among the gallants rushed forward, and,

"Fine day this for sleighing, miss," said the first, selecting Lizy from the trio, with that short impressive jerk of the upper half of the system which, behind a counter, signifies, "Thank you; much 'bliged. Is there anything more?—nothing more?—thank you."

"Hope you've had a pleasant ride, miss," followed-up the second, and pronouncing in favor of Alice.

"And what do you think of our city, miss?" chimed-in the third in favor of Clara.

But at this point their lights were all totally extinguished by a fellow-gallant—the quietest and the least to be feared of the whole lot as they had thought, and who had refused to bet—who came forward, and, quietly putting them all in the background, proceeded to busy himself with the "buffaloes" and to take the entire arrangements into his own hands; while he remarked, with a stroke of unaffected grace in which the whole of the lady occupants of both sleighs were comprehended,

"Ladies, permit me to say that Ottawa must feel proud of the honor that is conferred upon it this day. A few minutes ago, it was, in my opinion, one of the most unattractive places in the world, but now—now—"

"It's one of the most attractive," cried Philip, as he sprang from his horse. "Bravo, Lindsay! You have evidently a just appreciation of the 'best and latest attractions,' sir."

The girls of course smiled and laughed and replied to all remarks, and did the pretty and interesting to any extent; but this, however, didn't settle the matter of the bets between the gallants, which remained a subject of perpetual feud and dispute for the next six months, each one, of course, maintaining that the one addressed by him was the beau—or rather the belle ideal of perfection, to the exclusion of the rest.

Philip at once took the girls under his wing and led the way to a capacious apartment at the back of the store, where Mrs. Sorftish was in readiness to receive them.

There was very little change in Mrs. Sorftish beyond that which would be naturally and legitimately the result of seven years' advancement—or, perhaps more correctly, retrogression—towards the grave-end of mortality; and she received her guests in a small whirlwind of affectionate excitement, declaring that really she never would or could have believed it.

"Oh, Mrs. Plumley," said Mrs. Sorftish, when she and her friend were left alone up stairs: and our lady readers will readily imagine that it was not many minutes before that indispensible necessity to the future peace of mind and quietude of both for the remainder of the day, was contrived and arrived at. "Oh, Mrs. Plumley, this is kind of you. Isn't he a dear kind fellow—Philip? Whatever would have become of me if it hadn't been for him! So weak as I am, too. Constitutional, Mrs. Plumley—I never was strong from a child."

"But I think you are much stronger than you were when you first came to Canada, child," said Mrs. Plumley.

"Well, I may look so," sighed Mrs. Sorftish; "but when anything is constitutional—inward, you know—and then see what a terrible shock I have had to sustain. Cruel, cruel, Josiah! and never to hear anything of him all this time. Think what a shock, Mrs. Plumley. If he had only come back and said he was sorry, and would try and make amends, or anything at all, I'm sure I could have forgiven him. But never to hear a word—not so much as a syllable, when he didn't know whether I was alive or dead, or whatever had become of me! Oh it has been a terrible shock, Mrs. Plumley."

This of course involved the production of the everlasting cambric, and the total submersion of the countenance therein for the uninterrupted space of three minutes; during which Mrs. Plumley remained silent, for she felt that it was a subject on which her experience would scarcely warrant her in offering a suggestion.

"Oh, it is a very strange world," continued Mrs. Sorftish, the allotted time of lamentation being elapsed; "very, very strange. What a very pretty girl your new visitor is, Mrs. Plumley."

"What, Alice?" said Mrs. Plumley. "Oh yes; and she is such a dear creature. You will be so delighted with her when you know her."

"What a fine young man Simon is growing to be, too; and so clever," added Mrs. Sorftish, twisting the cambric about her fingers with a nervousness indicative of an over-pressure of ideas. "And Lizy too," she continued, spreading the handkerchief out and casting a look of compassionate concern into its centre, with her head thrown thoughtfully on one side, "how good and how very lady-like! But aint you really almost afraid (pray don't think me silly or unkind) that, that—but then Simon is very fond of her, is he not, Mrs. Plumley?"

"Oh, whatever do you mean?" said Mrs. Plumley. "Really how strange you talk, Mrs. Sorftish."

"Oh, I didn't mean to say there *was* anything, you know, Mrs. Plumley," returned Mrs. Sorftish. "But really things are so very strange; and do you know—it might have been imagination—but I thought I observed—but then, perhaps, it wasn't. I am afraid my troubles have made me very suspicious, Mrs. Plumley, and then I am so very weak, and constitutional weakness is the worst of all weakness, you know, Mrs. Plumley."

"Oh, I do wish you would tell me what you mean," said Mrs. Plumley, upon whom a new light began to steal, that made her feel for the moment very uneasy. "You talk so very strange."

"Well, never mind now," said Mrs. Sorftish. "Perhaps it is very wrong and silly of me; I dare say it is; but then we can't help our thoughts, you know; and things are so strange. But there, they will be wondering what has become of us. Let us go down; and pray don't think anything more about it, Mrs. Plumley,—I dare say it is all nonsense."

Nonsense or not, she had awakened a new train of reflection in the mind of her friend, which, followed by her own recollections and observations, effectually destroyed all her quiet and enjoyment for that day, and for many days to come.

"Well now, then, what do you say to a drive round the town and a run-over to the Chaudière Falls, eh?" said Philip after dinner, and when the whole party had expressed themselves in perfect readiness for anything. "We shall just get back in time for a cup of tea, and then, you know, in the evening comes off the grand—here, Plumley, what paper is that you are reading?"

"The—the—let me see," replied Mr. Plumley, turning the paper about, "The Bytown Gazette."

"Ay, well, that has it in. Have the goodness to turn to—let me see, thank you, I'll just read it to you, then. I fancy it will be rather amusing. Here you are. 'Temperance Hall, Monday, Nov. 28th, Indian Entertainment. A monster troupe of the famous Tribe of Dog-ribbed Indians from the Rocky Mountains, headed by their great chief, Chachinhawchacachawachaga, will have the honor of appearing in the town in their wonderful entertainment, illustrative of the customs, manners, and eccentricities of the wild tribes of the north; introducing all their peculiar and beautiful melodies, including the great War Song, the Love Ditty, by the Indian Maidens, and the Death Dirge over the Warrior's grave. Doors open at half-past seven, to commence at eight. Admission, &c. &c.' There, I think that promises to be not so bad," continued Philip, returning the paper to Mr. Plumley. "At any rate it is a novelty, and we don't get many novelties out this way."

The girls thought that the very least it could be would be "delightful," and their expectations were all at once arranged on the "tip toe" of excitement, and a general declaration was forthwith made to the effect that not one of them would be easy until they had seen the great chief Chachin—, &c. &c.

The drive around, or rather through the town, was of course attended with all those pleasurable emotions that usually accompany a drive of that sort; for with three charming young girls and two charming young men in a sleigh altogether, with the old folks all comfortably packed (?) in another by themselves (not but what in this instance the "old folks" were a decided acquisition to the party), even such an ordinary place as Ottawa is, would necessarily assume the character of enchanted territory; a delusion which almost resolved itself into reality with the glowing description with which Philip favored them as they drove from place to place, of the almost magic rise of the town from a small straggling collection of insignificant shanties—a fair specimen of which were still spread over the lower part of the town—to the important and prosperous-looking city that they then beheld it.

"Lor bless you," said Philip, as they glided over the canal bridge to the upper town, "the rapidity with which this place has sprung into life would completely frighten our Old Country friends out of their seven senses. Look here now. You see that street running down there, and this, and the whole of that range of buildings yonder? very well; five years ago there wasn't a brick of it to be seen, not a solitary brick. Then look here, here is a range of buildings, solid stone,—you know there is no mistake about them,—and then look at the stores, something like stores, eh? Very well, two years ago they weren't thought of. There is another block just like them, and another over there—literally wonderful, isn't it? In fact the whole of the Upper Town here has jumped up out of the earth by a sort of artificial magic. Just comparatively a-few years ago and we should have had the forest on each side of us by this time. That's the way they do things in this country."

This was of course very wonderful and interesting, and elicited any amount of astonishment from the fair listeners, who of course regarded it all as an extensive piece of magic, (oh, blessed poetry!) as Philip had intimated, and enjoyed it accordingly. But what was all this to those wonderful, those delightful, those lovely Falls? Long before they had arrived within sight of the handsome white bridge which stretches across them, the rumbling and mumbling which gradually grew deeper and louder as they advanced, had done its work, and had set their eyes sparkling, and their ears tingling, and their voices ringing, and their tender little hearts leaping, in a manner which we can all imagine and appreciate, but none describe. But when they came in full view of the rumbling monster—when they saw it come plunging along from the distance—tearing and splashing and lashing over the rocks; now staying to hold a conflict with itself in the deep ridges and cavities and excavations in its uneven bed; now dashing itself with reckless fury against the blocks and ridges that impeded its head-long way; now mumbling quietly along in a smooth stream by itself, and then boiling and raging and scampering away —tumbling down here and struggling up there, and then whirling on again with the great current—always rushing onward, always in a turmoil and confusion and commotion—never at rest—forever rolling down, and down and down, like a monster giant pursued to his destruction, till it reaches the gorge that swallows all, and thundering, and rumbling, and tumbling and wailing and moaning, as it falls, plunges headlong together into the boiling gulf that yawns below. When they beheld all this, and ten times more, they, one and all, immediately passed through all the various transitions from delight to surprise, surprise to astonishment, astonishment to perfect bewilderment, and from perfect bewilderment into the last degree of ecstatic reverie, from which they had scarcely more than two thirds recovered by the time they had returned home; and it was not until they had each partaken of not less than three cups of the sedative mixture which Mrs. Sorftish had presently laid before them, that their excitement had fairly abated, and the falls had fallen in their minds to anything like an ordinary level.

At half-past seven the whole party again sallied forth and recrossed the bridge to the Upper Town, and made their way to the Temperance Hall, the scene of the grand evening's entertainment. Although they were there pretty early, the Hall was already beginning to fill pretty briskly, and they had a bit of a scramble to get seated together in anything like a respectable position. Long before the performance commenced, the place was full to the doors, and, to judge from the general appearance of the assemblage, which appeared upon the whole to be very respectably constituted, the expectation from the evening's amusement was of itself both entertaining and gratifying, and afforded the highest general satisfaction—in fact, so much so, that Philip, in the spirit of Barnum, put it to his friend whether, in the

event of the entertainment's proving a failure, they might not be said to have received the full value of their money in the enjoyment they had derived from it in prospective.

At precisely eight o'clock a movement was heard behind the glazed calico—which formed a partition from the platform to the side-wall, and screened the door of the ante-room from view—and Chachinhawchacachawachaga, the great chief, vaulted on to the platform. His appearance was certainly anything but imposing, when considered in conjunction with the formidable appendage which he carried about with him for a name. He comprised a very small, slim, unchief-like little body, surmounted by a thin, spare, and equally unchief-like little head, including a bright vermillion countenance, and a pair of quick, rambling, telescopic eyes. He was decorated in a chintz "leopard-skin" skirt, thickly interlaced with goose-quills and tinsel, a piece of the same material being thrown loosely over his shoulder, to convey the idea of a hunter in full chase. His arms and legs were ostensibly naked—the required effect being arrived at by means of vermillion "fleshings," while the whole was crowned with a sweeping head-dress of ostrich feathers, which rose out somewhere from the spine and towered-up in a graceful cone above the head, and, after arriving at the height of about two feet six inches, turned majestically over and streamed down again until it almost swept the ground at his heels: in fact, take him all in all, he was about as ornamental and purely conventional an Indian as could very well have been manufactured, and we doubt if Mr. Barnum himself could have suggested an improvement. His appearance was hailed with a tremendous burst of enthusiasm from all corners of the Hall; and he stood shooting out his hand and grinning, in a manner sufficiently comical to have belonged to any known or unknown tribe on the face of the earth. When the enthusiasm had sufficiently subsided, he came forward, threw-up his hand in a grandiloquent style, and proceeded to address the ceiling.

"Laddy shemen," he said, screaming-out the words at the top of his voice, and twisting his face into a variety of uncivilized contortions, "sal hav ples to p'sent si mann'r cust'm of si great Injin Tribes of si risin sun of si Rocky Mount'n of si great nor-wes sou you. Fus sal p'sent si Injin Mar'ge wi si Injin Majin. Pheugh! Wheugh!"

The thrilling effect of this speech upon the audience has perhaps never been equalled. All the orators and wits and stage-trampers that ever were, would have incontinently vanished into nothingness could they have beheld the burst of enthusiasm that followed upon this simple mutilation of the vernacular. And, to be sure, it was sufficiently novel and incomprehensible to have convulsed any congregation of reasonable beings that was ever thrown together—the "pheugh wheugh" of the conclusion being avowedly equal to any five hundred pages of wit and humour that could possibly be compiled.

The chief disappeared for a moment after this, while the effects of his *debut* were subsiding; when he again came forward, followed by the whole of his "monster troupe," which consisted of a whole tribe of three souls, including two Indian maidens—who were attired in the chintz leopard-skin skirts, vermillion fleshings, and a gold band round their heads—and a warrior of rather small stature, who was supposed to be painted and accoutred in readiness for the war-path, although his general appearance and effect was very much more suggestive of a merry-andrew in an equestrian arena. But neither their limited numbers nor their suspicious appearance had any effect in diminishing the enthusiasm of their audience. From the manner of their coming, it at once became evident that they were perfectly competent to leap and yelp and howl, and to distort their bodies to an extent that must have carried satisfaction before it through any audience in the world. The first illustration of the customs of the wonderful tribe—the Indian Marriage—consisted of about ten minutes leaping and yelping about the platform, knocking rudely against each other, poking one another indiscriminately in the ribs and other tender portions of the anatomy, rolling down at full length upon the boards—and, in fact, a free indulgence in every practical absurdity that their abundantly fruitful minds could suggest: to all of which the audience responded with peals of laughter and shouts and hurrahs; the more they yelped and thumped and hooted, the more the audience roared and applauded; and the more the audience roared, the more the others yelped and thumped about, until the entertainment seemed to have resolved itself into a mutual contest between the audience and the troupe as to who should be the first to bring the Temperance Hall to the ground. But when the wedded pair were ultimately carried off the stage, tied back to back and with their heels elevated considerably above their heads, then was the climax—then was the great mys-

tery of human endurance solved—they could stand no more, and they therefore forthwith doubled themselves up and roared for their very lives.

After this the two maidens appeared by themselves and sang the "Love Ditty." Of course, no music was expected and therefore no one was disappointed that none was produced—the maidens' voices being, like themselves, remarkably masculine in the effect, and, instead of the "soft warbling of the Indian maid," sounding very much like the heavy bass of civilization. But it possessed the chief merit of being thoroughly inimitable and unintellgible, and was consequently vociferously encored and pronounced to be completely beyond everything, as most undoubtedly it was, and no inconsiderable distance either. The next illustration introduced the deliberations of the tribe at the "Council Fire," which appeared to be a complete conflagration, and blazed away to such an extent that by the time they had stamped and roared and brandished-about the last argument, which appeared to proceed entirely from the tomahawks in their hands, and, like true warriors, had leaped off the platform, maidens and all, over one another's heads, there must have been but a very small amount of breath remaining in their argumentative bodies.

"There, what do you think of that, sir?" said an excitable-looking individual who occupied a seat immediately behind the Plumleys, leaning forward and addressing Mr. Plumley himself, as the first part terminated and the tribe retired for a little respite from their boisterous exertions. "That's something like Indian life, I believe, eh?"

Mr. Plumley was observed to indulge in a peculiar facial distortion, as though he were endeavouring to suppress a violent impulse from the risible faculties, as this remark was put to him; while he winked aside to Simon, and otherwise enlightened him with the assistance of his elbow, as he replied,

"Delightful. Everything so down-right natural, too. They act'ly leap and tumble and knock each other about as if they was born to it. It just shows what man is in a state of nature. I s'pose these are real natural-born Indians?"

"Oh, the genuine thing itself, you know," replied the excitable individual; "they come down from the Rocky Mountains, you know. Here you have Indian life in all its phases. There was the marriage, you saw, the chiefs at the Council Fire, the preparations for war, and in fact the whole thing just as it is,—Indian life, in fact,—the whole thing brought before you."

"They're all genuine Indians, of course," said Simon, passing Mr. Plumley's telegram on to Philip.

"Oh," said the other contemptuously, "did you never see an Indian before, sir? Hark at their language."

"Ay, to be sure," returned Simon. "That is certainly unintelligible enough for anything. I suppose this is just the sort of entertainment now that takes with an audience generally?"

"Nothing like it," replied the other, "nothing like it. This is splendid, you know. Here's something we can understand—something to be learned, you know. This is about the best entertainment we've ever had in this town."

"Indeed," said Philip. "You have had some celebrated people here, too, at different times."

"Oh, bother your celebreties," returned the other. "Give us something we can understand —something practical. What's the good of celebrity? we don't understand it. We are practical men, and we must have the practical thing."

"Then, it strikes me," said Simon, "that the Indians have hit the right nail on the head. They deserve every praise."

From some cause or other, it was evident that the whole male portion of the Plumley party, between whom a variety of private telegrams had been passing during the evening, were in a high state of excitement about something connected with the entertainment, above and beyond what was produced by the performance itself; and even Timothy, who had taken a side-seat by himself against the wall, was observed at every successive appearance of the chief upon the platform, to bury his face in his hands and fly off at once into silent convulsions.

The second part was just a successful repetition of the first under different titles; and when it was completed, and the highly gratified and delighted audience rose to depart, a hurried consultation took place between Mr. Plumley and his male friends, which terminated in his whispering to his wife and her companions,

"Don't be frightened, children, I'm going-in to see the chief. I fancy I know him, notwithstanding his long name. You all remain quietly here."

"Why, bless me, George dear," said Mrs. Plumley, "you know that strange——"

"I'll be back directly," said Mr. Plumley. "Not a word till I return."

In another moment he was behind the calico screen and knocking with his stick at the door of the ante-room, which appeared to be fastened. It was presently opened very cautiously by one of the maidens, who said, "Whoo"; but as Mr. Plumley didn't understand the remark sufficiently to reply, he pushed-open the door, burst into the room, and, rushing-up to the chief and seizing his hand, exclaimed,

"Why, my dear Mr. Kwack, I'm so glad to see you!"

"What, what, what!" cried the chief, retiring a few paces to take a better survey of the intruder. "Why, is it contumaciously possible! What, Plumley! Plumley! My old pertinacious friend, Plumley! Good heavens! here's an elucidation! Well, here we are, here we are, you see. This is the sacridotal elucidation that we have contumaciously arrived at!"

"Why, Mr. Albosh!" cried Mr. Plumley, seizing-hold of one of the maidens, who had retired as he first entered, but who no sooner heard his name pronounced by her chief than she came forward, and, maiden like, rushed fairly into his (Plumley's) arms.

"Plumley! Plumley!" said the maiden, "I scarcely know how to express the overflow of feeling which this reunion calls forth. Believe me, Plumley, it is something more than a bagatelle."

"I'm sure I am delighted to see you, and so will they all be," said Mr. Plumley.

"Are they all well?" said the maiden.

"All wonderful," replied Mr. Plumley.

"Plumley," said the chief, coming forward, with a tear trickling down his cheek. "Must they know our degradation? Stay, I see it in your look—they are in the hall. We never look among the audience. But, Plumley, you behold us the unwilling victims of a sacredotal destiny, led even to assume an unnatural patronymic and to disguise our own native vernacular by a concatination of inscrutable vicissitudes. Plumley, we've tried native talent in all its multifarious ramifications: they wont have it. The fact is, the whole race are so inscrutably cadaverous, that—hark! there's some one at the door. Pheugh wheugh, ching chahaw!" shouted the chief, motioning the warrior to the door. "Excuse me, Plumley," he added in a whisper, "we are obliged to keep-up appearances."

As the warrior opened the door it was quietly pushed in his face, and two extremely cadaverous-looking individuals forced their way int the room, and stood at a little distance noddin and smiling on the chief and his subjects gene rally.

"How d'ye dew?" said the foremost ind vidual, in the the rich nasal twang that ha never once got fairly out of Mr. Plumley's ea since the first time it had got into them o board the Wanderer before Quebec. "Cor sider I'm tarnal glad t' see yeou doing s'well added Mr. Slicker, before the others had suff ciently recovered their surprise to reply. "Bu guess, Britishers, yeou don't suck us in s mighty slick as all that."

"Why, if I don't mistake," said the chie stepping forward, "you're the Yankee sharper.

"Shouldn't wonder if you find us a bit cute, said Mr. Slicker, nodding approvingly.

"Well, what can we do for you, pray?" sai the chief.

"Sh' say yeou've had pretty smart taking to-night, friend," returned Mr. Slicker, "Cor sider we should like to come-in for sharings, el Lecute," he added, turning to his companion.

"Guess that's fair," said Mr. Lecute.

"Oh, you do, do you," said the chief, beginnin to throw himself into something like a war lik attitude. "What do you think of this, Albosh?

"Confound their impudence," said the maide manifesting some very unmaidenly symptom "I tell you what, my Yankee friends, you' get nothing here."

"Guess there'll be a splurge then," said M Slicker.

"By thunder there will," added Mr. Lecut

Mr. Plumley here whispered to his friend and then retired. In a few minutes he returne followed by Simon and Philip, the latter whom, after saluting the chief and his maide friend, presented himself full in the front of th Yankee agent, and enquired,

"Do you remember me, sir?"

"Guess I do," replied Mr. Slicker, runnin his eyes over him with the utmost deliberatio as though he were examining a natural curiosit "B'lieve I sold your brother a neat little pl of land some seven or eight years ago. Cor sider your name's Sorftish."

Philip was completely nonplussed by th consummate coolness. He had some faint ide that at the first sight of him the Yankee scou drels would have turned tail and taken to the heels. But it was very evident that a tenden to any such weakness had never entered in their composition.

"Well," said Philip, "there is an amou

of cool assurance about you that is certainly refreshing. But nevertheless I think you will see the propriety of quitting, not only this room, but the town, as quietly and quickly as possible."

"Guess not," said Mr. Slicker.

"I suppose you are aware that there is something like a law in Canada for swindlers and sharpers?" said Philip.

"Sh' say I should be about the last person in the world to violate the law tew," replied Mr. Slicker with a tinge of virtuous pride encircling his eyebrows. "If you refer to that little transaction with your brother, consider that was a legal transaction—not much mistake 'bout that."

"Why, confound your insolence," cried Philip beginning to lose his temper. "We will soon see how—"

"Stay," said Simon, who had been conversing apart with his friends, coming forward and laying his hand upon Philip's arm. "What are your terms for leaving this place quietly, Mr. Slicker?"

"Why, what do you mean, Seek?" said Philip. "You wouldn't make any terms with them would you?"

Simon motioned to his friend that it was the only course.

"Consider you're a man of business, stranger," said Mr. Slicker addressing himself to Simon. "I sh' say we could do with 'bout fifty dollars, Lecute, eh?

"Fifty dollars!" cried Kwack. "What, are you contumaciously *nun cumpuss?* What do you think we've taken?"

"A pretty good haul tew," replied Mr Slicker. "Think we counted the heads, eh, Lecute?"

"No mistake, guess," returned Lecute; "splendacious house—fact that."

After a rather warm dispute, in which the dog-ribbed chief and his maiden friend began to grow dogged and war-like, a compromise arrangement was arrived at, by which Mr. Slicker agreed to take thirty dollars for holding his peace, magnanimously offering at the same time to liquor the whole company out of the same; but as this generosity was respectfully declined, he took his friend by the arm, and leaving his best wishes behind him, departed on his way the most meek and inoffensive of mortals.

"Well, all I can say is I wouldn't have done it," said Philip as soon as he was gone.

"But, my dear fellow, there was no alternative," said Simon. "He is too much of a sharper to be frightened easily. He knew of course that you could have no hold on him in your brother's affair, because as he says it was a "legal" transaction. And there is no doubt he could have raised a very disagreeable disturbance in the town for our friends here. But, however, it appears he is pretty considerably sold after all."

"Sold!" cried the Chief. "Pertinaciously entrapped in his own snare. What do you think I've given him, Albosh? Why, that twenty-dollar Yankee bill—you know—on the Bogus Bank—that was pronounced to be not worth tuppence. Ha, ha, ha! that's what I call a categorical conglomeration of sacridotal rapacity. After all, you see he has only walked-off with ten dollars."

This was of course received as a sublime joke, and the whole tribe, pale-faces and all, enjoyed it heartily.

"Well, I suppose you are soon able to change your appearance, chief, to something a little more Christian-like, eh?" said Philip.

"Change!" returned the Chief; "in half an hour from this, every vestige of this tinsel garnishing will be gone, and then 'Richard will be himself again.'"

"There is my address then," said Philip, "just on the other side of the bridge. We will give you half an hour. Bring your friends—we shall be happy to see you all. Knock at the side-door, and for the present adieu. Remember, all of you, and in half an hour."

CHAPTER XXII.

WHICH IS BOTH RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE.

In about half an hour after the party had arrived home, the expected knock came at the door, and Philip hurried down himself to admit his visitors, who had certainly undergone a wonderful metamorphosis since he left them at the Hall. Mr. Kwack was to all intents and purposes "himself again" without subtraction or addition; and his friend Albosh—in the very identical midsummer suit of bygone years, fresh, sprightly, and warm, notwithstanding the state of the thermometer—looked like a resuscitation from the past, the very foreshadowing and prototype of the light of other days: and he created his sensation accordingly. They were accompanied by one only of their Indian followers, whom Mr. Kwack introduced, after the first burst of salutions had a little subsided, in the following speech:

"Friends, allow me to introduce to you my esteemed and respected friend, Mr. Henry Dale, and, in doing so, you will allow me to say, that, notwithstanding he has been thrown on evil days and pursued by adversities, he is a gentleman of learning, ability, and literary perspicacity of the very highest order. He has condescended, through adverse circumstances, to take the advertising department and general private superintendence of our entertainment; and I may say that we have all considered ourselves highly honored in having his society and services. Friends, Mr. Henry Dale."

The object of these remarks, who it soon became evident had not appeared upon the platform, and who listened to Mr. Kwack's observations with some degree of uneasiness, at once became an object of marked interest with the whole of the party. He was a young man of not more than twenty one or two, of a slight but gracefully proportioned figure, with a slightly effeminate but perhaps the more strikingly handsome countenance, in which intellect and urbanity seemed to struggle for supremacy. He was well and even fashionably attired, and, in the calm composure and unaffected ease of his manner, it was impossible not to perceive the results of both education and a perfect familiarity with the usages of polite society; and he was at once regarded by a present with the utmost respect, if not, by th gentler portion of the company, with somethin very nearly akin to admiration. He was c course but a very short time in running-int the affection and esteem of the whole party among whom, everything feminine being al ways excepted, Simon was perhaps the on who appeared to receive the most unmistakabl impression.

"Well, I wouldn't have lost your entertain ment to-night for any consideration," sai Simon in course of conversation. "I suppos I have scarcely learned so much of human na ture in any one year of my life as you succeede in crowding into that hour."

"Come," said Mr. Kwack "you are what may call ironically hard upon us. The fact i we were driven ——"

"Excuse me, Kwack," said Mr. Dale. " think you have misapprehended Mr. Seek. I ar fully satisfied you were serious," he added turn ing to Simon.

"Most unquestionably," said Simon.

"You learnt there, and perhaps in an unusu ally forcible manner," continued Mr. Dale "what it has cost my friends here and mysel some considerable expense and many seriou disappointments to arrive at,—namely, that th most wretched mummery and buffoonery, th very vilest practical absurdities that it woul be possible to indulge-in, are infinitly mor acceptable to nine tenths of the world, than al the wit or wisdom that was ever coined,—i fact, that precisely in proportion to the presenc or absence of intellectual worth and abilit and common sense, may you estimate the fail ure or success of your entertainment, whateve the subject."

"Without meaning any disparagement to th entertainment," said Simon, "there certainl could be no stronger proof of the correctnes of your conclusions than was afforded us thi evening. And of course if the people will pa tronize nothing better, they have only themselve to blame for the result; while to you must ce tainly belong the very highest praise for havin succeeded in hitting their tastes so completely

Really, Mr. Kwack, I hardly could have believed that you were such a thorough genius. We of course knew you almost the moment you appeared, and I must say from first to last I was astonished both by the intimate acquaintance with human nature displayed in your entertainment throughout, and the dexterity with which you enacted your part; for, certainly, a more unintelligible or irrational being in every word and action I never beheld, which is of course your highest praise, because, as you are evidently thoroughly aware, if you had been any more intelligible or rational in your performances, you would have been just so much the less acceptable to your audience."

"Friends," said Mr. Kwack, rising and buttoning-up his coat in evident preparation for an oratorical display, "I feel that I am called to make a remark. I feel that at least a brief explanation of the unpropitious circumstances under which I and my friend again appear in your midst is pertinaciously demanded and called-for. And as this involves a brief sketch of our itinerant historysince that well-remembered day on which we took our last farewell and commenced our perambulating course, I crave your indulgence. As you well know, we were then allied to a serenadian troupe of homogeneous celebrity. With them we wandered pertinaciously from town to town, from city to city, from State to State, with success to-day, disaster tomorrow—now revelling in categorical abundance, and anon pursued by all the conflicting concatinations of disastrous vicissitude. But nevertheless in the aggregate, I may say, that fortune was systematically propitious, and that the inscrutable unravellings of our fortuitous destiny was fundamentally homogeneous. In this way we perambulated through the length and breadth of the land, until we ultimately arrived at New Orleans. Here fortune deserted us, and left us in a sterile category of imbicility and ruin. Disaffection crept into the very heart of the camp, our troupe was disbanded, our mutual co-operation had drawn to a period, and, thrown upon our own resources without means, paraphernalia, or patrimony of any kind, we had for a time to contest against the direst concatination of circumstances in an uncongenial clime. While here," continued Mr. Kwack, looking towards Mr. Sorftish, "we fell-in with—well perhaps I should not mention it. Should I mention it, Albosh?"

"Perhaps not now," said Mr. Albosh.

"O really Mr. Kwack," said Mrs. Sorftish, did you see Mr. ——"

"Excuse me, pray," continued Mr. Kwack. "At any time we can have but little to say on the subject, from its peculiar nature, but suffice it to say now, that we saw him. Leaving New Orleans—which I may observe is remarkable for nothing but heat and niggers—we tramped our way on to St. Louis, from which city we had presently to fly for our lives in consequence of a lecture which I had prepared and attempted to deliver, entitled 'Universal Emancipation, or the Everlasting Rights of Humanity.' And certainly our own individual emancipation from the blood-thirsty fanatics that pursued us was something miraculous; but the most heterogeneous category of the lot was to see the contumacious niggers themselves actually joining in the chase. I thought there was something rich about that, to be sure. But as fortune would have it, while we were wandering along, existing from day to day on chance and atmospheric air—which diet let me tell you is rather hot and light with the thermometer at about a hundred and ten in the shade—we accidently overtook a monster travelling circus that was performing through the country. Necessity impelled us, and we therefore at once entered into an engagement, uncongenial as it was—myself as first clown and equestrian gestr, while Albosh took the great Antipodean feat of walking on the ceiling, heels uppermost, —which I may remark is achieved by means of an ingenous contrivance of his own, of hooks, rings, and tapestry. This engagement lasted with fluctuating success for upwards of three years; when we again found ourselves thrown upon our individual resources in the well-known city of Philadelphia. For two years did we struggle here against all the thousand ills that flesh is heir to, when, and proud I am to be able to state it, we had the honor and good fortune to become acquainted with Mr. Dale. In explanation, he will perhaps allow me to state, that having been driven by adverse necessity to take to lecturing for a livelihood, which, however, from the causes which you have this night had illustrated, did not succeed, and both Albosh and myself having been singularly struck with the eloquence and wit which was therein displayed, my friend at once introduced himself and offered a suggestion, to the effect, that Mr. Dale should write a humorous entertainment in which we could all three take part, and that we should co-operate together. That suggestion was condescendingly and graciously adopted. And now," said Mr. Kwack, unbuttoning his coat and drawing him-

self up to his full altitude, "let me do justice to the genius and perspicacity that characterized that production."

"There, there, that will do Kwack," said Mr. Dale.

"Let me say," continued Mr. Kwack emphatically, "that that entertainment has been heard, and seen, and read by men of high standing and ability in the different towns through which we passed, and that they have one and all unanimously pronounced it to be as genuine a compilation of wit, humour, and satirical profoundity as ever came before them in any shape or form whatsoever. And without attempting to bring my own perspicacity in juxtaposition with such a transcendent production, that you may be able yourselves to form an idea of its categorical merit, I would suggest, since I presume we have met here this evening for a little amusement, that Mr. Albosh and myself should give you, as well as we are able, a few illustrations from its irresistable portraitures."

"No, no, no," cried Mr. Dale.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes," cried all the ladies of the party.

"We shall all be highly delighted, I am sure," said all the gentlemen.

"I am proud to hear you say so," said Mr. Kwack. "But," he continued, resuming his narrative, "did it succeed? Was it contumaciously possible to make the cadaverous incomprehensibilities of human ambiguity to comprehend so much as the perspicacious witticism of a solitary line? No. The masses pertinaciously rejected it. And after trying it in city after city, we were obliged reluctantly to consign it to an inscrutable oblivion. This led our friend, Mr. Dale, to the framing of the entertainment which you have witnessed this evening; and which—although I believe it was devised more out of indignation than anything else, I believe you will all agree with me is a powerful and profound elucidation of philosophical research. Friends, I have now laid before you the categorical fluctuation of events that have impelled us through the whole paraphernalia of our wanderings; and I trust that the unmitigated concatination is such as to redeem and exonerate your humble servants from any semblance of impropriety or duplicity that the ignominous assumption of the barbarous incongruities of the Indian character might have suggested to your perspicacious minds. And now, if my friend Albosh is willing, and with your acquiescence, we will do ourselves the honor to introduce to you one or two of the powerful sketches from life and character from the pen of our esteemed and respected friend."

"I can only say," said Mr. Albosh coming forward and gradually falling into stage attitude, as if he did it by the mere force of custom, "that all that so poor a man as Albosh is can do shall be done freely."

The company all removed to one end of the room, the table was drawn from the centre, and, notwithstanding some deprecatory remarks from Mr. Dale, which the unmanimous voice of the party however very soon succeeded in ruling out of order, the friends at once threw themselves into action and commenced. The performance consisted of a series of sketches from life, of some of the most eccentric characters of both men and women; and it was not long before their audience were completely convulsed with laughter, and became almost as ungovernable as they had been in the hall an hour before; for while both the performers evinced a thorough appreciation of their parts, and displayed the most consummate powers of mimicry, the profusion of wit and humour that tumbled out in all directions, stroke upon stroke, until each character was wound-up with a complete explosion, was entirely irresistable. The girls, and the party generally, of course took the wit and the action and the mimicry as an inseparable whole, and laughed and enjoyed it in proportion to its spontaneous effect upon their risible faculties, as all audiences do; but Simon, who had already taken a considerable fancy to the author,and had been extremely anxious to hear his production, regarded it from a very different point of view; and although he laughed as heartily as the rest, he assumed the position of a critic, and weighed the composition throughout upon its own individual merits. And he was not long in discovering, that, taking it for what it was, it was possessed of merits of no ordinary character; that the wit was both refined, pointed, and original; that the characters were selected with good taste and judgment, and drawn to the life; and above all,that there was nothing forced or overdrawn or meagre in any one of the sketches from the first to the last.

He was highly delighted with the performance of course, and, when it was concluded, applauded it generously and sincerely as it deserved; and his interest in his new acquaintance began rapidly to increase from that moment. But had his attention been directed to Mr. Dale himself, instead of to this production

of his humourous genius, it is difficult to say what kind of turn that interest might have taken. For he would then have observed that he (Mr. Dale) had become all at once peculiarly alive to some of the same influences as himself with regard to Alice,—that is to say, that his soul was fired with admiration, and to a certain extent spell-bound.

O ye wits, and geniuses, and sages! how ye tumble-down before the shrine of a pretty face! Well, well; it may not be so great a fall after all; for behind a pretty face there is perchance enshrined an angel's soul! Angels might worship it, and why not ye?

He would have perceived that his eye followed her through all her emotions as the performance proceeded—that when she laughed and applauded, his countenance lit-up and flushed with the most pleasurable exitement, and that when she appeared to lose a witticism or to have her attention distracted from the performance, if only for a moment, he became uneasy, and the pleasurable emotions vanished. But Simon was too much engaged with his criticism to observe anything of this; and after all, if he had, he could scarcely have been surprised, for he certainly had the strongest reasons to know, that, according to the immutable laws of immutable nature, there are certain objects that must always be admired, and that in being admired absorb the whole physical, mental, and psychological development of the admirer.

At the conclusion of the performance, of course a general shower of plaudits and commendations was bestowed upon both the author and his exponents, doubtless to the infinite gratification of each.

This laid a good foundation for the evening's amusements, into which the whole party straightway plunged with considerable zest. The counter-gallants, headed by Mr. Lindsay, were had-in; and as the latter gentleman was good on the everlasting fiddle for a quadrille, a waltz, a cotillion, and the time-honored Sir Rodger, why, as he has subsequently been heard to observe, that was a time that was rather like a time; and if he didn't set the little angels flying about to some purpose, why, to use a familiar Yankeeism, it was somewhere about a "caution"; the only thing he could find to complain-of in the whole proceedings being, that, like angels' visits, sure enough such times in that locality were few and far between.

It was observed that Simon availed himself of several opportunities of conversing with Mr. Dale; and by the time the party broke-up, which was not until a pretty late hour, a mutual understanding of friendship seemed to have been established between them.

The Plumleys were to start for home again early in the morning; and as it was thought that they might possibly be separated again for some considerable time, their three friends were invited to an early breakfast with them before starting.

When they presented themselves in the morning, it was easily discernable that their minds were disturbed about something or other, and Mr. Kwack, who was in a high degree of excitement, was not long in unburdening his mind on the subject, for he had scarcely bounded into the room when he exclaimed,

"Here we are, here we are! here's another categorical elucidation! Fortune, fortuity, and disaster—the whole paraphernalia over again—the very personification of the inscrutible vicissitudes of the past!"

"Why I hope it's nothing serious, Mr. Kwack," said Mr. Plumley. "What is it?"

"What is it! Why, what do you think?" replied Mr. Kwack, in that spirit of impossible enquiry in which people are wont to indulge under such circumstances, although for what end or object it is impossible to say. "Both the Indian maid and the warrior have contumaciously decamped,—gone! And what gives a sort of finishing-touch to the disaster, is, that they have had the decency to walk off with all our dresses, appointments, and decorations, together with the money-box. Oh, I can see the dodge plain enough. It's a thorough Yankee elucidation altogether. They've planned it—those two contumacious Yankee swindlers—your 'heow d'ye dews,' you know; and a pretty how d'ye do they've made of it certainly."

"Well, but don't you think you could catch them?" said Mr. Plumley.

"Catch them!" replied Mr. Kwack. "What, catch a Yankee! Bless your innocent soul, you might just as well try to run-down the smoke of a locomotive. There's nothing but smart tricks and smoke in a Yankee, you know. An ordinary, sound, substantial, corporeal being stands no chance with them. No, they're *gone*, and so are we into contumacious ruin."

"Well, Kwack," said Mr. Dale, "this is evidently a final disaster. I think after this it will be advisable that we should all endeavour to find some other mode of obtaining a livelihood. For my part I am mortally tired of the life

altogether. I have pretty well made-up my mind to remain in Canada; and really it must go very hard with us if we can't do as well, or even better, than we have done hitherto in this turbulent sort of existence. What do you think, Albosh?"

"There can be no doubt," replied Mr. Albosh, "that there is plenty of room for improvement upon what we have done. The fact is, I have just made a little discovery, and if you will allow me I will just offer it as a suggestion."

"Yes, well?" said Mr. Dale.

"Well, you know, I strolled up as far as the Chaudière Falls yesterday morning," continued Mr. Albosh, "and it just occurred to me that, of course, there was a water-power there sufficient to drive the mills of the whole world, while very little of it is applied to any really profitable purpose—and that which is, is decidedly not applied judiciously. Very well; it occurred to me that if we could get just the smallest nook of land in any available corner about those falls, and we were then to run-up a mill—a flour, paint, or cotton mill, or anything of that sort—why, there we should be—a sort of a little fortune right off; and as to the cost, why I should say that wouldn't be much—in fact, I should think a mere bagatelle."

It is needless to say, that however desirable the adoption of this suggestion might have been, a very small amount of reflection sufficed to reveal to them all the propriety—as indeed was usually the case with suggestions from that quarter—of allowing it to stand-over for a "week or two" until a better insight could be got into the ways and means—the raising of the "bagatelle" by which it was to be carried into effect. A long discussion ensued, in the course of which both Simon and Philip offered a few somewhat more practicable suggestions; and which terminated in a suggestion from Mr. Plumley to the effect, that, while they were looking about them and deciding on the best course to be adopted, they should all three pay a visit to the Plumley estate, and there consider themselves at home for any reasonable time denoted upon the calendar: and as this suggestion was well seconded, and supported by the whole of the Plumley family, it was ultimately, and after some considerable deliberation on the part of the three friends, adopted and carried straightway into effect; and by virtue thereof, at about five o'clock on the afternoon of the very same day, the whole party were found seated round the tea-table, in a general glow of social happiness, in the front parlor of the Plumley cottage on the borders of the wood; whereupon on looking round upon the peace and plenty by which he suddenly found himself surrounded on all sides, Mr. Kwack felt constrained to offer a remark, which he did to the following effect:

"Why, Plumley," said Mr. Kwack, "I was certainly prepared for an elucidation, but this flagellates the entire complement of one's categorical perspicacity! Why how, in the name of the seven contumacious wonders, did you ever homogenorize this?"

"Well it's soon told," replied Mr. Plumley, who was glowing at that moment with all the generous pride of a thorough-going paterfamilias. "When you left, if you remember, I was in a pretty comfortable berth—that is, it was pretty good pay, the work was hard of course, that's what we might expect—on the wharf. Well I kept steady on—and we was always able to save a something—for up'ards of six months, when, as fortin would go for to have it, what should I fall in with but a regular first-rate place of work in my own trade; and, perhaps you'd hardly believe it, but there I kept, and I don't know, Lizy, as I ever lost a single day for the whole four years, did I girl? No, I don't think I did. Very well; by that time we had managed to save-up just a hundred pounds; and as I had paid some attention to farming in the mean time, I followed the advice of Mr. McCameron who has always been the kindest of friends to every one of us, and got a 'grant,' and set to work in real earnest: and what with the kindness of Mr. McCameron's brother and one thing and another, we've been regular prosperous ever since; and now I've got up'ards of three hund'ed acres of land—and capital land it is too—which we've best part cleared—and there it is, it's just worth now, in consequence of the great increase of the settlers all round and the village, five times what it was three years ago. So that's just how it is. And now we are thinking of leaving here to go up West into Simon's county. There seems to be a splendid farm there that we can have; and Simon thinks, as we shall be nearer a market for the produce, we shall do better there than we have here even—and I fully expect as we shall. So that's the whole history of it—it's a pretty plain one, aint it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Kwack, "it is pretty plain to me—that you have hit the right nail about the physiognomy, while we've been pertinaciously shooting at the moon."

"You see, mine is a rather different pursuit from yours," said Mr. Plumley.

"Well, slightly," returned Mr. Kwack, "for

yours appears to have been the pursuit of the unsophisticated substance, while we've been running over the whole habitable globe after a phantomagorial shadow."

"Well, there's Mr. Worzel," said Mr. Plumley, "he's done just the same."

"Oh Worzel," replied Mr. Kwack, "Worzel's a miracle. He's been giving us an abridgment of his history as we came along. There is something strictly flagellating about it. I can't make it out."

"Oi'm rather orf orpinion tha-at it a good deal cormes of trying oonly one thing and keepin' to it," said Mr. Worzel, who had taken up his seat beside his future personal moiety, and to whom he looked for a gracious confirmation of this opinion, and from whom he straightway obtained the most gracious of maidenly smiles for his assurance of her perfect concurrence in the principle of adhering to but one solitary object at a time.

"There's something in that, friends, you may be sure," said Simon.

"Yes, a good deal," returned Mr. Kwack, "a sort of incontrovertible axiom. But the nonplusser is to put it into practice. We've been trying it, you know, for the last seven years. But no sooner have we been pertinaciously set-up by one chance, than we've been contumaciously knocked-down by another. You had a fair specimen of it this morning. I'd have undertaken to have gone down an Indian Chief to my grave; but when the immutable fates cry 'stop,' in a unmistakable category like that, who in the name of the seven wonders of the universe is to go ahead? A child knows the axiom, you know. We've all heard about the rolling stone. But it just appears to me that while one half the world are born with something like a solid foundation to rest upon, the others are set rolling from the top of a contumacious mountain as soon as they look out upon its inscrutable old crust, and of course down they come head over heels—neck or nothing, until they go plump into the three feet of earth that's ready-open to receive them at the bottom. And then the world pertinaciously wonders why they didn't stick to one thing. It appears to me an inscrutable imbicility in the fundamental principles of perspicacious elucidations."

Simon found so much real and profitable pleasure in the society of his newly-found acquaintance, Mr. Dale, that (this at all events was the ostensible reason, and no doubt it had its share of influence) he obtained an extension of his leave of absence for several days beyond the stipulated period, which expired on the day after his return from the trip to Ottawa. The strange passion into which the reappearance of Alice had so hopelessly plunged him, was however only increased and deepened the longer he remained in her society; and in this particular —as every pleasure has its pain—he was subjected to some little annoyance from the addition to their society of Mr. Dale. For when they went out to walk—which, the weather being fine, they did frequently—his conscience, his honor, his delicacy, and every other sense of propriety compelling him to give his arm to Lizy, he was forced to abandon Alice to his friend; and very often did he cause more distress and pain to the sensitive mind of the trembling girl who hung now almost timidly on his arm, by the agitation and silence and confusion which he manifested on these occasions, than would probably have been the case had he unhesitatingly transferred her to the arm of his friend and allowed Alice to occupy her place by his side.

It was of course very natural for Simon, who must have been so forcibly impressed with the constitutional weakness of the human mind on such subjects, to be something apprehensive of the result of the uninterrupted contact of two such minds as he was compelled to leave together on these occasions; and more especially was he apprehensive of his new friend, whose mind, being decidedly of a literary turn, he naturally conceived—like all literary-turned minds—would be peculiarly sensitive and susceptible on all feminine topics; and in this he found a new addition to his perplexity, and a new incentive to the development of the strange anomaly that had taken possession of him.

"Seek," said Mr. Dale a day or two after his arrival at the cottage, "I am a little bit puzzled on a certain interesting little matter. It strikes me if I had the good fortune (or perhaps in one sense it might have been a misfortune) to have been the brother of either of our little angels here, I should have felt it a sort of duty due to all parties to have put the usual question to you on the point of *intentions*. Might I ask you, my fine fellow, if Alice ——"

"Dale," said Simon interrupting him and laying his hand emphatically on his arm, "on that point you will please to excuse me. But while we are on it, I will just take the liberty of offering you one word of advice: Don't allow yourself to get entangled in that quarter. There is an insurmountable obstacle—nothing can

possibly remove it. I am sincere, I assure you."

"Thank you; you are very kind," replied Mr. Dale.

"And no less true," returned Simon. "But if you please, we will change the subject. Perhaps one day I may be in a position to give you a more satisfactory explanation; but for the present I give you my word as a friend, Dale, for the verity of what I say," he added in a lighter tone: and the subject was pursued no farther.

They were both for the future silent on the subject; but to Simon it was an ominous silence, through which he daily and hourly became the more and more involved in the tortuous labyrinth of indecision and perplexity in which he found himself entangled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHICH RETURNS TO McCAMERON.

We return to him again as we left him, in the dark depths of the forest, seated on the upturned trunk, and rapt in his own melancholy reflections on the strange fortuity that had pursued him for so many years. It was several hours before he stirred; and when he did so, he looked about him bewildered, and shook his head as if with the conviction of the utter hopelessness of endeavouring to extricate himself from the labyrinth by which he was surrounded. Whichever way he looked, he saw the same land-marks—the same broad white road—the same confusion and darkness: there was no choice of way in all that vast, untrodden wilderness—there was none to choose. After a time he rose, however, and having succeeded in partially reanimating his half-frozen limbs, he selected his course to the best of his recollection—which however was of but little service, for if he had started right he could not possibly have followed the same direction for a single mile—and waded-on through the snow as briskly as his benumbed limbs would carry him against its soft and irregular bed. He walked-on, hour after hour, and was still pushing forward when the light began to dawn. On noting the direction from which its rays began to break through the darkness, it occurred to him that he must have been going very nearly in a right angle with the course he wished to pursue, a supposition which was confirmed when the sun rose, and, by gaining an elevation which was surrounded by trees something smaller than the great bulk of the forest, he was enabled to form a correct estimate of its whereabouts. He now reshaped his course and pushed forward again; but as the hours passed one after another, so every hope of again recovering the solitary clearing in which he had left his best companion and guide, began to desert him; and noon, and evening, and night overtook him again, and still he was wandering in the midst of the same forest, the same changeless objects, the same white sea in which he started.

His little store of provisions having been left with his compass in the shanty, he had nothing to subsist-on but a few small biscuits that happened to be in his pocket. One of these he had eaten during the day, and, having allotted himself another for his evening's meal, he cast about him for a shelter for the night, which he found in the hollow of a tree; and here he passed the long weary hours in broken dreams and sad and sorrowful wanderings to his daughter and his home.

The next day and the next night were spent in the same way, and with the same results; and when he rose from his icy couch on the morning of the third day, what, with the combined effects of the exposure to the intense cold, the long fast, and the heavy toil of wading through the snow, he found himself almost unable to crawl from the cover, and it was with the greatest difficulty and only by dint of the most resolute determination that he was enabled to stagger forward at all in his uncertain way. But still he staggered on, defying his weakness and contending resolutely against the pain and hunger and fatigue of which he suffered, for hour after hour, and still no mark nor sign appeared to give him hope of escape from the danger and death that was spread about him. By the time the evening drew nigh again, his strength, his

fortitude, and every ray of hope had deserted him; and after stumbling indiscriminately through the snow for some time, he threw himself down upon its cold bed and gave himself up to all the anguish of despair. His nature was exhausted—his limbs were benumbed and disabled by the long exposure to the intense cold—his hope and his courage were gone, and he believed that at last he had stumbled to his grave. He raised himself to his knees, and clasped his hands fervently together in a last prayer for his child and the dear ones at home. His lips had ceased to move—his mind had become abstracted, and he had knelt there with his hands still clasped, and his eyes turned mournfully upward, motionless and dumb for a considerable time; when he was suddenly startled by the pressure of a human hand upon his shoulder, and, looking round, he beheld through his still vacant gaze, the outline of a tall, swarthy figure who was standing motionless by his side with his hand resting on the muzzel of his rifle, the butt-end of which was planted in the snow, and his eyes bent quietly down upon himself.

"Why, in God's name, who are you?" gasped McCameron, seizing the man by the hand and raising himself by his assistance to his feet, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered his senses to comprehend the reality.

"Me Ingin," replied the man. "Whar you go?"

McCameron felt the blood again darting through his veins, the stiffness seemed charmed out of his limbs by the very first sound of the man's voice, his weakness vanished at a bound, and, seizing the Indian by the hand, he exclaimed,

"Heaven be praised for this deliverance! I have lost my way, my good mon. I was completely exhausted—I should never have risen again. Heaven be praised!"

"Injin thought pale-face lose way," said the man: "often lose way. Injin no lose way. Follow you long time 'fore speak: all day. Thought you lose way."

"Are we far from any habitation, my good mon—any shelter?" said McCameron.

"Not far to Injin home," replied the Indian. "Long way to the pale-face. Take you to Injin home."

"Thonk you, thonk you," returned McCameron. "Many thonks—you have saved my life."

"Drive 'way cold," said the Indian producing a small stone bottle from the pocket of his blanket-coat, and offering it to McCameron without any further remark.

McCameron took the bottle and supped a small portion of its contents, which consisted of perhaps some of the worst of Canadian whiskey; but bad as it was, it had a wonderful effect upon his spirits and revived his exhausted energies amazingly.

"Well, now, my friend, I think I can accompany you," said McCameron, having rubbed and chafed his limbs to renew the circulation. "Stay, what are you doing, mon?"

The Indian had commenced to remove the snow-shoes which were on his feet, and he only replied,

"Injin's shoes better for pale-face," and, having removed them, handed them to McCameron in silence.

"Yes, but, my good mon," said McCameron, "I can get along very well as I am."

"Pale-face weak—Injin strong," replied the Indian.

And McCameron seeing that he had no idea of retaining them, took them, and, with the other's assistance, adjusted them to his own feet, much to the Indian's apparent satisfaction.

This being arranged, the Indian led the way, and McCameron trudged along after him with renewed hope and energy, and not regretting that he had availed himself of his guide's generosity in the matter of the shoes, which proved to him a wonderful assistance.

They had waded-on for several hours, McCameron being refreshed every now and then with a draught from the Indian's bottle; and it was close upon midnight when they emerged from the woods into a broad, open plain, at the upper end of which a faint light, and then another and another, became gradually and more distinctly visible as they advanced.

"Injin home," said the man, pointing with his hand towards the lights.

"Heaven be praised," said McCameron. "I am almost exhausted. You have saved my life, mon."

Another hour brought them to the village, which consisted of an irregular range of low, snow-clad huts, from which, here and there, a faint glimmer of a light became visible. But there were no other signs of life to be seen anywhere about; everything was silent and still; and they passed-on to the upper end of the rude collection without seeing a soul, or hearing a sound of any kind.

Here the man stopped before the door of one of the largest huts of the collection, and, motioning McCameron to follow him, removed the

rude fastening, and, opening it very carefully, entered, closing it again with the same care the moment McCameron was by his side.

He was a savage; his friends were doubtless asleep, and therefore he entered noiselessly. Had he been a proper civilized Christian, he would have banged and slammed the door about in a civilized manner, until he had succeeded in knocking at least the next three hours' repose out of the entire village. Where are the Missionaries?

McCameron now found himself in a spacious apartment, in which there was scarcely anything in the shape of furniture; what there was being of the rudest description, and arranged with no pretensions to order. There was a fire still burning near the centre of the floor, and by the light it afforded he was enabled to distinguish the outlines of several rude couches arranged along the upper end of the apartment, on each of which an object lay coiled-up in a coarse blanket, or with a rough bear-skin thrown loosely over it.

His guide now placed a stool near the fire and motioned him to be seated, and then, moving noiselessly to the further end of the room, disappeared behind a large blanket which was hung-up in one corner to conceal an aperture in the wall. He had not been absent many minutes when he returned, accompanied by a second figure enveloped in a loose blanket, who followed him slowly to where McCameron was seated at the fire.

McCameron rose as he approached, conceiving it might be the chief, and the other stood eyeing him in silence for several seconds, and then, putting out his hand for his guest to shake, he said,

"Englishman welcome. Injin make him welcome. Chief glad to see Englishman. Chief give up sleep to stranger. Long no eat—walk long—very much tired—stranger want sleep—Chief give up sleep to stranger."

As he said this, he pointed to the aperture by which he had just entered the apartment, and motioned his guest to follow him, as he led the way into the small room into which it conducted. McCameron shook him warmly by the hand, and, thanking him over and over again, most gratefully accepted his hospitality.

As he entered, be observed a closely enveloped figure glide from the room and hurry towards the door of the principle apartment; and as it occurred to him that this was his generous host's squaw, whom he had deprived of her rest as well as himself, he was about to offer some apology, but, on looking into the other's countenance, he observed that he appeared so totally unconscious of the figure's having passed him, that he thought his apology might be misplaced.

The chief pointed to the rude but ample couch which occupied the principal portion of the apartment, and, having removed several of the skins that hung against the walls and placed them on the ground for his guest to tread upon, he again held out his hand, which McCameron took with the utmost sincerity, and then silently withdrew.

A few minutes after, and just as McCameron had composed himself on the rude, but to him most welcome bed, he observed the blanket concealing the opening moved gently on one side, and the head of the noble savage who had saved his life, thrust noiselessly into the apartment. When he perceived that its occupant was not yet asleep, he came in, and, silently placing a small earthenware pan, containing some hot, steaming mixture, down by the bedside, he pointed to it with his hand and again noiselessly withdrew.

McCameron tasted it, and, as both its appearance and taste resembled very much the "gruel" of civilization, rather strongly flavored with the whiskey whose quality he had already tested, he proceeded to put it to his proper use without the slightest hesitation; and considering the long time he had been without calling upon his digestive organs to exert themselves for the general good, he was agreeably surprised to find that the process was attended with anything but painful sensations.

He had just replaced the empty dish upon the ground, and was about to compose himself for sleep, when his attention was attracted to a scuffling noise in the outer apartment, and, on removing the blanket-partition a little on one side, he perceived that the sleepers had all quitted their beds and were holding a consultation in low, hurried whispers, at the further end of the room, with the Chief and three others, who appeared to have just arrived from a journey, their snow-shoes being still on their feet.

The consultation lasted but a few seconds, and then they all quitted the dwelling one after another as noiselessly as mice, and he heard no more of them for perhaps fifteen minutes, when the door was again opened softly, and several of them reappeared supporting a litter between them, on which a human being appeared to be

conveyed, although a large coarse blanket, which was spread completely over the whole object, concealed it effectually from view.

They were followed by several women, each carrying bundles in their arms, and who proceeded at once to the beds at the upper end of the room and commenced busying themselves about them, while the men, having deposited their burden on one of them, litter and all, at once quitted the hut and left the women alone with their charge.

McCameron could observe that they were fixing a screen of blankets, of which they appeared to possess a plentiful supply, around one of the beds, and that the object, whoever it was, was quickly removed from off the litter and placed upon the bed within the screen; after which he was only able to catch a whisper now and then from among the women, the purport of which he was of course unable to divine.

A variety of conjectures now crowded into his mind in a variety of strange shapes, and kept his brain in a continual whirl. The grateful sleep that his exhausted nature so much complained for had entirely fled him; and there he lay, rambling and rolling about, both in body and mind—his daughter, his home, the unhappy maniac, and his daughter again; and then a moment of unconsciousness, and a strange confusion of storms and trees and phantom giants; a ghastly corpse, a flying demon; ships and seas, and cities and forests advancing, retiring and rolling, and tossing and dissolving together; and all covered with a great white pall, and his daughter wading, and flying and struggling through it all; and then a great calm, and his daughter is borne towards him in the arms of a great red giant; she comes nearer and nearer, he puts out his arms, he starts, she has vanished, and he clasps his hands to his burning head and sighs, and turns upon his pillow, and murmurs "God bless her and preserve her," and the phantoms crowd about him again.

Everything remained quiet in the adjoining apartment, and, after two or three hours of restless wandering, he succeeded in falling off into a little more regular sleep, which lasted with but little interruption until the morning had far advanced; when he woke with a start from a short dream, in which his daughter had been restored to him by an Indian, and on looking round he perceived that the Chief, whose bed he was occupying, was standing in the room with his arms folded across his breast, and his keen, dark eye directed thoughtfully towards his own.

"Good morning, Chief," said McCameron, putting out his hand.

"Chief wish stranger good morn," said the Chief. "How pale-face stranger sleep in Injin bed?"

"Thonk you, thonk you," said McCameron, "no bed was ever so good or so welcome to me before, Chief."

"Glad Englishman like Injin bed," said the Chief. "You hear noise in thar?" he added, after a thoughtful pause, pointing to the adjoining apartment.

"None to disturb me, Chief," replied McCameron, who, although anxious to know something of the object of the proceedings which had excited so many strange conjectures in his mind over night, was yet reluctant to appear unnecessarily or obtrusively curious.

"Know who in thar?" added the Chief.

"No, certainly not," said McCameron, whose mind began to crowd with new conjectures.

"English squaw in there," continued the other.

"What," cried McCameron, starting to a sitting posture. "Do you really tell me, Chief, that it is an English lady?"

"Chief speak truth," returned the Indian. "English squaw in thar. You lose white squaw?"

"Yes, yes, mon," cried McCameron, springing from the bed and commencing hurriedly to dress. "I must see her, I must see her, Chief. Is she ill?"

"Been much ill," replied the chief. "Injin find her in woods, no speak, no move—much ill."

"Will she recover, will she recover, Chief?" said McCameron, grasping the generous Indian earnestly by the hand.

"Injin squaw soon make well," replied the Chief. "Stranger much like squaw?" he added interrogatively.

McCameron followed the chief into the adjoining apartment as soon as the hurried arrangements of his dress were completed. He stood by the bed-side of the fair invalid as she lay with her pale face turned upward, and her unconscious eyes looking vacantly into his own. He stood motionless and dumb, with his hands clasped firmly together and his eyes fixed immovably on that pallid cheek; his weak frame trembled, and the tears gushed to his eyes, and he fell-down by the bed-side and wept with joy, and prayed with many thanks that he had *found his child.* And he left her not again. By night

and day did he watch by her bed-side, until a smile had grown upon her cheek, and her conscious eyes were turned lovingly towards him, and she put her arms about his neck and said,

"Father, you are very good, and so is Heaven!"

It was several days before Matilda was sufficiently recovered to move about; and as it was three days' journey to their own home, and every kindness and attention that was possible was bestowed upon them by the noble-hearted Indians, McCameron thought it expedient to remain until she was completely restored to health. She recovered slowly but surely, and her conciousness was very soon restored; and the happiness and joy of both parent and child was great, as was the Providence that had brought them together.

McCameron had made many enquiries of the chief and his people about the poor maniac, Blackbourn, whom he described to them so that they might know him; but it appeared that none of them had seen him, until the day before his departure, when the chief came to him and informed him that one of his people, who had just come in, had seen him in the woods.

The man was led in, but McCameron could only learn that he had seen him many miles to the north, and that he was still roving the woods in a wild state, which the man described by throwing his arms wildly in the air and rolling about his eyes and distorting his body into all kinds of unnatural postures, exclaiming at the same time,

"Much mad, much great mad, fraid of Injin, no come near, very much mad!"

With many thanks and many good wishes, which came with sincerity from their hearts, they took their leave of their Indian friends on the morrow, and commenced their journey. They were accompanied by three of the tribe who were well acquainted with the route; and as they were supplied with every necessary to make the journey light and for counteracting the injurious effects of the cold, they arrived at their destination on the third day, in good health and spirits, and without having experienced any casuality or inconvenience that would be worthy of notice.

And Matilda is again locked in the arms that have borne her so often and so fondly; her sister is kneeling and weeping the tears of joy by her side; McCameron and his brother stand apart with their hands clasped together and their eyes bent affectionately and fervently on the dear object of so many years of their sorrow and distress; and the hearts of all beat in unison together,—and the father and the husband stretches forth his hand, and his eyes are turned upward, and his lips move in silence, and the soul of each is uplifted with the same silent thanksgiving,

"Oh, God, we thank thee---she is found!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

SIMON'S DOUBLE LOVE.

The Plumleys have long left their home near the forest, and established themselves for the remainder of their days, wind and weather permitting, on a perfect gem of a farm, and in a very love of a house, (as Mrs. Plumley calls them,) about a mile distant from the flourishing little town in the West, in which Simon is still hard at work carving out a fortune and a name, and existing in a perpetual whirlwind of law and love and politics.

But although Fortune has not only smiled upon them, but has turned-to and laughed outright and continued showering-down her sublimary blessings about them, until one would have thought, in her merriment, she must have forgotten herself and unconsciously wandered from her beaten track of frugality and reserve ---which would certainly have been highly excusable, considering the exemplary manner in which she usually husbands her resources; ---although they are surrounded by friends and good wishes and esteem, and seem to be without such a thing as an enemy in the world (we say *seem*, because we don't believe in the fact); although they are naturally the most contented and least exacting of mortals, and

are frequently heard to declare that in their present abundance they positively have more than the heart (and we all know what the heart is) could reasonably desire;—yet they are not happy.

No; and moreover they are daily and hourly heard to propound the startling proposition to the whole world, and to challenge the whole world to reply to it,

"How can they be happy?"

And strange to say, the whole world straightway shake their heads sympathetically and re-echo the proposition—how can they?

The fact is, the dear darling of their hearts —the one dear object for which they have lived and would willingly have died, their own good, kind, loving, tender-hearted Lizy, is *un*happy. And although they never blame him, although *she* never blames him, although they all love him and say what a blessing he is to them all, it is their own son, their own clever, darling boy who is the cause.

Although for two long years' of suffering and perplexity Lizy had kept her own counsels, and had never made known, by word or sign, beyond the blanched cheek and fading smile that spoke to all, the weeping and sadness and melancholy of her own heart, it was impossible for an affectionate mother, and above all for Mrs. Plumley, not to discover the truth, or to fail to be distressed and alarmed for the consequences.

Lizy's affection for her friend Alice, who was still with them, had never ceased nor diminished for a single moment; and it was entirely through her interposition that Alice had not complied with the entreaties of Matilda and the McCamerons generally, to make her home with them. She always appeared more cheerful and happy when in her company, and invariably spoke of her as a dear and valued friend; while the subject that so troubled her mind and distressed her heart, and with which her friend was so intimately connected, she carefully and strictly avoided on all occasions.

But the silent impression that it was gradually making on her health and spirits became day by day more distinctly marked; and although she disguised it with all the goodness and patience and tenderness with which her nature overflowed, it excited in her friends, whose eyes were never removed from her, the utmost apprehension and alarm, and it had now become the one subject perpetually on their lips and in their hearts.

"Oh George, dear," said Mrs. Plumley one chilly morning about the middle of September, as Lizy and her friend quitted the breakfast table, and she and her husband were left in the room alone, "did you notice the poor dear child, how pale and ill she is looking? And then she eats nothing. And then, do you know, I have observed lately that she has taken to sit by herself alone for hours together; and then when you speak to her she looks-up so vacant and seems so strange, as if, poor dear child, she didn't understand what you said. Oh, I'm sure she is breaking her heart, George dear! Oh, whatever can we do?"

"I'm b'wildered, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley, who sat shaking his head mechanically to and fro and looking distressedly at his wife; "I'm b'wildered, girl. Poor thing, poor thing. I don't think Simon can have the least idea of it, Lizy; he can't, you know, 'cause where's a kinder heart than he's got? It can't be—he don't know of it, Lizy girl."

"I think the poor boy's perplexed, George dear," said Mrs Plumley. "But he has been very strange, you know, since Alice—but then poor girl, she can't help it, she's as good and loving a little creature as ever breathed. But I'm sure the poor boy's perplexed."

"Yes," said Mr. Plumley, "I'm afraid, Lizy, Simon's been a good deal worried in his business lately. There's this election, you know, and then the partnership, and one thing and another, that it really aint to be wondered at if he is a little b'wildered, and p'rhaps that may account for it. But then to think that the dear child should take it so to heart!"

"Yes, George dear, but there's something more than that," said Mrs. Plumley, who looked at the matter of course with woman's eyes, which in such cases are always an infallible medium. "You know it's been going-on a long time. But the poor child's so good and patient, and I'm sure I have always hoped it would wear away."

"Well, but," said Mr. Plumley with that honest simplicity that seemed a part of his very existence, "you can't think, Lizy girl, that Simon would go for to do anything that wasn't right in a thing of that sort. Besides, it appears to me that conduct like what you seem to refer-to wouldn't be manly. I don't see it's possible for a young man like Simon to do a thing of that sort."

"Well, I don't know," said Mrs. Plumley thoughtfully. "He wouldn't if he could help it. He is a great deal too good, I know, to do that; but then we don't know—but, oh dear

who's this coming-in at the gate? Why, bless me, it's Mr. Sorftish! Oh, George dear, I've just got a thought! Suppose we was to speak to Mr. Sorftish? He and Simon are very great friends, and perhaps he might know something. I don't think it would be wrong, it is really coming so serious, George dear."

"Well, I don't know," replied Mr. Plumley; "it's rather a delicate matter, and I shouldn't like to do anything that would lead Simon to think we was a acting underhand in any way.

"Oh no," said Mrs. Plumley. "I'm sure we needn't do that. But think of the poor child, how ill she's getting. Shall I speak to him, George dear?"

"Well, I don't know; I think it's my place, if any one does," returned Mr. Plumley. "I'm a good deal b'wildered, Lizy; but I think, perhaps I'll just say a word, that won't be no harm on either side. Yes, I think I will. Here he comes. Good morning, Mr. Sorftish."

"Good morning, good morning," cried Philip, dashing into the room and seizing a hand of each and shaking them lustily like a thorough young Canadian. "How d'ye do, how d'ye do, how are the girls?"

"O pretty well, pretty well," said Mr. Plumley.

"Ay, pretty and well; that's as it should be," returned Philip. "Well, I thought I ought to run-up and see you. I have been in Toronto for the last day or two, on rather agreeable business—perhaps you can make a rough guess?"

"Making preparations of course," said Mrs. Plumley.

"*Of* course," continued Philip; "you have hit it exactly. Well, I have taken the store, in one of the best thoroughfares,—in fact, *the* best —King street; and not by any means one of the smallest—in fact, rather one of the largest; and so in about a month's time you may expect to see your humble servant started on his own account, with his old and respected governor for one partner and the loveliest little angel under heaven for another."

"I'm sure we're very glad to hear it," returned both together.

"Of course you are, I knew that," returned Philip; "that's why I came to tell you, because I knew that these were the sort of things that you take a delight in. And so the girls are quite well, are they?"

"Why, yes, pretty well—that is to say, middling," said Mr. Plumley, who now began to shift-about on his seat rather uneasily and to cast certain compound glances at his wife indicative of extreme embarrassment. "The fact is, Mr. Sorftish—I was thinking of speaking to you—that is—there's poor Lizy ——"

"Why, my friends, I hope there's nothing amiss," said Philip, perceiving that the other was confused and looked distressed.

"Well, not anything—that is to say, I hope nothing very serious; but I was thinking of asking your advice—or rather if you could give us any—any—I'm sure I don't know whether I ought—but then the poor dear child, she's growing I may say, in fact, we're, we're—there, it's no use, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley turning and looking steadfastly at the fire to conceal the tears that started to his eyes, "I can't do it, that's what I can't. Lizy girl, just tell Mr. Sorftish what it is."

"Excuse me," said Philip, "I think I know to what you allude. And I don't know that I should be breaking confidence in any way with Simon in referring to it—especially as you have introduced the subject. But still I am very much at a loss what to say to you. There can be no doubt that latterly Simon has been a good deal perplexed, and I dare say he has perplexed the poor girls—bless them. He has had a great deal in his business lately to engross and worry him too."

"There, Lizy, there," said Mr. Plumley, rubbing desperately at his eyes; "I told you what it was. It's business, that's what it is."

"Well, some of us, you know," said Philip, "are very peculiarly constituted with respect to certain subjects. But still, I scarcely need tell you that Simon—that he, in fact, that it is my conviction that he loves Lizy better than any one else in the world."

"There, Lizy, there," said Mr. Plumley; "I was sure of it."

"But still," continued Philip, who began to feel the subject sit somewhat uneasily, "there has been a little of that strange, that is to say —well, I am inclined to think it is all nothing. I think the very safest remedy is being applied. Somehow, we are very strange beings, Mrs. Plumley, very strange," said Philip, endeavouring to convey through philosophy and gesture what he found awkward and embarrassing in the form of plain English. "I suppose you frequently see Mr. Dale, now he is up this way, Mrs. Plumley?" he added after a pause.

"Oh yes; he very often comes-in to spend the evening, and almost always on a Sunday," replied Mrs. Plumley.

"Yes, well, I feel assured that everything is

in the right way towards a proper termination. I should just be perfectly easy in mind, if I were you, until this election is over; and if I might be allowed to offer the suggestion, Mrs. Plumley, I should just, you know, cheer her up with the—with, with the assurance that—that, of course—you understand, you know—just so, precisely."

"Yes, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley, "you hear what Mr. Sorftish says. We must cheer the dear child up, Lizy, that's what we must do. He's worried with business, that's what *he* is, Lizy."

"Have you seen Simon lately, Mr. Sorftish?" asked Mr. Plumley.

"Oh, yes," replied Philip, "saw him yesterday, and Mr. Dale likewise. He is very much engaged. I promised to see him again this morning; and so I think you must please to excuse me. I may possibly look back again in the evening. But as I was saying—oh, here come the girls."

The entrance of the girls at this moment put a final stop to the subject in hand, to Philip's infinite satisfaction, for he felt all along that he was treading on very delicate ground, and would have been only the more pleased had the same interruption occurred at the very outset. He was very much startled at the change in Lizy's countenance since he had last seen her; which, added to the effects of the preceding dialogue, combined to render him extremely uneasy, and effectually dissipated his wonted gallantry and mirthfulness; and he therefore excused himself as quickly as possible, and proceeded to the town in which his friend Simon was expecting his appearance.

Simon's business chambers were situate in a side-street on the first floor of a large wood building which was devoted generally to professional purposes, and of course displayed the usual cold, stiff, gloomy, unwashed, mildewed, professional appearance, and looked extremely like a large pile of defunct bank-notes and superannuated briefs put together with red tape and sealing-wax, and thrown into Chancery. On a large square board fixed-up beside the door and carved-up into numberless subdivisions for the purpose,—and which looked remarkably like deed-boxes out of work,—were inscribed the names of all the presiding genii of the place; and in one of them, where but a short time before there had shone but one solitary name, there were now two, and the latter one was Seek: a change which Philip seemed to regard with considerable pleasure and satisfaction. Yes, Simon was no longer Mr. Seek the articled clerk, but, to all intents and purposes, Simon Seek, Esquire, of the firm of Breefham & Seek, barristers and attorneys at law, etc., etc.; and as the senior partner in the firm of Breefham & Seek was more so ostensibly than in reality, since he had retired to the bosom of his family, and, finding it a very soft, quiet, congenial bosom indeed, had become very reluctant to desert it, as all men finding such a bosom to recline upon should be, Simon was of course rapidly growing into a man of importance, esteem, envy, trust, mistrust, love, hate, commendation, and slander, according to the immutable law.

As Philip moved towards the office, the door opened, and a young man came hurriedly out, and closed it again in a somewhat unceremonious manner.

"Ah, Dale!" cried Philip, catching him by the hand as he was in the act of rushing down stairs. "Why, man, you are looking positively wild. What's amiss?"

Mr. Dale (who certainly did not look the picture of either happiness or composure, except as we have seen it sometimes depicted on a public-house sign, with its hairs all erect, and its eyes rolling about the face in direct defiance of all the laws of locality and sockets) shrugged-up his shoulders and pointed to the office-door with sundry voluminous gesticulations as if to say, "I don't wish to frighten you, but there's an earthquake inside."

"Exploded," he said at length in a half-whisper. "I couldn't have believed it."

"What, Seek do you mean?" said Philip. "Not about ——"

"Yes," returned the other. "*He* introduced the subject: of course I could see with what object; and so I thought it would be the most honorable and straightforward way just to make a clean breast of it and let him know what the state of my mind on the subject really is. That was bad enough; but when I hinted at the possibility of a mutual understanding existing on the subject already,—oh, good Heavens! I began to think that nothing short of a pair of Colt's, breast to breast, would ever adjust it. As it is, as far as his interest goes—so he says —I have got my discharge; and so if you should happen to know of any one in want of an active young man, capable of—etc., etc., why I shall be obliged, you know."

"Nonsense," said Philip. "Upon my word, you astonish me. But he would never do that. That's just the heat of the moment with him.

He has too much honor about him to do a thing of that sort."

"Yes, yes, so I think," returned Mr. Dale. "But that is just how the matter stands now."

"Well, I am just going-in to see him," said Philip. "Perhaps I shall see you by and by. But I shouldn't think of anything of that sort for a moment."

Philip found Simon Seek, Esquire, pacing up and down the floor of his office in a state of supreme agitation.

"I just met Dale going down stairs," said Philip after a few preliminary remarks, to which Simon appeared tolerably oblivious.

"Confound him," said Mr. Seek. "I have done with him."

"Eh?" said Philip, who was slightly startled by the young barrister's professional-like manner of disposing of the case.

"I have done with him; he is discharged," added Simon, still more emphatically than before.

"Why, if you are really in earnest,—and there is certainly a good deal of the matter-of-fact about you,—you astonish me," said Philip. "It must be some very serious offence; may I ask what?"

"Yes," returned Simon, who still continued pacing the floor, with a face extremely flushed and agitated; "he has broken faith with me in a manner I don't intend to overlook. Now, what *do you think* he had the assurance to tell me?" he added, stopping short and fixing a look of indignant inquiry (produced as usual) on Philip.

"Couldn't form half of a shadow," said Philip.

"Why, that he considered himself as good as engaged to Alice, and that he had every reason to believe that *she* recognized it. Now what do you think of that?"

"Well, since you ask me," returned Philip, "I will tell you, Sim. I think you ought to take him heartily by the hand, and consider him the best friend you had got."

Simon threw himself in a chair and proceeded to stare incredulously at his friend for the space of three minutes and a half, during which Philip emphatically reiterated that opinion three distinct times.

"Oh, do you?" he said at length. "Well, now, I am of so very different an opinion that he will have to look-out for other employment. I respected Dale as much as I could respect any one; and I have respected him the more since he has been engaged on the paper, for the ability and energy he has displayed in the conducting of it; but if it were to cost me my whole interest in the concern, I wouldn't retain a man that could be guilty of such a flagrant breach of faith. He is as good as discharged."

"I have too much confidence in you, Sim, to believe anything of the sort, although you say it yourself," replied Philip. "I suppose you are prepared to make a slight allowance for the peculiar difficulty of governing our passions in little matters of this sort?"

Simon sidled round in his chair and then sidled back again without offering any reply.

"Well, now, Sim, the fact is," continued Philip, drawing a chair opposite his friend and seating himself with a stern demeanour, "I am going to read you a lecture."

"Thank you—I'm obliged to you," returned Simon, certainly with but little appearance of gratitude in his countenance; "but I think with a little effort I might manage to get along independently of any such obligation."

"No doubt, my dear fellow," continued Philip; "but if you will excuse me, I am going to do it. Now, first of all, don't you think it is time, both for yourself and your dear friends—for I am sure they are all most dear to you—at home, that you should begin to give this matter some serious consideration?"

"Consideration!" cried Simon, starting to his feet and pacing hurriedly too and fro again. "Haven't I been distracting my mind night and day, and every moment of my existence, for the last two years, about it? What do you call consideration, pray?"

"But have you really any idea of what you are doing?" urged Philip.

"Yes," replied Simon, with a sudden burst of remorse; "making an ass of myself—a consummate ass; I know that."

"Well, I won't say that," continued Philip; "but this I am sorry to say is the fact, that it is destroying the health and happiness of one of the best and dearest girls in the world; and that, I have reason to know, is becoming something more serious than you can well imagine."

Simon again seated himself, and sat looking at his friend for several minutes a picture of supreme wretchedness; and a crowd of conflicting emotions appeared to be wrestling together in his mind.

"And do you really think it is affecting her health, Phil?" he said at length in a subdued and anxious tone.

"I am confident of it; and to a very serious extent," replied Philip.

"What ought I to do—what *can* I do, Phil?" said Simon, with all the earnestness and seriousness of one who only required to *know* the remedy in order to put it into execution at any sacrifice.

"If you ask my advice seriously," replied Philip, "I would say, simply and precisely the opposite of what you have just done with respect to Dale in the first place, and ——"

"What," cried Simon, with a start that seemed to frighten away at a bound the noble resolution which was just on the point of forming in his mind, "allow him—" he paused again and engaged in another praiseworthy struggle with himself, or rather with the strange influence that appeared for the time to have made himself not himself, as he has already hinted; after which he added, showing that he himself was for the time victorious—"Well, after all, it is the only absolute remedy; and if she favors him, why—why I'll make an ass of myself no longer; so here goes for the first step."

This was the simple process of ringing the small hand-bell on the table, and which was certainly effected with a remarkable degree of resolution and stability of purpose. It was instantly followed by a conflict of stools and scuffling of feet in the adjoining office, and the almost magical appearance of about eighteen inches of the upper end of an elongated youth, in bottle-green, around the door-jamb, who, addressing the bell, replied respectfully,

"Yes, s'r."

"Pholio," said Mr. Seek.

"Yes, s'r," said Pholio.

"Just run across to the office, and ask Mr. Dale if he will be good enough to step over."

"Yes, s'r," and Pholio was not.

"There, I'll settle that matter, at all events," said Simon, who was evidently very fast becoming invincible.

"You may rest assured it will be the happiest thing you ever did," said Philip. "It wants a little resolute determination, my dear fellow,—that is all it wants. If you once set about it in a proper way, I believe it will vanish in less than no time. And really the affair has begun now to assume a serious aspect."

"I'll do it, I'll do it," said Simon, invincibly. "Cost what it will, I'll do it. Nothing can be worse than this perpetual distraction. Poor, dear girl! The fact is, I can't make it out, you know, Phil. There is a peculiarity of feeling about the matter that I can't understand. I am satisfied that Lizy is really and truly as dear to me as ever she was, or as she can possibly be; and yet there is a something that makes me look with a kind of horror on the bare possibility of losing the affections of the other. It appears to be a genuine Platonic affection—essentially Platonic, and I think it is the same on both sides; but unfortunately the definition has no virtue in it in the present state of society—the one is equally inadmissible as the other. Well, at all events there must be an end of it, one way or other. I will settle it all this very day, now I have set about it. You will be able to return home with me this evening, Phil?"

"Oh, yes; I think so. I partially promised them."

"That's well. Here comes Dale."

Mr. Dale entered with a sort of comical seriousness, which said plainly, "Of course I knew you were either jesting or deceiving yourself, so I am perfectly prepared to receive your apology."

"Dale," said Simon, "take a chair, old fellow. The fact is I have been making an ass of myself. I wish you to understand that what I said just now, every word of it, is recalled, entirely recalled. Do you understand me?"

"Very much better, certainly, than I did five minutes ago," replied Dale, passing a look of eternal friendship to Philip, "and very much more to my satisfaction, unquestionably. Then I suppose I may just as well complete the article, showing the advantages to the county, the country, and the state, that will accrue from the return of Simon Seek, Esq., to Parliament, for the county of ——"

"Oh confound the Parliament," said Simon. "Whatever you do, don't put it in too strong, Dale. Because if it should happen that I go in, I shall just falsify it all, and then away goes your prophetic reputation at once; and that is worth about half the circulation at any time. At any rate, you will have to support your own statement on your own account. But, however, that is not the subject. All I can say is, upon what we were talking, or rather brawling about this morning, you must exercise your own discretion."

"That is to say," interposed Philip, "that you have her *guardian's* full consent and approbation, and that it now only remains for you to obtain the assent and approbation of the young lady herself."

"Which, as I took the liberty (not without

some risk)," said Mr. Dale, "of intimating only a short time ago to that respected individual, I believe is progressing favorably."

A slight tinge was perceived to gather about the jealous features of the "guardian" as Mr. Dale delivered himself of this remark; but it was presently suppressed, and a smile of congratulation, which however was far from perfectly according to the usual standard, substituted in its stead.

It was rather late before Simon was able to tear himself away (to use a familiar phrase) from business that evening, and it was nearly eight o'clock before he arrived home, accompanied by Philip, and by a small regiment of resolutions which were to be forthwith put into execution for the purpose of sweeping, as with a besom of remorse, all the difficulties and perplexities from the course of his true love, opening-up a new track altogether, smooth and unruffled, with precisely space enough for two to walk abreast and no more, not even the most fairy-like form inserted edgeways.

He had admonished Philip to watch his proceedings, and just to observe the nature of his first step. Philip did so; and it appeared to him to have very much the appearance of a stumble. He observed that as he entered the room in which Lizy and Alice were seated together at the table over a Berlin-wool frame, and his eyes met their eyes, and they both smiled and laughed, and then greeted him together like a pair of the most affectionate of sisters, that a peculiar change overspread his countenance, that his resolution appeared straightway to be oozing-out either at the popular point or from some other locality, and that he seated himself apparently more bewildered, more irresolute, and more thoroughly wretched in mind than it had ever yet been the other's fortune to behold him.

A rubber was presently proposed by the girls; and having cut for partners, Alice fell to him as a matter of course. This only tended to embarrass him the more; for he couldn't move his head but there were those two bright, innocent (the more dangerous), angel-like orbs to look into, and all that calm and beautifully placid countenance perpetually before him. He looked on Lizy, with her pale features and forced smile and her silent love, and his conscience smote him and his heart sank within him; he turned to Alice and his heart leapt and the blood flushed to his cheek; and all the strange perplexity of the strange passion that had spread its influence so securely about him had again returned.

Lizy observed the wandering of his agitated eye, and perchance could read too the conflicting thoughts that were running through his mind; for she instinctively followed him through every movement and every emotion, although no one else knew it, or thought it, or could possibly have observed it, for she laughed and talked and appeared as cheerful as they; but none of them knew the pain and the suffering that lay beyond it, in the silent depths of her aching heart. But they each had their own thoughts to trouble them; and from starting pretty cheerfully, they sank-down into occasional common-place remarks; and from this the game gradually began to be played according to Hoyle, in profound silence, and doubtless they each and all felt grateful and relieved when it terminated.

"Philip," said Simon, when they were left alone, "you will think me perfectly insane, or something worse; but I can't do it. Good Heavens, what a whirlpool I am in! Now I have committed myself with Dale. Whatever can be done? It would be useless to attempt to explain to you my feelings. I am spell-bound. But come what will, I tell you, Philip, I am confident I can never suffer to see her married to any one else. I can see the chaos I am going to, but I can see no way out of it."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ELECTION.

Irrespective of all political considerations, of all subsequent influences, a general election is in itself an important social institution. It is a mighty ploughshare, ploughing-up the passions and prejudices of men and of parties—a great magician, all powerful for an hour, at whose command the social chaos is unveiled—by which the impenetrable darkness that envelopes the motley crowds of humanity as they jostle together in the social labyrinth, is dispersed for a little moment, and the slumbering deformities, the secret emotions, the fondly-cherished mysteries, the good and the evil of the moral, political, and religious character of individuals, of parties, of cities, and of nations is brought-out from its obscurity, divested of its garb of mystery, and laid bare to the vulgar criticism of the world.

That it should, as it were, revolutionize society for the time,—should call forth all the passions, the prejudices, the ignorance, and the wisdom from every fibre of its beings,—is but a natural consequence of the importance and magnitude of the institution, and the universal influence that its operations are destined to exert over all portions of the community. For it is the gathering-together of the individual atoms of that vast machine whose ultimate operations shall vibrate through every nerve of the social fabric, affecting every atom of its being, from the statesman who declaims in the senate-house, and whose voice may sway the destinies of empires, to the unconscious babe that nestles in its mother's arms in the forgotten obscurities of indigence and vice. As that machine shall operate for or against the encouragement of social industry, the good interests of commerce, the general welfare and prosperity of the nation, the common weal or woe, so shall that witless babe perchance become a good or a bad member of society, a denizen of honest labor or a worthless beggar in the streets, a husband and a father of a happy home or an inmate of a jail and an outcast from his fellows. As that great institution the materials of which are gathered together at an election, shall legislate for or against the proper enlightenment and intellectual culture of the masses,—shall promote or neglect the establishment of good and proper national institutions,—so perchance shall that now unconscious babe become an intelligent, a useful, a moral, and even a great and good man, or, on the other hand, a clown, a sot for the finger of the world to point at, an untutored savage, a ready tool for designing men to employ against the good interests of the state, ripe for rebellion, and regardless alike of the laws of God and of man.

Reasoning upon these principles, and jealous for the interests of the country generally and their own county in particular, a number of the leading inhabitants of the county of Phlare-up, amounting to ten souls in all, gathered themselves together and said,

"We are in want of a representative. The Sheriff has intimated that much; and as he ought to know what our wants are, we believe him, and it now becomes our duty to ask ourselves who that representative shall be. There is Stumps. He's a first-rate fellow in his way. Goes-in for good broad principles, looks to the general good, but won't budge an inch to oblige an elector, who of course is the first that should be looked to. And therefore as Stumps will vote for the Railway to A. for the *general* good, and we want the Railway to B. for our *own* good, why of course Stumps won't do—in short, Stumps is not the man. Then there's Doughy. Doughy's pretty soft, goes-in for the pay, and hasn't got a principle belonging to him. And therefore Doughy would be just the man for us, because we could just mould Doughy about to anything we pleased. But unfortunately Doughy can't speak. We might just as well send an automaton labelled 'yes' or 'no' on the various questions, and that would be equally as serviceable as Doughy; and therefore Doughy won't do. But then there's Seek. Seek's a young man, decidedly ambitious; and if we put in Seek, no doubt we can do with Seek just as we please; and Seek has the advantage of being a good speaker, a clever fellow, has an insinuating manner, and, above all, is the proprietor of the principal paper in the county: and therefore, without a shadow

of a doubt, Seek is the man: Hurrah for Seek!"

Such being their patriotic conclusions, the worthy electors threw themselves heart and soul into the cause; and in less than a week the usual "numerously-signed requisition," requesting that he would allow himself to be nominated, etc., was presented to Simon Seek, Esq., much to that gentleman's gratification and satisfaction. Whereupon Simon Seek, Esq., drew-up his address to the Independent Electors of the County of Phlareup, and therein propounded such principles that the whole company of ten souls, the original agitators, were so completely scared that they rushed straightway in a body to the office of Simon Seek, Esq., to demand an explanation; and having been favored with the same, became so thoroughly horrified at the independence and principle therein manifested, that they all forthwith deserted him to a man, and, in a fit of despair, rushed precipitately to the habitation of the flexible Doughy, and called upon him to come forward like a man and defend them from the impending calamity of having for their representative a man of independence and principle, and, above all, that had the ability to make use of them. Doughy was not the kind of man to hesitate in a matter of this sort. Doughy knew very well the value of six dollars a day and perquisites. And therefore Doughy came forward like a *man*, sure enough. And as the Address of Simon Seek, Esq., had found favor in the eyes of a goodly portion of the county, and friends and supporters came pouring-in from all sides, the whole county from one end to the other was forthwith placarded, in all the colors of the rainbow, calling upon all men of independence and principle to vote for Doughy on the one side, and Seek on the other; and a nine days' conflagration of towns and villages, and parties and individuals, was therein inaugurated.

Now, at this period of Canadian history, there were several great and important questions agitating the political worlds, or rather the political, civil, and religious world, as important questions usually do in Canada; and party feeling was running high,—in fact, so high that it was fast over-reaching itself. There was the Permanent Seat of Government question; the Representation by Population question; the Double-Majority question; the Re-Adjustment of the Tariff or Protection question; the Separate Schools' question; and the Hudson Bay question; together with an infinite variety of smaller questions on every questionable subject that political ingenuity and party interest (usually compound) could possibly suggest; all of which, like questions generally, were of course very much easier put than answered.

The Seat of Government question was a great question, in which all the great towns were of course vitally interested; because wherever the Government was located, experience had shown that property would straightway run-up to the very top of the ladder, and "assume a *value* if it had it not," which of course was a thing devoutly to be wished: notwithstanding that experience had also shown, that, being founded on nothing, the assumption was generally somewhat ephemeral; that, as the value was fabulous, so the realization of it was a fable; and that, before the hopeful adventurer had so much as regaled himself with the first scent of the visionary feast, the reaction had commenced, and down came the castle pell-mell from its aerial elevation,—the fable was run-out, and the moral was below it,—business paralyzed, resources crippled, confidence nowhere, employment a chimera, and a general stagnation the only one thing certain. Such being the boon to be obtained, it is scarcely to be wondered at that each of the candidates for the distinction should fight for it manfully,—and they fought for it manfully accordingly; and not being able to fight it out to a satisfactory solution among themselves, they ultimately hit upon the happy expedient of calling-in the aid of Her Most Gracious Majesty as arbiter, who, seeing that the question was purely a local one, would be sure to know all about it and give her decision accordingly. They therefore at once prepared their petition, humbly praying that Her Majesty would be graciously pleased to set aside the little barrier of the Atlantic, and any little difficulty that might arise in her mind from a want of knowledge and experience of the nature and requirements of the country,—such as any trifling doubt as to whether its inhabitants still resided in wigwams and followed the chase for a livelihood, or whether the St. Lawrence was most resembled by the Thames or the Lea, or if Ontario was anything to be compared to Windermere, or Superior was much superior to the Hampstead Ponds, or in fact any little trifle of that sort; and thereupon graciously settle the dispute as might seem unto her best for the interest and prosperity of the country generally, by settling-down the Government in a seat in which it

might henceforward recline with the greatest amount of security and ease. To which humble petition Her Majesty most graciously replied, and presented them with a seat, that certainly, to all intents and purposes, was an easy-chair—a quiet, retired little seat, in which one would have thought the Government might have reclined for the rest of its days in happy unconsciousness of the great Babel in which its youth had been jostled, jogging along quietly and cosily, secure from intrusion, and at peace with the whole world. But the humble petitioners had no sooner received that gracious decision, than they straightway found-out their mistake, and said: "No; we are humbly obliged to your Majesty for your Majesty's prompt and gracious consideration of our humble petition; but we beg humbly to submit, that your Majesty evidently knows no more about the subject than we do ourselves; and therefore, with your Majesty's gracious permission, we will just put your Majesty's decision on the shelf, and decide the matter for ourselves."—And the Seat of Government question was therefore a question still.

The Representation by Population question was a question arising from the fact, that the Upper and Lower Provinces having been united together and made *one* Province—a nice line of division, sectional antagonism, and individual interests being at the same time established and pertinaciously maintained with the view to keep them *two*,—it was ultimately discovered that the Upper Section contained some thousands more of inhabitants than the Lower Section, and it was therefore argued that it ought consequently to be entitled to send a corresponding extra number of representatives to Parliament; an argument which, of course, was absurd in the extreme, because, as an honorable member from the Lower Section contended on the floor of the House, it would be just as reasonable to demand that because the city of Montreal was half as large again as Toronto, *it* should have three representatives, while Toronto had but two; a powerful argument, of course, had it not been somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that the said difference of representation of three to two in two towns did really exist: the gentle intimation of which by another honorable member, at once caused the first honorable member who had produced the argument, to make an ignominious retreat into his seat, amidst a perfect tornado of ironical cheers; and it is believed that "Representation" would instantly have obtained, had it not been for the powerful arguments of another honorable member, who took the floor and proceeded to say that he was perfectly prepared to go the whole hog of Representation, if any honorable member would undertake to prove to him that any such thing as an Union of the Provinces did in reality exist at all—that, in fact, the Union altogether wasn't a delusion, a bugbear, and a lie; that the sole end and aim and object of each individual Section had not been, from the first to the last, to subdue, to control, to govern—in a word, to subjugate the other; and how was he to know that this was not in reality a subjugation movement? Not but what he was of opinion that a little wholesome contention, and strife, and animosity between the two sections, when fairly balanced as now, was good and desirable, inasmuch as it tended to develope the resources of the country, to promote industry, to strengthen confidence, and to bring everything down to its proper level (he was a grain and lumber jobber), in proof of which he instanced the flourishing and prosperous state of the country at the present moment: and this argument on the whole was considered so entirely satisfactory, that Representation by Population is also a question still.

The "Double-Majority" question was a sort of compromise question between a repeal of the Union, subjugation, and Representation by Population, and was a kind of double compound complication of complex incomprehensibilities, the only object of which appeared to be to get-up a sort of political quadrille on the floor of the House between the ins and the outs, and the outs and the ins, by virtue of which they would be changing places and dancing from one side of the House to the other about every hour or so, to the tune of Upper and Lower Non-Confidence.

The Tariff or Protection question was a simple question as to whether Canadians should continue to be, as they had hitherto been, hewers of wood and growers of grain to the American Nation generally; whether Canadians should continue to hew wood for the Americans at just what price they chose to give for it, in order that the Americans might make chairs and tables for the Canadians at just what price they chose to ask for them; whether Canadians should continue rag-pickers to the Americans that the Americans might continue paper-makers to the Canadians,—and everything else by the same rule; or Canadians should take upon themselves to do a

little manufacturing on their own account, and lay the foundation for something like national solidity and independence;—whether Canada should consume her own grain, her own rags, her own minerals, and use her own water-power, and thereby keep her own gold; or whether Americans, and Germans, and foreigners generally, should consume them all for her, and drain her coffers dry at the same time by way of an offset. Some were of course found bold, adventurous, and daring enough to assert that Canadians had a right to look after their own interests and to do a little of the more respectable of the work for themselves; while others again maintained that the sole object of their existence was to sow and reap, and hew, and pick rags, and scrape-together the dollars for the promotion of the prosperity, happiness, and independence of all and every the Americans, Germans, and foreigners generally throughout the world: and hence the Tariff or Protection question.

And then there was the Hudson's Bay question, which in fact was a Red River and Prairie question, which has since resolved itself into a Gold and Frazer River question, through which the solution to the whole question is now in course of active preparation. Then there were Railway questions, and Canal questions, and Fishery questions, and Militia questions, and questions of every grade and denomination; religious questions, party questions, and individual questions; everything questionable, everybody questionable, nobody answerable, all questionable together,—a great universal stumbling-block of questionable questions.

This being the questionable condition of the political world, it is not surprising that the moment Simon Seek, Esq. had plunged into its midst, he became a questionable individual—a very questionable individual indeed; that every tailor, shoemaker, blacksmith, farm-laborer, cheese-monger, and grocer came forward with his question, and questioned to the very top of his bent—in fact that he appeared for the time to have no such thing as a bend about him, rising-up from his obscurity one long, stiff, rigid, inflexible incarnation of impossible interrogatives. It is not surprising that from the moment he was heralded to the world as the heir presumptive to the honor of representing that flourishing county in the forthcoming Parliament, his chambers should have been declared straightway in a state of siege; that his private residence should have become at once the common property; that his person should have been regarded as a sort of public pump at which the country generally had a right to slake its political thirst; that he should have been accosted in the streets, secured and pinioned for hours together against lamp-posts, hailed from windows, dragged per force into beer-shops, thrust pell-mell into the midst of drunken squabbles, and jostled-about among pot-politicians and quacks and rabble; carried from place to place and exhibited like a fat boy or an arithmetical pig; slapped on the back by uncouth hands and cheered-on to the contest like a prize-fighter in a ring; denounced as a boy, applauded as a "brick," abused as a sharper, defended as a "cute 'un,"—threatened, challenged, insulted, doomed, and in fact treated to the honors and attentions generally accompanying the initiation of a candidate for that honorable distinction. Neither was it surprising that within three days after his laudable aspirations were made known, all the shelves in his office, all the wood, tin, and iron boxes in the same place, every drawer in his desk and the desk itself, the floor and the table, the chest of drawers in his own private bedroom, and even the pillow and the bolster, and every pocket in every coat and also in the unmentionable continuations, should have been strewed, crammed full, and overflowed with something like half of the whole available stock of yellow, cream-laid, and other envelopes, enclosing the like proportion of note, foolscap, blue-post, Bath, sugar, tea, butter, and other papers, on which all the questions, all the thoughts, all the troubles, difficulties, calamities, disasters, and the political, moral, religious, and social afflictions that the whole county from one end to the other ever had, would, or could by any earthly possibility have, were propounded and inscribed and dilated-on in a unique collection of pot-hooks and hangers and mutilated English, and hieroglyphics, and wild emulations of the dead languages generally, before which all the little trifles of Nineveh and Egypt and the perfectly transparent simplicities of the Chinese would have been as nothing, a bubble in the ocean, a speck in the universe, or, as Mr. Albosh would have had it, a mere bagatelle. Neither is it surprising that he was straightway hunted from one end of the county to the other; that a thorough systematic chase was instantly established for the purpose of running him down at every turn; that from his private residence to his office, from the office to the committee-room, from the committee-room to the office

and from the office to his private residence again—thence into his bed-room, thence into the very bed itself, and anon, away again, five, four, three in the morning — hurrah! there's Seek, run-down the buggy, stop the horse, a few questions if you please! Night and day and all hours and all places, still he is pursued, question on question, threat upon threat, charge upon charge. He is the public utensil; nothing appertaining to him is his own; not a word nor thought nor idea, nor night nor day; not one solitary individual atom of either his mental or physical existence—he is the public property, and the public do with him as they will.

Much less is it surprising that business was for the time suspended, that butchers and bakers and grocers, and hardwares and soft wares and dry wares, all deserted their counters and their blocks and their yard-sticks, and rushed pell-mell to the saloons and hotels to defend their liberties, to propound principles, to crush opponents, to hear nobody's arguments, and to drink anybody's cocktails; that small groups of all sizes, shapes, forms, characters, and of no characters at all, were to be seen congregated at every corner, clustered at every window, filling the shops and overrunning the market-places,—all politicians, all big with a question, all patriots, all indignant, all immaculate, all ready to come forward and save the country from eternal ruin at any given moment, and to establish a universal calm throughout the length and breadth of the land,—and all zealously forwarding the good work by firing-up a little pandemonium of anarchy and brawl among themselves;—that zealous-hearted electors should be seen to collar one another in the streets and endeavour to shake their respective antagonisms out of their respective bodies by main force; that carts and vehicles of all sorts should be seen to bring-up suddenly in the road, while their respective owners lashed about their arguments at one another, and, in the event of their failing to convince, having straightway resource to their whips as a more persuasive medium, and lashing them as freely as their arguments about each other's bodies, and thenrushingaway again to meet thenext opnenton thesame footing, andso asit wereliterally to cut and carve their way before them;-that one side of the street threw-up their windows to abuse their political opponents (every one being of necessity the opponent of some one else) on the other side of the street; that Jones discovered suddenly, and without any previous intimation of the fact, that he was just the man to pull the nose of his avowed friend and companion Smith; while Smith, on the defensive, and purely out of love for the country of his adoption, felt himself prepared to inflict ignoble chastisement on the dark side of the economy of his once esteemed friend Jones at any time that he (Jones) should bring so much as his little finger into anything like undue proximity with that fragment of private property appertaining to the countenance of Smith; that Brown furthermore held himself in perfect readiness at any given moment to summarily annihilate the whole race of Smiths and Joneses on his country's behalf for the trifling consideration of a solitary "red cent," or on the smallest possible particle from either side of either of their respective countenances being tendered to him; that Thompson went in to the death for the patriotic and impartial Doughy, while Johnson was ready to walk over the dead bodies of any required number of his best friends to the safe return of the immaculate Seek; that every one was up in arms against every one else; that nobody thought as you thought, and you thought as nobody else thought; that agricultural interests, and manufacturing interests, and railway interests, and river, lake, and wood interests, together with a thousand and one private and individual interests, were all jostled together, and heaped-up in one great, heterogeneous pile, and set burning and blazing and flaring away, a great and glorious conflagration, a social Etna, with Doughy and Seek and Seek and Doughy kept dancing to and fro on the top of all—now singing-away in the very heart of the flames, now lost in the smoke, and anon rumbling through the blazing mass, with a sear here, and a burn there, and a blister somewhere else, and so on, flaming and burning and boiling and roasting to the end of the chapter: that this should all obtain, and ten thousand times more, is of course only reasonable and natural—a part and parcel of the glorious institution, without which its very life and soul and purpose would be lost and nullified.

The "day of the poll" was an eventful day for all the Plumleys, as it was for the whole county. Business was suspended, crowds assembled, fires broke out, men, women, and children of every grade, denomination, color, caste, and language, had something to say and something to do in the political cause; every one ready to slander every one else,—lawyers,

editors, merchants, farmers, bakers, butchers, grocers, tailors, shoemakers, scavengers, pick-pockets, and vagabonds generally, all jostling together, all friends and pot-companions, all enemies and sworn antagonists, all learned politicians and philanthropists for the time,—every one an interest, every one a question, every one a principle,—all determined and resolute, and wild and rampant, rushing to and fro, declaiming here and arguing there, and brawling everywhere at one and the same time,—now for Seek and then for Doughy, and anon for both together: and thus they rumble and tumble and jostle to the poll: so let us follow in their wake, and see what is to be seen.

The day had scarcely dawned when people began to rush to and fro from all quarters, and among them were two individuals who soon became the focus as it were of the general eye. In stature and general effect they were unquestionably something inferior to the ordinary run, the whole extent of surface of the two developments combined perhaps scarcely measuring more in superficial inches than about two thirds of the total of any full-grown specimen of the sames pecies; but it soon became manifest that for strength of purpose, agility of movement, and indomitable courage, they were entirely without parallel, at least in that quarter of the globe. They were seen flying from place to place, now in buggies, now in cabs, and now on foot; hunting-up fugitive electors from all kinds of impossible haunts,—now diving into villages, up highways and down byeways, and fishing-up a cab-load here and a buggy-load there, and sending them rolling away to the poll; and anon rushing over fields and breaks and ditches and quagmires, and turning-up asthmatic old gentlemen from their covers, and startling lethargic young gentlemen from the plough-tail, and collaring hold of plethoric middle-aged individuals from their easy-chairs, and dragging them all away after them, and sending them rolling down with the stream to the great rendezvous—to the poll, gentlemen, all to the poll, and hurrah for Seek!

They appeared to be in all parts of the county at one and the same time; always together and yet always rushing different ways; always in motion, always with an elector under escort, always holding forth and speechifying and arguing with some one, and yet always looking after somebody else; always cheerful and jolly and excited, and so they went on until the polling was considerably advanced, and the results, wherever they were ascertained, were already showing in favor of Seek.

It was nearly noon when these two individuals met suddenly—each in a buggy and driving in opposite directions—at a little distance from the residence of the Plumleys, and accosted each other in precisely the following terms:

"Here you are—here you are, then," cried the smallest individual, who was driving alone, and appeared in a higher state of excitement than usual, "and contumaciously lucky it is I've found you. Here's a pretty perspicacious elucidation, and no mistake."

"Ay," cried the other, "what are they up-to now? Seek's ahead everywhere so far, and not exactly by a bagatelle either."

"By the inscrutible fates," said the other, "if we—where's Plumley?"

"I have just left him in the town."

"Then contumaciously fly after him, Albosh—fly for your life and bring him down to Blazo, with all the auxiliaries you can muster, or the game's up. What do you suppose is the dodge? Why, the pertinacious scoundrels are taking possession of all the polling-places. They are now at Blazo,—I have just left them there,—and they have sent another gang off to Splurge; and, by George, if we don't dislodge them, not another homogeneons vote will Seek get in either place."

"Confusion to them," said Mr. Albosh, "We must muster a troupe. Here, I'll go back to the town. I'll bring them down upon them."

"That's the move," cried Mr. Kwack. "I'll scour the country round at the same time. And just tell them that the electors are being pertinaciously intimidated into Doughyites one after another, *nolus volus*. Here, stop! I forgot to tell you. Here's the richest thing of all. Who, in the name of the seven wonders, do you think is heading the gang and leading them on? Why, that Yankee sharper Slicker, and his friend. Yes, there they are, in the height of their glory, threatening eternal annihilation to everything but Doughyites, and swearing if Doughy don't go in to burn-out every opponent he has got. What do you think of that, my boy! However, we'll talk to them. You hunt them up that way—bring down a regiment of them, if you can—and I'll undertake to do my share of it.—They only want a leader—that's what they want, and I'll undertake to say we'll dislodge them in ha f an hour. So off you go, and hurrah for Seek!'

"All right," said Albosh. "Be on the spot in

half an hour; and if we don't have a pitched battle, there's more bosh about my name than I give credit for. So off we go, and hurrah for Seek!"

So saying Mr. Albosh rattled away back again to the town, while Mr. Kwack returned whence he had come, and set to work to raise the whole neighbourhood about. He stopped every one he met or overtook on the road with the interrogative, "Are you for Seek?" And if they answered in the affirmative, he at once favored them with a patriotic oration and enlisted their services in the cause. He hailed every one he saw—farmers on their grounds, and at their windows, and in their stables—labourers in the fields, at the plough, or in the ditch—wood-choppers and idlers, and even called upon the farmer's wives to stir-up the virtuous indignation in their other halves, and send them on in the cause of liberty and their own rights. And in less than half an hour he had collected fifteen buggies and a small regiment of farmers and laborers—formidable-looking fellows, all zealous to the back-bone for the liberty of the subject and freedom of thought and action, which they manifested as they rattled along the road with their ardent little leader at their head, by proclaiming annihilation to the whole and entire compact of Doughyites, and Seek forever—down with Doughyites, and hurrah for Seek!

"Now then, electors, friends, and compatriots," cried Mr. Kwack as he drove into the village of Blazo at the head of this warlike assemblage, "here we are—this is the scene of homogeneous action. Now let us draw-up in line and face the rebels, like men, free men, and cosmopolitans. There, you see where they are. That's the polling-place—entirely circumscribed by the Doughyite rebels—not a free elector will be allowed to pass, and there they are filling-up the poll-books—*your* poll-books, friends, just as they please. What do you think of this, electors and free men of the county of Phlare-up?"

"Down with them—clear the poll!" cried the free men and electors to a man.

"Hurrah for Doughy, and down with the Seekers!" shouted the rebels as soon as they heard the war-cry of the invading party. They were assembled in front of the store which was occupied as the "polling-booth," and mustered something like two hundred strong, of a class that appeared to be very much more inclined to drams than scruples; and there is reason to believe that as soon as the Kwack's party began to get a little correct insight into their real character and extent, their patriotic ardor was in a slight degree damped, which, being perceived by their leader, induced him to remark,

"Friends, the rebels are strong in numbers, but ours is in the good cause, and I shouldn't despair of routing them at one charge; but I am expecting reinforcements every moment, and until they arrive we'll just fall-back on our positions, and in the mean time I will go forward and see if an honorable armistice can be negotiated without a direct recourse to hostilities."

So saying the gallant leader placed his forces in order, and then drove deliberately up to confront the rebels.

"Now then make way, make way here," he cried endeavouring to force his way through the crowd.

"Ay, heow d'ye dew," cried a voice coming over the heads of the crowd from out of the store. Mr. Kwack looked in the direction whence the nasal twang was still ringing, and there he saw the head of Mr. Slicker nodding and smiling upon him from the open window of the store in the blandest manner possible.

"Oh, how d'ye do, how d'ye do, my sharp friend," replied Mr. Kwack. "You are the very man I am looking for. Now, as you seem to be the ring-leader of this revolutionary movement, I want to ask you if you are disposed quietly to remove this rebel band (oh, I'm not afraid of you," he added in parenthesis as a movement became visible on the part of the band) "of insurrection and intimidation, and so allow the freedom and purity of election among Her Majesty's subjects to proceed without abstruction? or must we ——"

"Guess we'll do the proper thing," interposed Mr. Slicker. "Consider we're here on the Doughy party, and guess we'll stick to it tew; no mistake 'bout that."

"By the unmitigated fates!" cried Mr. Kwack "if we dont crush this ——"

"Hurrah for Doughy," cried Mr. Slicker, "and down with the Seekers, boys!"

"Down with the Seekers!" cried the boys, taking the cue, and half a dozen instantly made a rush at the horse's bridle and commenced pushing the buggy before them.

"Hold off," cried Mr. Kwack rising-up on the defensive, whip in hand.

"Down with him," cried the mob, and the champion was instantly surrounded on all sides, the horse began to rear and plunge, the champion began to lash his whip about him in a

most resolute manner, catching a cheek here, a nose there, and an eye somewhere else, until the boys got completely furious, and, shouting "Turn him over," "Over with the buggy," made another plunge on the vehicle, and down went the horse and over went the champion, buggy and all, into the midst of the infuriated boys. Just then a shout was heard to proceed from the champion's party in the distance, and, as it occurred to him that it was his reinforcements headed by his friend Albosh, he made a desperate plunge among his assailants, screwed and twisted himself about into all kinds of shapes to extricate himself from their grasp, and, assisted by the eel-like character of his physical formation, he broke loose here, slipped through there, tripped-up this one, and eluded that one, until away he came altogether, excepting his coat, and flew breathless and rampant to his friend.

"By George, Mr. Kwack, what's this here?" said a ruddy-looking individual who had a special-constable's ribon on his arm and a regular constable's-staff in his hand, coming forward to meet him with several individuals similarly accoutred in his train.

"Plumley," said Mr. Kwack, taking the special constable fervently by the hand, "they haven't done it yet. I'll undertake to lead any band of a dozen men through the whole herd. What's this!" he added as if the other's remark had just reached his scattered perceptives "why, anarchy, revolution, revolt, and dastardly intimidation, for the avowed object of defrauding justice and placing an unmitigated blackleg at the top of the poll."

"By George, they wont do that," said Mr. Plumley. "No, no; let's have justice—by George, let's have justice."

"Then we must have it by force," said Mr. Kwack.

"Then force we will have," returned Mr. Plumley. "Here comes Albosh, and here's William, and we have brought down about fifty more, so I think we'll try, at all events."

"Try! I should say we would," cried Mr. Albosh. "Here, they all say they are ready. Now, then, friends who's ready to dislodge these rascals?" he shouted to the assemblage generally.

"All, all! Down with the scoundrels!" cried the friends in a body.

"By George, come along then," shouted Mr. Plumley, "fall into order, and, as I've got a bit of legal authority to do it, I'll lead you. Come along!"

In a few minutes they were all in order and looking ready for anything; and with Messrs. Plumley, Kwack, Albosh, and William at their head, they marched-on in a body to confront the rebels.

"Now, then, open way here in the Queen's name," shouted Mr. Plumley as they came abreast of the crowd.

This request however was only received by the rebels with lawless shouts of "Down with them," "Keep them back," and "Doughy for ever," in the midst of which Mr. Slicker appeared at the window elevated above their heads, and called upon them to fight for it and to drive every individual "Seeker" to Halifax or elsewhere, but at any hazard to keep them back every man of them, promising to liquor them all at his own expense as soon as they gained the victory.

"Oh, you really mean that, do you!" cried Mr. Plumley making his preparations.

"I guess that's 'bout it tew," cried Mr. Slicker, secure in his retreat.

"Come on, lads, then," shouted Mr. Plumley. "Hurrah for Seek and justice!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the party, and away they dashed, one and all, pell-mell upon the rebels, and down went the foremost, and slash, crash went the sticks; and a hand-to-hand, head-to-head, stick-to-stick scuffle ensued, in the midst of a tornado of shouting and yelling and yelping that startled the whole village from one end to the other.

"That's right! down with them, down with them, push away!" cried Mr. Kwack, who was slipping in and out and about the legs of the rebels like an eel. "By the Fates, I'll be in the first now. On, on, to victory!"

"By Jupiter, no you wont," cried Mr. Albosh who was laying about him in a most alarming style for the shins and hip-bones of his opponents. "Come on, that's the way; here we go."

"Why, confound you," cried William who found himself suddenly pinioned by half a dozen of the rebels at once, "come out in the open ground in fair fight and I'll be answerable for any round dozen of you, you ruffianly puppies you! Oh! down you go—that's the way; now then, who's the next? We'll have you out of this in less than no time."

There were very few weapons of any kind on either side, and it was just a hand-to-hand school-boy scuffle; but however the rebels very soon began to find that they were getting the worst of it, and they fell back here, slunk off there, and soon began to give way on all sides,

notwithstanding that the valiant Slicker stood back upon the window-sill, cheering them on and throwing about his promissory-notes indiscriminately in all directions: and in a very few minutes the besieging party had made their way to within a few feet of that gentleman himself.

"Now then, Mr. Yankee, you are my prisoner," cried Mr. Plumley making a clutch at Mr. Yankee's leg and holding-up his staff, at the same time, as his badge of authority.

"Ah! Yankees!" cried his followers; "down with the Yankees!" and a general rush was made upon the window, and away flew the opposing obstacles on both sides, rolling-over one another, dashing their heads together, and sprawling-about in all the confusion of a routed party, and at the same time over came Mr. Slicker, crash into the arms of his assailants.

"Hold him—he's the ring-leading rascal," cried Mr. Kwack, as he observed the rascal making a desperate resistance, and attempting to escape.

"All right—I've got him," said Mr. Plumley who had seized hold of the prostrated rascal's leg, and had commenced to drag him thereby into the store, which was now almost vacated. But before he could drag him over the threshold, a sudden and unexpected rush was made towards him by the half-vanquished rebels, and a desperate struggle ensued, in the midst of which the rascal re-secured his leg, and, crawling-out between the legs of the crowd and regaining his footing, took to his heels, shouting to his defeated gang,

"Never mind, boys. Let them have it, I guess. Let's off to Splurge. Come along; hurrah for Doughy!"

With which invitation, the rebels set-up a victorious shout and followed their valiant leader in a body.

"Well, here we are, here we are, friends!" cried Mr. Kwack jumping on the evacuated window-sill. "Hurrah for victory, and three cheers for Seek and justice!" an appeal which was scarcely necessary, seeing that he could scarcely hear his own voice for the already deafening shouts and hurrahs by which he was surrounded.

"Well, now then, friends," said Mr. Plumley, "there's no time to lose. We must just set things in order here, and then after them to Splurge."

"All right," cried Mr. Kwack, leaping into the store. "Oh, so here are the books. Where are the clerks and the rest of them, I wonder? I suppose they 've been contumaciously intimidated. Hi ho! what have we here? —what's this?" he added examining an open book upon the desk and then referring to the poll-book. "Why, friends, look here," he shouted; "let me see—D, D, D, why, why, look here, here's a dodge. If the contumacious scoundrels haven't actually been filling-up the poll-book out of a Yankee Directory. Look, here they are—C, C, C, D, D, D, actually in alphabetical order page after page. Well, if this is a Yankee dodge, upon my word I'm sorry for them. Why, a fellow that was pertinaciously *nun compass* would scarcely be inscrutably cadaverous enough to do such a transparent job as this."

At this moment a small voice was heard in the crowd calling out, "Mr. Plumley, sir, Mr. Plumley, sir; here's a reglar go, sir," while a small individual in fustian was seen wedging and curling and twisting his way towards the door of the store with a total disregard for his own personal safety that at once stamped him as a phenomenon of which the fellow was unknown.

"Well, Timothy lad, what now?" said Mr. Plumley, as soon as the phenomenon's head had wedged itself in at the door-way, which it presently had, independently of the appurtenances that usually accompany intelligent heads, which were still struggling somewhere among the crowd.

"Why, a reg'lar go, sir, at Rumpas, sir. A mob's been an' got the poll, sir, and they ses as they're goin' to 'lect Doughy right off, sir," replied Timothy.

"Oh, are they," said Mr. Plumley. "Do you hear that, Mr. Kwack? at Rumpas. Come along lads," he shouted to his followers outside, "they've got possession of the poll at Rumpas. Bring down the horses; look alive, lads. We'll just leave a guard here to see that every one has fair play—let them all have justice, but, by George, no violence!"

Having found the Polling Officers and installed them again in their place, and left a guard, with William at its head, to maintain order, they crowded again into the carts and cabs and buggies, which by this time lined the village from one end to the other, and drove off in strong force for Rumpas.

Here they found the Sheriff of the county and several other officers and gentlemen doing their utmost to restore order, and in a state of great consternation at the utter failure of their official authority. The polling-place was entirely

invested by a Doughy gang, and none but Doughyites were allowed to pass, notwithstanding the august presence and resolute demeanour of Her majesty's officials. But on the arrival of the Plumley and Kwack heroes the aspect of affairs was speedily changed. The gallant Sheriff, finding that entreaties and threats were alike ineffectual as a means of bringing the rebels to a respect for order and his own authority, at once accepted the services of the heroes, and, placing himself judiciously in their rear, proceeded fearlessly to cheer them on to the attack. Another similar scuffle to that which they had just encountered at Blazo ensued, with the exception, that, the rebels being here in inferior force, the resistance was much less determined and the assault altogether much shorter, and that it terminated in the securing and taking into custody of several of the ringleaders including Mr. Slicker's friend Lecute, who was found to be at the head of affairs, although he stoutly protested that he was there for no other purpose than to see the "fun"; which the Sheriff at once pronounced to be a direct evidence of his guilt, inasmuch as he could find the audacity to intimate that such a lawless and flagrant violation of order and contempt of authority was anything approximating to an innocent recreation as implied in the ingenuous monosyllable "fun."

On getting inside, they found the Returning Officer lying at full length under the desk in a state of happy unconsciousness of things generally, with a whiskey bottle in one hand and the poll-book in the other, having apparently been true to the last; while odd leaves were strewed about the floor, some with the names obliterated, others filled-up with a unique assortment of imaginary electors taken from the world generally, and ranging from Queen Victoria to commissioner Yeh, and thence through the whole tribe of Indian celebrities, from Nana Sahib onwards, all of whom appeared to have voted for the immaculate Doughy.

Having re-established affairs on a proper constitutional footing at Rumpas, the heroes again started-off for Splurge, where the rebels were assembled in considerable force under their Yankee leader Slicker. Here also they found the immaculate Doughy himself cheering-on the rebels and throwing-about the prospective dollars to a reckless extent; but the heroes' numbers had been too decidedly increased and their courage too much augmented by their recent successes to admit of any lengthened or effective opposition from the whole force of the Doughyites throughout the whole county; and a very few minutes sufficed to dislodge them from their position at Splurge, and to send them scampering away again to the next rendezvous. And so the heroes kept dodging from place to place all day, until in the evening, just before the closing of the poll, they found themselves in the town in which Simon was located, and where the mob had concentrated the whole of their strength for a last dying struggle to secure the poll-books, which were here the most important of any place in the country. A short, but determined contest ensued, in which a goodly collection of blows, and a miscellaneous assortment of second and third class bruises and disfigurations were exchanged from one side to the other; but the heroes of justice and defenders of right, according to the good old dramatic rule, were of course the ultimate conquerors, and the books were preserved in all their native purity, and the electoral prerogative maintained inviolate: the poll closed, and the result was forthwith heralded from one end of the country to the other, to the eternal discomfiture of Doughy and his party, with Seek figuring (in pretty round figures too) at the top.

Everything thus satisfactorily settled, Mr. Kwack, accompanied by Messrs. Plumley and Albosh, repaired with all despatch to give an account of his stewardship to his lord and master, whom he found just escaped for a few moments from the turmoil, and seated alone in his private office apparently in a state of extreme dejection.

"Mr. Seek," said Mr. Kwack, appearing before him breathless and agitated and overflowing with emotion like a warrior before his general, fresh and reeking from a recent victory, "we've conquered. We've subdued the revolt, the rebels have been in every instance pertinaciously routed, and I have now to offer my humble congratulations to my esteemed and respected employer on his safe return to the Imperial Parliament of the Canadian Legislature."

"And," said Mr. Albosh, "perhaps I may be allowed to add my humble congratulations at the same time, and, in doing so, I would express a hope that our endeavours, humble as they have been, to maintain the public peace and the purity of election, and to suppress the insurrectionary movement that has characterized the day's proceedings, have met with your approval and approbation; assuring you, at the same time, that what we have had to contend

with could scarcely be described as a bagatelle."

"I assure you, friends, you have my most sincere thanks," said Simon, "as I believe you have of the whole county. For while it affects me personally, it of course affects the county generally; for you have evidently prevented the perpetration of a gross fraud and injustice. I assure you, you have my most sincere acknowledgments, and I trust before long I may have the opportunity of expressing them in something a little more tangible than words."

"Well, we've had a pretty warm day, Simon boy," said Mr. Plumley, "I can assure you. But, by George, we're paid for it. M. P. P., Member of Parliament. Well, by George, it's literal wonderful—wonderful, that's what it is, by George. But I see how it is, you're worried, Simon. This day's been too much for you, so we wont disturb you. Do you think you will be able to get home to night?"

"I shall endeavour to," returned Simon. "I *am* a good deal worried. An election is a harassing piece of business, after all."

"Well, sir," said Mr. Kwack, as they all prepared to leave, "I can only say for my part, that I am proud that circumstances have so elucidated as to enable me to appear before you again. For had we not subdued them, had might triumphed over right, had not the categorical fundamentality of even-handed justice been systematically vindicated this day, to the pertinacious discomfiture of unmitigated fraud and corruption,—never could I have returned to these chambers with the ignominious stamp of cowardice and pusillanimity that a defeat so heterogeneous and incompatible would inevitably have entailed. We have subdued them, we have done our duty to our country and our employer, and nothing more: our conduct is approved, and we are satisfied." So saying Mr. Kwack made his obeisance in true military fashion, took his friend by the arm, and withdrew with the warrior and the victor stamped indelibly on his brow.

Mr. Plumley invited them to accompany him home, whither he was only too glad to repair after the day's fatigue; but not so with Mr. Kwack and his friend. The stirring occurrences of the day, and the then state of the town and all the saloons and places of rendezvous therein, afforded too tempting an opportunity for the development of his natural propensity and genius to admit of anything of the sort; and Mr. P. was therefore left to return to the bosom of his family alone. He was nevertheless in high glee at the general success of the day's proceedings, and, on arriving home and finding his wife alone, he straightway caught her in his arms, danced her once or twice round the room, disarranged her cap and put her hair in confusion, and exclaimed,

"Hurrah!"

"Oh, dear me, George dear," said Mrs. Plumley as soon as she had regained her breath, looking very serious indeed and almost frightened, "is he elected?"

"Elected," cried Mr. Plumley, "by George, I should think so! Yes, our boy is M. P. P., Lizy girl."

"Oh, I was afraid so—I was afraid so," said Mrs. Plumley falling into a chair and burying her face in her hands. "Oh, the poor dear child, whatever will become of her!"

"Why, Lizy, what's the meaning of this, girl," said Mr. Plumley completely taken aback at the strange reception of what he considered such capital news.

"Oh, you don't know all, George dear; you don't know all," sobbed Mrs. Plumley. "The poor dear child. Simon will never marry her; he has told me all about it."

"Eh, what, what—why, by George;" stammered Mr. Plumley staggering back and looking incredulously at his wife, "and Simon act'ly told you that; why, by George, you don't don't go to say that ——"

"It's true, George—it's all true," said Mrs. Plumley; "but I suppose he can't help it. He told me all about it. He said he was very miserable, and he couldn't drive it away, do what he would. He said he loved Lizy still as much as ever he did; but there was a sort of strange—strange—spell I think he called it, George dear, that he couldn't shake off; and he said he felt somehow that this election was going to tell what the end of it would be; and if he was made a member of parliament, he felt sure he should never marry Lizy. So there, George dear! Oh, my poor dear, dear Lizy, she's going to break her heart and die, I am sure she is."

Mr. Plumley stood looking at his wife in mute astonishment for some minutes after she had stopped speaking, and appeared completely overcome by this direct avowal from Simon himself, which was essentially the opposite of what he had expected, for he had looked forward to the favorable termination of the election as the direct forerunner of his daughter's happiness, inasmuch as it would relieve Simon from that worry and perplexity of mind to which

he had been willing to attribute his late peculiar conduct with respect to her.

"Lizy," he said, seating himself and looking earnestly at his wife, after pacing silently up and down the room for a considerable time, "I'm convinced it's wrong—cowardly—unmanly—I'm convinced of it, Lizy, and I must have some better explanation than *spells*—I must, Lizy, as sure as I'm her father and she's my child—some better explanation than spells, Lizy. I love him, Lizy—I always have loved him as if he had been my own flesh and blood, and even more, if that could be; but, by Heaven, Lizy, if he goes to—if Lizy is made—why, by Heaven, it's hard to say it, but, but, I'll——but there I can't say it before I know it's true—I must know it's true, Lizy—I can't believe it—I *can't*, Lizy!" he said, rising again to his feet and pacing to and fro, "it's too unmanly, it's too dishonorable. But, Lizy, you hear what I say, I must have some better explanation than spells."

There was a solemn earnestness and a depth of distress in his manner, that almost alarmed his wife as she sat watching him through her tears; and after a time she rose from her seat and laying her hand gently on his arm and looking affectionately into his countenance, she said, "They are both our children, George—let them be brother and sister still—Providence will have it so, and perhaps it's best."

CHAPTER XXVI.

PARLIAMENTARY AND OTHERWISE.

"Lizy," said Alice, a few days after the great day of the election, as immortalized in the last chapter, "I am going to leave you."

"Leave us!" said Lizy, starting and looking in astonishment at her friend. "Whatever do you mean? You are not going to leave us altogether—not for good?"

"I *am*, Lizy," replied Alice. "I have spoken to your ma about it, and it is finally arranged. I am sure you will forgive me, dear, for not consulting you first, won't you? You know my only motive, Lizy."

"You are very, very good," said Lizy, "but at the same time you are very cruel. But, will you really go, Alice dear? I shall be very unhappy without you."

"I hope you will be much happier, Lizy," returned Alice. "You have been very unhappy of late. But I am indeed going; and although I am very, very sad at leaving such a happy home and such dear friends, yet I think it will be all for the best. You will try and think so, wont you, dear?"

On every previous occasion on which the subject had been advanced, it had been strenuously opposed and ultimately overruled by Lizy's entreaties; but now she offered but little obstruction to her friend's determination, for perhaps a ray of hope might have beamed through the alternative, from which her enfeebled mind and her sinking heart had no longer the fortitude to turn, for, oh! if she could only redeem him—if she could recall him again to what he was when no other eyes, no other tongue, no other form than hers had a charm for him, and when they were all and all to each other, from what a depth of grief and anguish and suspense would she be restored! Yes! surely there was yet a faint hope, for he had told her that he loved her still; and Alice had told her, that, although she indeed loved him, it was but the love she might bear to a brother, and another might still have her (Alice's) affections as her future husband.

Yes! there was still a hope. And so, in a few days after that on which the foregoing conversation took place, Alice took leave of the Plumleys and went to reside with the McCamerons, very much to the delight of her dear friend in adversity, Matilda—between whom and herself the strongest and most sincere attachment had always existed.

The departure of Alice had a marked effect upon Simon's demeanor; but unfortunately it was such as to afford but little hope that the change would prove a specific for the malady of which he was afflicted. He became at once perfectly dejected, he drove and walked and strolled about by himself for hours together, without any apparent object, further than whil-

ing-away the time; he kept himself almost entirely at his chambers, scarcely ever returning home at night except on Sundays, and then he mostly employed his time in writing and wandering about; and his conduct was altogether so marked and strange, that Mr. Plumley was hardly restrained from giving vent to his feelings, which were daily becoming deeper and stronger on the subject, and which would several times have broken-out had it not been for the entreaties of his wife, who, while she grieved as much as he did, had sufficient perspicacity to perceive that there was more to be hoped-for from a quiet, reconciling policy, than from accusation and blame, which could only have the tendency to render matters still worse by irritating an already sufficiently aggravated wound.

Thus the time wore on, heavily, wearily, and bitterly, both for the lovers themselves and their friends; until Parliament had opened and the night on which Simon was expected to present his maiden speech to the world had arrived.

His friends were all of course duly apprised of the fact, and a general holiday was arranged, the day being spent with Philip and Mrs. Sorftish, at their new residence in King St., Toronto, where Philip had already established himself, although as yet without the little "angelic" addition to his estate, of which intimation was given when announcing the fact of his forthcoming change in residence and position to the Plumleys a month or two before. But, however, the general aspect of the establishment, from the hall to the attic, and thence down again through the best bed-chamber, thence into the most charming little room in the world, that looked extremely like a lady's boudoir, thence into the drawing-room, and thence everywhere else,—was, to say the least, indicative of something, and something that was very easily resolved into somebody, the advent of whom was evidently (to speak technically) hourly expected.

The party comprised Mr. and Mrs. Plumley, Lizy, Miss Plumley (still *Miss* Plumley), Mr. Worzel, and Messrs. Kwack and Albosh—the latter gentlemen being personally and peculiarly interested in parliamentary matters just then, since they were hourly expecting, through the influence of their fast friend, Simon Seek, Esq., M.P.P., to be finally and comfortably established in the service of their Queen and country; a distinction towards which their every aspiration, their every hope and wish and perspicacious hallucination (as Mr. Kwack had it) had been directed from their cradle upwards; the only drawback with their friend and patron being, that in the first place he found some considerable difficulty in selecting a post in which their peculiar genius might excel, and in the second place that he had gone into Parliament denouncing favoritism and party patronage with the most virtuous indignation; which, however, to tell the truth, it scarcely occurred to him at the time would be a direct obstruction to his using his influence to obtain honest employment for two unfortunate, but, in the last degree well-meaning, upright and indefatigable men, whom he saw almost in a state of destitution, simply because he happened to be acquainted with them; and as the absurdity of the objection became more and more forced upon his mind, so did the double obstacle become less and less visible, until it resolved itself altogether into the solitary difficulty of finding them a suitable position: so that their expectations were legitimate and well founded; and, certainly, anything like the feverish anxiety, the prospective gratitude, the eager desire to be serving their country and maintaining themselves, and the hope and fear and doubt that the prospect elicited, has never yet, that we are aware of, been either seen, heard, or even prognosticated as likely to obtain.

At precisely seven o'clock in the evening, the whole party sallied-forth and made their way direct to the gallery of "the House," and took-up their seats immediately opposite "the chair"; and at precisely half-past seven o'clock the Speaker entered, ascended the rostrum, called out, in a remarkably sonorous voice, "or-*der*," put on his three-cornered hat, seated himself with becoming gravity, took-up the last new "Punch," in which he was presently absorbed,—and the business of the country had commenced.

It was some time before Simon "took the floor," and in the interim the party had an excellent opportunity of observing the general appearance and effect of the congregated wisdom of the land as it there lay—or, rather sat before them.

Mr. Speaker, being the father, head, and general focus of the party, was of course the most conspicuous fragment of the land's wisdom to be seen; and to be sure, as a father he did certainly look one of the jolliest and happiest paterfamaliases that was ever called upon to preside over a roast-beef-and-plumb-pudding

party in any quarter of the world; and it occurred to the party, that, on the whole, his appearance was strongly suggestive of that of the good old king, the celebrated Cole, on that memorable occasion wherein he is said to have called for that heterogeneous assemblage of fiddlers, sailors, parsons, and the representatives of the world generally; the congregrated wisdom itself conveying a pretty accurate idea of the probable individual and collective effect of that worthy assembly.

One of the next conspicuous fragments to Mr. Speaker, was an honorable member who occupied a bench immediately on his right, and whom Mr. Plumley pronounced, in his opinion, the very pink of modern statesmen. In stature he was rather tall and rather thin, with slightly prominent points, among which, the organ in which physiognomists have implanted strength of character and depth of purpose—the nose, was not deficient. He wore his hair a little over his forehead on one side, and would have looked a good deal better (so Lizy said, and we presume that is not to be disputed) if he had brushed it off, carried a perpetual wink in either eye, and smiled continuously; this latter characteristic being that from which Mr. Plumley is supposed to have drawn his conclusions, and certainly it was not by any means the least remarkable trait of the perfection of statesmanship. For there he sat with one leg reclining gracefully and comfortably upon the other, his head thrown somewhat waggishly on one side, one hand in his breeches' pocket, and a tooth-pick in the other—smiling most charmingly, most blandly, most serenely, while honnorable gentlemen opposite were jumping-up in their places, one after another, and lashing at him right and left—denouncing him as a charlatan and a trickster, and threatening to have him utterly consumed in the gulf of public opinion some considerable time before he was aware of it—shaking their honorable fingers, and, not unfrequently, their honorable fists, at him in derision and contempt, confounding him with declamations, probing him with ridicule, and cutting him up piece-meal with double-edged sarcasm. But still there he sat smiling sweetly through it all—the more they shook, the more they ridiculed, the more they denounced, just so much the more blandly did he smile, just so much the more pleased and entertained and delighted did he appear,—surely he was the very pink of statesmen.

Counterpoised with him on the opposite benches, was a tall, robust, formidable-looking personage, in brown—that is to say, brown coat, brown vest, brown continuations, brown boots, brown cravat, brown hair (what there was of it), in fact, as Mr. Plumley observed By George, he was brown all over!

He was partially bald, with strongly-marked features, rather prominent points, and a determined aspect; and appeared, at least for his side of the House, to take the paternal prerogative entirely out of the person of the Speaker, for, unquestionably, he was the paterfamalias of his side; and he sat upright in his seat with a calm, dignified, fatherly countenance, and when he rose he looked round upon his family and seemed to say,

"Children, I am about to speak—be still!"

And the children all straightway opened their attentive little mouths, and seemed in their turn to say, as he proceeded, "Go it, father—well done, father—give it 'em, father, they've just been pitching into us, father—don't spare 'em—bravo, father!" with the exception, however, of a rather short, rather thick-set, rather round-shouldered, good-tempered-looking member in father's rear, who smiled approvingly, and seemed to say, "Pretty well, Jones, pretty well—I've seen you do better, but, on the whole, I think that'll do, Jones!"

This, as Philip informed them, was *the* Irish member, who, said he, from some peculiar course of reasoning or other, it was universally expected would make his appearance in the House with a revolver sticking-out of each pocket, a shillaleigh in each hand, and not less than a score of bowie-knives concealed about his revolutionary person; but, strange to say—or rather, not in the least degree strange at all to say, continued Philip, when he did appear, he was found to be attired in the most humble, the most retiring, the most unassuming garb and demeanor that the most loyal tailor and moralist in the world could possibly have designed: and the only conventional traits of the Irish character that he has displayed ever since he has been here, are, in my opinion, said Philip, the three rather prominent ones of eloquence, generosity, and wit.

Counterpoised with the Irish member (for each one appeared to have his particular antagonist) on the opposite benches, was a round, plump, jolly-looking personage, with a very nicely-polished countenance mounted in a well-cultivated moustache and an indefinite smile; and it was observed that when he rose to speak, the eyes and ears of the whole House, galleries and all, were straightway turned upwards to

the ceiling, thence out at the door, and thence out at the windows, in perfect bewilderment as to where the sound was actually coming from, for it seemed to be the very last idea that entered their minds that it could possibly proceed from any portion of the honorable member then in "possession of the floor"; and when the fact that such was really the case was ultimately forced upon them, it was concluded at once that he must be a clever ventriloquist amusing himself and the House with a practical joke; but then, the bear idea of such a shadow of the ghost of a sound originating within any such reasonable distance of the outlet as from within the honorable gentleman's waistcoat, was simply preposterous, and the problem could only be satisfactorily solved by assuming that the sound had originally taken rise in some locality about the honorable gentleman's toes, and thence struggled upwards through the various intricacies and obstructions to be met-with in a somewhat plethoric constitution; and had become so thoroughly exhausted by the time it had arrived at the legitimate portal, that it was only by dint of the utmost coaxing and manœuvring that it could be induced to come forward at all.

Immediately in front of the Irish member, sat a small, grey-headed little gentleman, with a highly-wrinkled frontage, quick, roving eyes, and a short, sharp, repartee sort of a manner; who, nothwithstanding that his stature was decidedly small, and that this again had been materially shaken by time and contingencies, appeared to be the first hero and champion of the House, and by no means afraid of the biggest and stoutest man in it, the Speaker not excepted.

He had a somewhat peculiar way of addressing the House, which he adopted on all occasions, and by which he at once succeeded in bringing-down the biggest of them to their proper level, and, at the same time, of elevating himself to his own proper altitude. This was accomplished by a simple but ingenious play upon the figures of the memorable year of 1837: for instance, having succeeded in catching the Speaker's eye, which he sometimes found to be rather a difficult task, he would commence:

"In 1837, sir, when you were in your swaddling-clothes, sir," or, "I remember when I was a young man, sir—when one half this House was being whipped at school, sir, and the other half wasn't thought of, sir," or, "Twenty years ago, sir—in '37, sir—glorious days they were, sir—no such day's as them since, sir—I wish I could see a few of the champions of those days in the House now, sir," and so forth; until the speech ultimately resolved itself into a tooth-and-nail conflict between himself and the Speaker on a point of order; or he found himself interrupted by certain honorable gentlemen opposite, who had gained a reputation in the House for the performance of certain curious and inimitable noises with their feet against the bottoms of their desks, and, in the failure of that argument to silence an opponent, with the covers of the desks themselves,—who, from the locality they occupied in the house, had been designated the champions of the North-West corner.

Being interrupted by this scraping-of-feet-and-grinding-of-boots argument on this particular occasion, the old gentleman folded his arms in the most invincible manner and told the North-West that if that was their game, he was perfectly prepared for them; he could stand there all night and then speak-out his speech afterwards; he was not the sort of man to be put-down by the creaking of the boots of a parcel of parliamentary dummies, that couldn't say "bo" to a goose; whereupon one of the dummies, by way of openly refuting that accusation, said distinctly "bo"; upon which the honorable accuser magnanimously assured the House that he wished to withdraw the statement that honorable gentlemen opposite were unable to say "bo" to a goose, for one of them had just whispered that emphatic monosyllable in his neighbour's ear: which was presently followed-up by the Irish member, who said that, contrary to his friend, he was certainly compelled to give the honorable gentlemen of the North-West credit for a considerable eloquence of soul, but, unfortunately, he was obliged at the same time to say that it was the *sole* of their boots. This was of course considered to be a downright leathering for the North-West, and they immediately settled-down into ignominous oblivion, and the honorable '37 champion was allowed to proceed.

A few benches lower down on the same side was an honorable member, who, Mrs. Sorftish said, was the handsomest man in the house, at least so it was reported, but whether by himself or any one else she could not tell; but as to the fact, Lizy said she was of a different opinion altogether, although she really thought if he had had a different shaped nose—say anything about half the length—a pair of cheerful-looking eyes instead of the dull, heavy, leaden ones that

he kept perpetually turning-up to the gallery; if his mouth had been visible, which it was not, owing to a monstrous bunch of hair that had sprouted-out in its place, and his cheeks had been round instead of flat—she thought he might have been passable. Whatever do the girls want? His ideas of the duties of a statesman appeared to consist in twirling his moustache, arranging his hair, reclining gracefully and calmly for the general inspection, and supplying the House with sundry little light condiments in the shape of puns and witticisms, as the peculiar state of the country demanded. He spoke with the tip of his finger, which he darted and pointed about as though all the ideas were centered in the tip, and required a jerk at each word to bring them out. His political duties for that evening (and which Mr. Kwack said was really about the smartest way of earning six dollars that *he* had ever witnessed) consisted in informing the House that in his opinion the honorable gentleman who had just sat down—who certainly did appear to be a trifle overgrown and loose of limb, although with this exception Lizy pronounced on his general appearance favorably—was in his opinion the complete personification of a giblet-pie, that was to say, "he was all legs and wings"; which, to say the least of it, was a political joke of the first water, or rather, to carry-out the honorable gentleman's gastronomic simile, we might perhaps say, of the richest gravy.

Taken as a whole, perhaps statesmen were never seen in a greater variety, in more distinct stages of development, with more heterogeneous characteristics, or with more conflicting opinions on politics and the world generally, than on the floor of that House on that occasion. There were French, English, Irish, Scotch, and all the complicated combinations of the same; lawyers, editors, merchants, farmers, butchers, tailors—belonging to every individual and collective step of the social ladder; Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists, teetotallers, temperance men, and men of a very different persuasion; and there they were all struggling together for the promotion of the prosperity and welfare of the one beloved country, all struggling for the great principles of which they were the great representatives—some this way and some that way, and each one in his own peculiar way, and very peculiar certainly some of their ways were.

There was one rather youthful statesman who was furthering the great question of Represention by Population by inditing an affectionate epistle to his sweetheart; and from the manner in which he smiled over and enjoyed the performance it was abundantly evident that he was tolerably sanguine that his measure would be carried. Another equally youthful patriot, who was as well-conditioned and jolly-looking a young statesman of the French school as could possibly be desired, being from the Lower Province, was laying the foundation for the ultimate and satisfactory adjustment of the grievances and differences between the two sections, by throwing-out the whole force of his attractions, eye-glass and all, with a view to the entire subjugation and captivity of the one hundred and fifteen fair and queenly representatives of the upper Section, then occupying and ornamenting the front rows of the gallery Another decorous sprig of loyalty, who was surrounded by several friends and parliamentary colleagues, appeared to have conceived that the dignity of the House and the country generally was in a certain amount of danger, and required his immediate interference in his official capacity; and he therefore called upon his friends and admirers to observe and emulate the profound respect with which he regarded that great institution as represented in the person of the Speaker, which he illustrated by closing one eye, placing the tip of his thumb upon his nose and waving his fingers gracefully to and fro, to the unqualified delight of every statesman who beheld him. Another was doing his endeavours towards the promotion of the fine arts, and the cultivation of the public taste generally, by inspiring a few select friends who had gathered about him with an appreciation for the sublime, through the medium of a Jew's-harp, which, as far as he could be judged from the hasty snatches with which he favored them, he handled with a dexterity that no statesman in the world could possibly have surpassed, if even equalled. In another corner, a party of zealous and spirited politicians were vigorously discussing the Militia question, with a view to retrenchment and economy in the public expenditure, by the simple expedient of firing at each other a volley of paper bullets ingeniously manufactured out of the speech from the throne, and sundry humble petitions from the people. Removed from these were several jolly young farmers, who had taken upon themselves the especial promotion of the great agricultural interests in the country, by severally and collectively going through the ventriloquous and zoological feat of imitating the complete farm-yard from the donkey downwards. In direct

antagonism to these, another knot of patriots were prompting and supporting the manufacturing interest by whistling in unison and with one voice the great national lyric of "Yankee Doodle." Away from these, in the front benches on either side, a few were declaiming and *exclaiming* and threatening and attacking each other, and, from the earnestness and seriousness of their manner, appeared at least to be sincere; and when they were tired of this, they all, with the exception of a select few, crossed from one side to the other, and like true lawyers shook hands heartily together, and repaired arm in arm to the little family sanctum below, to drink gin-cocktails and sherry-cobblers—it is all parliamentary, the country pays for it, and so "we are all jolly good fellows."

And so the business of the country goes on—so the great questions, the great interests, the adjustment of grievances, the promotion of the welfare, the prosperity, the advancement of a great and important country, are cared for. And if any one should marvel at its present peculiar prosperity, at the flourishing of its manufactures, the rapid strides of civilization, the healthy state of trade, the increase of its emigration, the happy state of the money market, and the general peace, and quiet, and amity, and progress that obtains throughout its length and breadth, at the present time—let them pay a visit to the parliament of the day and they may there find at least a partial solution to the all-absorbing problem.

"Well," said Mr. Kwack, as soon as this and as much more had made its way to his slightly bewildered perceptives, "this is about as rich a scene as one could reasonably desire to see. I have heard it said that a house divided against itself is unqualifiedly rotten; but if this house ain't divided, and contumaciously divided again, why all I can say is, that Johnson utterly fails to elucidate the bare meaning of the word."

Mr. Kwack had scarcely concluded this remark when a slight nervous movement was observed to run through the whole of the party; the great event of the evening was at hand—Simon had the floor. He was a young member of whom something was expected, and the whole House immediately resolved itself into something like attention. There was a slight tremulousness in his voice perceptible in the first few sentences, and the usual lack of purpose and locality about the hands—those absurd, unwieldy, senseless, poltroons of appendages, that betray you the very moment you get on your legs, if you don't choose to condescend to give them the best side of the argument, and set-off trembling and strolling and poking about into all kinds of impossible corners, as though they had purposely and systematically forgotten the very first object of their existence; but this very soon passed away, and the fugitive members themselves were presently subjugated, and gradually brought to perform a very important part towards the general effect, by clinching the arguments, as they were disposed-of one after another, upon the desk, and in carving-out and unravelling intricate problems in the air, in which words alone would have been utterly insufficient, and setting-up imaginary patriots on the one side, and knocking-down imaginary corruptionists on the other, until they really seemed to have become the most sensible, discriminating, and intellectual hands in the world.

He had got into the full zenith of his eloquence, and honorable members were beginning to whisper and nod and telegraph to one another, as who should say, 'he'll do—that's good—clever fellow—decidedly eloquent—bravo—hear, hear'—when by some chance or other his eyes happened to wander to the gallery, and to the very spot whence the pale countenance of Lizy was turned anxiously and eagerly towards him. He withdrew his eyes almost with a start—he became slightly confused, and, in the midst of his confusion, somehow or other his wayward head turned again mechanically to the same spot; she looked paler and paler still, and her eager eyes that were turned so earnestly towards him, seemed filmed with sadness; and in that short moment that his eyes were upon her, all the whole train of his unworthy conduct that had led to this cruel change, crowded into his mind—he turned and attempted to proceed—he faltered, he referred to his notes and essayed again, but his theme and his eloquence had left him, and, after stammering-out a few more disconnected sentences, although the House did their utmost to cheer him on, he resumed his seat, pale, and trembling, and unmanned.

It was thought by the House that he was taken suddenly unwell, and several of his friends immediately collected around him to proffer their assistance. At the same instant a note was put into his hand by one of the messengers. He looked mechanically at the address, and—Heavens! how could *that* have reached him there and at that time—it was Alice's handwriting, brought by hand, and Alice a hundred miles away. This was a finishing-stroke to his

confusion, and, not trusting himself to open it there, he informed his friends that he was taken so unwell as to be obliged to retire; and requesting one of them to apologize for him to the House, he instantly withdrew.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CLOSING SCENE AND A REVELATION.

The moment Simon was free of the House and alone, which he presently contrived, he drew out the note and tore open the envelope. It ran as follows:—

Rossin House, 10 o'clock.

Dear Simon,

I have just this moment arrived here with the Mr. McCamerons, on a matter in which *we* are both deeply interested. Could you make it convenient to come to us at once? If you delay, it may be too late. In haste.

Yours sincerely,

Alice.

Simon stood turning and twisting this obscure piece of paper about in his hand for several seconds, after he had read it, in a state of complete mystification. He read it over a second time and a third time, and still only the more mystified did he become.

"A matter in which *we* are deeply interested." "If you delay it may be too late." Why, what in the world could it refer to? There was not one solitary, individual thing that he could think-of that seemed to him to bear the very remotest relation to it. Well, there was but one way evidently to get the mystery solved, and, as it appeared to him to be highly desirable to do so with as little delay as possible, he hurried-up to the Rossin House as fast as his legs and exitement would carry him.

He found both Alice and the McCamerons anxiously awaiting his arrival. They were all still attired in "out-door gear," and Simon at once observed that there was a sadness hanging over them for the which he had no cue in anything as yet within his knowledge. Their greeting was kind, affectionate as usual, but sad; and yet he thought he could discern through the cloud that sat silently on the countenance of Alice, a calm, secret, placid satisfaction that seemed to speak peace to his very soul, and to say, in angels' whispers, Simon, we have before u sa moment of sadness, but happiness, much happiness lies beyond.

"I fear we have no time to lose," said Mr. McCameron, after the first salutation had passed. "The cab is at the door. Will you accompany us, Mr. Seek?"

"I am at your service," said Simon, who felt so completely subdued by the calm and almost solemn demeanour of his friends, that the heated curiosity in which he had arrived was immediately restrained; and he contended himself for the time with merely casting an enquiring but silent look at Alice, as he offered her his arm, to which she replied in a subdued tone,

"You will understand all very soon, Simon, very soon."

They entered the cab in silence, and the cabman, who appeared already to have his instructions, drove down King Street, thence into Queen Street, and so on until the lamps began to disappear, and the broad dark country opened-out before them; but although Simon asked himself a thousand questions as he proceeded, and wondered more and more the further they advanced to what the strange adventure was conducting, not a word was spoken by any of the party, until, after running for some distance under a high brick wall, beyond which the top of a long black building was indistinctly visible in the darkness, the cab stopped, and the driver instantly dismounted, and the dong dong of a heavy bell was heard waking-up the dark night into which they had glided.

"What," said Simon, whose surprise had got the better of his reserve as he saw where they were, "the Asylum—the Lunatic Asylum! why, what—"

"A few minutes, a very few minutes," interposed Alice, laying her hand gently on his arm.

The gate was presently opened by a man with a lantern, who, after a few words from McCameron, requested them to follow him; and they immediately alighted and passed into the

open ground before the building, through which their guide led the way with the lantern.

And now they very soon received sad, melancholy evidence of the character of the inmates of that huge, black, isolated mass. A wild, incoherent chattering as of many persons quarrelling and brawling together, gradually broke upon their ears as they advanced, and then such a terrible hooting, and howling, and wailing, that all the woes and miseries of the great world might have found a voice from that large, black blotch; and then a low murmuring and chattering again, as though the blighted souls were whispering their agonies to the night wind, and conjuring the pale stars to tell them "how long!" and then a hideous yell and a low, long wail, that seemed to people all the darkness with goblins of despair, and to wake-up the solemn stillness of the night with chilling horrors.

Alice clung tremblingly to Simon's arm as these agonizing sounds approached her; and so terrible and unnatural did they seem in the darkness and stillness of midnight, where no other voice nor sound was heard to break the silence or mingle with their terrors, that they all clung involuntarily together as they moved forward—their features became blanched and hueless, and their very souls seemed to shrink within them, for every wail and every groan was a blazing torch that lit-up the midnight by which they were surrounded, to the blacker midnight of souls that lay beyond.

Their guide conducted them straight to the Doctor's apartment on the ground floor of the building, where they found both the medical gentlemen attached to the establishment, who received them with utmost politeness, and, from the manner of their addressing both Alice and the McCamerons, Simon at once perceived that they were already acquainted with all three, and to a certain extent prepared for the visit.

There was a calm, pleasing, affectionate gentleness about the appearance and manner of both these gentlemen, that at once inspired you with confidence in them as the proper men to fulfil the important, the sacred duties devolving upon the guardians of so great and grave a trust; and Simon felt a sort of grateful pleasure steal into his breast, that those poor, hapless wretches whose voices had so distracted it a moment before, had at least one kind and sympathetic eye to watch them in their sufferings, one hand of affection to alleviate their many strange and unnumbered miseries.

"I fear you are none too soon, my friends," said one of the Doctors, after some preliminary remarks. "I have just left him; but if you will be seated for a few moments, I will just see him again, before I ask you to accompany me."

"I presume there are no signs of returning consciousness, Doctor?" observed McCameron when they were all seated and the other had left the room.

"None, none," replied the Doctor: "we never entertained a hope.

"And is he still violent?" asked the elder McCameron.

"Too weak, too weak," replied the Doctor, shaking his head. "I only wonder that there is still life. The least excitement or exertion would snap in an instant the slender thread by which it hangs to the poor worn-out body."

"Has he ever been confined at all since he has been here?" asked McCameron.

"Confined, only to his bed," replied the Doctor with a smile. "We have no such word as confinement here. That is a trite old system, which, please God, we shall never see again."

"But have you none so incorrigible or vicious as to require some sort of restraint?" added McCameron.

"Our restraint is kindness—we have none other," replied the Doctor. "And *viciousness*, in its usual acceptation, is also a word that our system does not recognize. It belongs, like the other, to an old system which was founded essentially on an ignorance rather than a knowledge of the subject with which it had to deal. It is comparatively but very lately that we have had any idea of what a lunatic really is. He is a being as it were without the pale of our own world, existing in a world of his own, by the laws and peculiarities of which he is governed. Hence, before we can prescribe the cure, before we can pronounce upon his actions at all, we must know something of the world and the laws and impulses by which he is controlled; for what to us is viciousness and malevolence, may be to him a direct obedience to one of the most sacred—if I may use the term—laws of his being. If you will allow me I will give you a very simple illustration from a case which transpired but a day or two since.

"We had a girl among the female inmates who used to seize every opportunity that presented itself of throwing her clothes—boots, shoes, stockings, handkerchiefs, or in fact anything that offered—out of the window. Nothing could prevent her; the more we attempted to check her, the more she persisted. This of

course, in the usual acceptation, would have been thought viciousness and obstinacy, and should have been punished accordingly. But according to *our* rule, it was the simple result of a delusion ; and before we attempted the remedy, it became our duty first to ascertain something about this delusion, or the real cause. And this a few days ago, after a great many failures, with a great deal of kindness and coaxing I succeeded in learning of her. She believed she was shut-up and retained a prisoner in an enchanted castle, and these were signals thrown-out to attract the attention of her brother, whom she expected, on seeing them, would come to her relief. From this you may readily judge the effect that correction and restraint would have had upon her mind; but knowing the secret, the remedy of course was simple."

"Why, my dear friends, you are but just in time—if you will be good enough to follow me," said the second gentleman, entering at this moment and speaking in an undertone.

The company immediately rose from their seats, and put themselves under his escort. They passed through a large open hall, thence up two wide flights of stairs, from the landing on the top of which, through a door which was kept carefully locked, they entered a long corridor, on either side of which were the dormitories in which the inmates were dreaming-out their dark dreams of terror and gloom and melancholy—waking or sleeping, the same phantoms, the same painted gorgons, filling their brains. And now they were in the very heart of the unearthly clamour of lunatic tongues; the groaning, and wailing, and chattering, and hooting of blighted souls. And although the space through which they passed was entirely empty, their stricken imaginations peopled it with living terrors ; and every corner and every crevice and every dark spot had its crouching maniac, its wild, distorted visage, its fierce glaring eyes, or its unearthly grin ; and every shadow that passed along the wall was a haunted wretch pursued by the phantoms of his own brain, or flying before unreal terrors, alas ! to him too real ; and every panel and every post had its ghostly occupant. Here crouched the melancholy wretch with his leaden head supported in his bony hand, and a great night of grief upon his soul, that no art of man could ever lighten and only death remove. There slunk-away the creature of a thousand fears, yet a thousand times more terrible than all the living terrors of the real world. Here the victim of a fierce delusion struggled, and struggled in vain, to shut-out from his stricken soul the frown and the thunder and the lightening-eye of an offended and all-destroying God. And there again sat the murderer, moaning over phantom crimes; and therethe suicide condemned before the great judge ; and here the Evil One himself with all the terrors of an infinity of sins upon his soul,—all the forms, and shapes, and miseries, and horrors of the great human blight were there, and the darkness only added to the terror of their shapes.

The whole party felt a dread in walking through this phantom-peopled cavern at that hour, and with all the strange and unnatural voices that surrounded them, that they had never before experienced, and that perhaps no other scene nor circumstances could possibly have exerted in their minds ; and they felt it quite a relief when their conductor stopped and opened the door of one of the chambers at the far end of the corridor and motioned them to follow him, notwithstanding that they knew what the room contained.

They could distinguish a low, mumbling sound as of some one muttering in a hoarse whisper, and, as the Doctor moved before them towards the head of the bed which stood in the room, the light fell upon the object from which it proceeded.

"Good Heavens, is that he !" said McCameron in a startled whisper.

It was a ghastly visage indeed that they there beheld. It was a mere wrinkled and blackened skeleton. The eyes had sunk into their two dark, ghastly caverns, until they were no longer visible; the teeth were all gone, and the mouth was horribly distorted ; the eyebrows were contracted as if with great pain, and the bones seemed everywhere all but visible through the parched and blackened skin. It was a frightful spectacle ! And, O wretched Blackbourn, well might they exclaim, "Is it thou !"

Alice trembled very much as her eyes fell upon this heart-rending object, and she clung involuntarily to the elder McCameron for additional support, while her blanched countenance was turned with a look of intense grief towards the bewildered Simon. He returned it with mute amazement, and, as his eyes wandered from her to the strange muttering gorgon upon the bed, and thence to the heavy countenances of the McCamerons, and thence to her again, there was an expression of wonder and

confusion in them that no words could possibly have conveyed.

They had scarcely taken the first glance at the wretched sufferer, when a change was observed to pass over his features; the muttering ceased; he seemed to struggle a moment with his excessive weakness; and then suddenly throwing-up his arms and stretching-out his hand, he cried, in a half-stifled scream,

"Al—Al—at last—you, you co—come—I—I I—;" he shook his head and fell back again on his pillow, panting and gasping for breath, and almost in a moment became perfectly motionless—so much so that they all thought the exertion had terminated his sufferings, and that his troubled soul had gone from its strange tenement forever.

The doctor stepped forward and felt his pulse, and, as he did so, shook his head, observing in a whisper,

"A few moments, a very few moments, friends."

They all stood with their pale faces and their terrified eyes riveted on the disturbed countenance of the dying maniac; and the chilly shadow of death seemed to glide noiselessly about them as they stood; and they were all dumb, and trembling, and hueless, as they almost felt its touch upon their hearts. They had stood so for a considerable time, without uttering a word or moving a limb, when the lips of the dying man began again to move, but without any sound escaping them, the features began to change and writhe slightly; his hands gradually became clinched; and his eye-brows worked up and down, as though he was struggling to penetrate the darkness in which his eyes were for ever clothed. He remained so for several minutes, without emitting a sound or moving a limb; when, like a flash of lightning, he suddenly sprung-up in the bed to a sitting posture, and, throwing out both his hands and stretching forward his head, exclaimed in a screaming whisper, that hissed through the chamber with a most unearthly effect,

"Now—now—Al—Alice, forgive—forgi—see, see your mo—your mother, Alice—see she's now, now—the water,—and hark," he screeched, clapping his hands with a death-like grasp upon his ears, "the last—the last bell! and—" a choking and gurgling in his throat stopped his utterance; his features suddenly became rigid; and his neck grew instantly distended. The doctor stepped forward and caught him in his arms as he fell backwards; he laid him gently on the pillow; and, after bending over him for a moment, he turned and said,

"Friends, his sufferings are at an end—he is *no more*."

"Simon—Simon," exclaimed Alice, falling upon her knees by the bedside, "OUR FATHER."

A strange sensation thrilled through Simon's frame as these words fell upon his ear, and he staggered back a moment with incredulous amazement. But there was a solemn sacredness in the time, in the words, and in the sad spectacle he had just witnessed, that constrained him to believe that, however strange, it must be true; and giving vent to the powerful reaction of his mind, he fell down on his knees by her side; and they both wept long and bitterly together, and prayed for the troubled soul of their strange parent, that was already wandering through the labyrinths of an unknown world.

As they rose from their knees, Alice placed a small packet of papers in his hand, and, laying her head upon his shoulder, as the tears flowed again from a fresh source, she said, "It is true—all true, Simon."

He folded her tenderly in his arms, and a holy and grateful calm seemed to steal upon them both; and imprinting a kiss upon her pale cheek, he said, "Alice, my sister—my dear, dear sister, God bless thee and our unhappy father. He was indeed good to me to have left me so dear a treasure. God spare him and bless him for thee, my sister."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FUGITIVE'S RETURN.

The papers which Alice handed to Simon were the same that Bolton committed to the charge of William on the eve of his melancholy end in the forest, and which, from some reason or other, William had not delivered to her until the day before they came into Simon's possession, as we have seen. They contained a clear and satisfactory account of his birth and parentage, and also that of Alice, and left not a doubt upon his mind that she was his sister. His desertion, when he was an infant, on London Bridge, was accurately narrated and accounted-for by the cruel abandonment of his mother by her husband, Blackbourn, whom she had married in opposition to the will of her parents, and which plunged her into the distress and misery by which she was led to the commission of the crime with which these Adventures opened. These statements were said to have been derived from the confession of Blackbourn himself, and to have been written by the unhappy lady's brother, although his name was not mentioned or subscribed to any of the papers in Simon's possession. Alice, however, subsequently assured him that that was also known, and that he should be made acquainted with it by-and-bye.

It will be readily supposed that Simon was something more than anxious for the opportunity to communicate the extraordinary but welcome intelligence to his wronged Lizy and her friends, and to endeavour to make atonement for his past sins; and oh! notwithstanding all its sad accompaniments and the melancholy relations it involved, how supremely and calmly happy he was—what a holy and grateful influence this happy termination to his strange perplexity imparted to his mind! But as his friends had left Toronto the same night, and before he had an opportunity of seeing them, as had been previously arranged, he felt that it would be both expedient and proper for him to remain until after the last sad duty to his unhappy parent had been performed, before following them with the intelligence, which, from its happy results and in the absence of any personal knowledge of the deceased, could only inspire them with feelings of gratitude and pleasure.

The interment took place on the second day, and the McCamerons were both present at the ceremony. And so the body of the intoxicated soul was followed to its last resting-place by the feet of those who had been the worst victims of its dark delusion; and as they stood upon the sod that was waiting to hide him forever from their sight, they forgave him in their hearts, and they exclaimed in one voice, "His sins have been many, but his punishment has been great: may he rest in peace."

It was the third day, then, when Simon, accompanied by his newly-found sister, set-off to bear the intelligence to his friends. It was arranged that the McCamerons, with Mrs. McCameron and Matilda and Clara, who were expected to join them, should follow on the succeeding day, and Philip and Mrs. Sorftish were also invited, and promised to be there; so that what might be termed a complete Plumley and McCameron party might be formed, for the purpose of running-over the reminiscences of the past together—seeing that a happy termination to a long series of adventures appeared at last to be arrived at.

On arriving at "his own" town, he drove-up in front of the newspaper-office, in which Mr. Dale was still engaged, and, placing the reins in Alice's hands and promising not to keep her a moment, leapt out of the buggy and rushed up stairs to the editor's office. Mr. Dale happened to be alone.

"Well, Dale, my dear fellow," said Simon, in a manner that caused Dale to see that *another* change had taken place since he last saw him, "I can't stop a moment. I have just run-up to tell you, as I passed, of a most extraordinary occurrence that has transpired within the last few days. There is no mistake this time. Alice is yours, my boy. I give her to you freely, joyfully; that is, always provided,—you understand? Talk about wonders: it is miraculous! Would you believe it, sir—could you have credited such a thing for a moment, that I have discovered beyond the possibility of a shadow of a doubt that Alice is my sister?"

"Impossible," cried Mr. Dale, "your—why, how in the world—"

"Well, seriously and truly, Dale," continued Simon, "it is an indisputable fact. But you must excuse me, now; I have left her down stairs in the buggy: but come up to the house this evening—and at the same time you must make arrangements for being disengaged to-morrow, and you shall have the whole history. Will you run-down and see her?—yes, of course you must; but take no notice of what I have told you until this evening; you understand?"

Mr. Dale of course understood, because he certainly made no mention, direct or implied, to anything having any relation thereto; but there was that in his countenance and in his clear, expressive eye as he took her hand, that spoke something far in advance of anything of the sort; and there is every reason to believe that he returned to his office entirely satisfied with the response that that voluminous expression met-with at the hands, or rather from the eyes, of the fair object of the same.

When about half-way between the town and the country estate, they observed a wretched, ragged creature standing by the roadside, a little distance ahead of them, who, as they came up with him, they thought made a movement towards the vehicle, as though to accost them; but checking himself and stepping on one side, he stood looking at them vacantly until they had passed. Simon, taking him for a beggar, thrust his hand into his pocket and threw him a handful of coppers; but on looking back he was surprised to see that he had taken no notice whatever of the money, but was still standing motionless on the road looking after them.

"Why, what does the poor fellow want, I wonder," said Simon, reining-up. "Shall I—oh, he is moving off, I see. I suppose his poverty has affected his head as well as his body, poor fellow. Ah, this poverty is a fearful thing, Alice! We all manage to have our afflictions of one sort and another; but depend upon it, put them altogether, we have none of us known affliction until we have known poverty. Let me see, I must have been very silent since we left Dale's, surely."

"Dear me, have you? I am sure I did not notice it, although you will certainly say it is a very bad compliment to say so," said Alice, who nevertheless had certainly not observed it, for she had been too fully occupied herself, and had really said so much and heard so much, by whatever means it had reached her, that the only thing she observed was that the journey was diminishing with unaccountable rapidity.

"Yes," continued Simon, "I was just running over the singular circumstances through which we became acquainted with Dale. Very strange how things do come about! Well, he is most unquestionably a very fine fellow. I don't know any one of my acquaintance that combines so many good qualities with so much real ability. I find he belongs to an excellent family in the old country, too; and I am satisfied he will be somebody in this country yet."

Simon said this with the two-fold object of leaving Alice to conceive that he knew something of the nature of her sentiments on the subject, while at the same time to convey his own.

On arriving home, they were received by Mrs. Plumley, who certainly did look a little surprised at the unexpected visit from Alice, and especially since she was so accompanied.

"Mother," said Simon, taking both her hands in his, and looking earnestly into her face, "we have come to bring you some extraordinary, but at the same time very welcome, intelligence; and *I* to ask your pardon for all the pain and uneasiness that I know I have caused you for some time past. It is all over now. Where is Lizy? Alice will tell you all about it for me—do, there's a dear; but Lizy must be the first to receive it from me—that is, if she will. I ought to be doubtful, certainly; but where is she?"

"Why, she is all alone up stairs in the drawing-room, Simon, my child," returned Mrs. Plumley, looking from one to the other in astonishment. "But, dear me, how strange! Whatever does it mean?"

"As strange as it seems, I can assure you," said Simon; "but Alice will explain it to you. I must leave that task with you, my dear, for I must confess that I am a little bewildered with my own part."

He found Lizy seated on the sofa with her work in her hand; but he thought, from the way in which she held it, that she had not been working. She was looking pale and sad, and she started as he entered, and seemed almost bewildered; and as he advanced towards her with both his hands extended, she rose hesitatingly, and, when she did place her hands in his, she did it with such an expression of timidity, that it almost bordered on alarm, and he felt so stung and conscience-stricken by the wonderful alteration in her appearance an manner, which had never before so impressed

him as at that moment, that it was some time before he could sufficiently suppress his emotion to utter a word.

"Lizy," he said at length, as the tears started to his eyes, "I have been very cruel, wickedly cruel. Can you forgive me?"

She looked at him more bewildered than ever, and, after struggling to speak for several moments in vain, she fell upon the sofa, and, burying her face in her hands, began to cry bitterly.

"Can you, can you forgive me, Lizy," said Simon, seating himself beside her, after a long pause.

"I have never, never accused you, Simon," she sobbed in reply. "I have nothing to forgive you."

Whereupon Simon gently took her hand in his and said tenderly—well, the fact is, my dear reader, you know very well what he said; the whole affair went on from beginning to end in precisely the usual form; a lover's reconciliation—and we all know exactly what that is; at least, if we don't, we ought to, because of course we have all been in love in our time, all had our courtships, real or imaginary, and whatever sort of an affair would a courtship be without a little misunderstanding? why, one of the most insipid things in the whole world, without a doubt. There was as usual a copious flow of tears on either side; both were wrong, and yet nobody was wrong at all; they were both perfectly sure, that, notwithstanding what had occurred, they loved each other to—to the usual degree; and so at the expiration of about half an hour they were thoroughly established again as two of the most loving, devoted, happy, and essentially blissful atoms-organic that Cupid and the world had ever blessed. And when Simon fetched-up Alice, and introduced her to her friend as his sister, the manner in which they fell on each other's necks, the manner in which their blessed little hearts did beat in unison together, and the happiness and love and friendship with which they all overflowed together, is something on which the obstinate little bit of steel which has said thus much decidedly declines to say any more, inasmuch as it finds itself wholly insufficient to the task, to which nothing but the lively imagination of the reader can do justice.

"Simon dear," said Mrs. Plumley, stepping-in just as this very desirable state of things had been arrived at, "there's a gen—a poor man down stairs wants to speak to *you*."

"To me?" said Simon. "A poor man—why, Alice, it's never that. Does he look very poor—ragged?"

"Yes, I'm afraid he is," replied Mrs. Plumley.

"Oh, I'll go down to him. Where is he?"

"Well, I didn't like to keep him waiting in the passage, so I asked him into the parlor," said Mrs. Plumley.

"That's right. You must remember I am a sort of public property now. I am supposed now to be in a position to redress all the evils in the county. So it is just possible I may have some strange visitors now and then."

Simon found his visitor standing in the centre of the room with a ragged cap in his hand, and his head hanging down upon his chest, and he at once recognized him as the man who had attracted his notice while on his way to the house a short time before.

He was tall and thin, and looked very haggard. His dress had the appearance of having originally belonged to the better order, but it was now very much worn and ragged, and the coat was buttoned close-up to the chin, apparently for the purpose of concealing the absence of anything like linen; and altogether he was as wretched and miserable an object as could well be. He evinced considerable agitation as Simon entered, and kept his eyes irresolutely fixed upon the ground.

Simon requested him to be seated, without seeming to take the slightest notice of his appearance, for he at once detected a something in his manner that scarcely accorded with his dress. And after some hesitation, still keeping his eyes upon the ground, he said,

"I suppose you have entirely forgotten me, Mr. Seek?"

"Well, dear me," said Simon, "have I the pleasure—are you known to me? I am really afraid that I have—indeed I have no recollection. May I enquire your name?"

"Well, sir," returned the other, "I am quite aware that I ought to be ashamed to repeat it to you, if a matter in which you are so little concerned be still in your recollection. But seeing your name lately in the papers, I have made bold to come to you, thinking that you would possibly be in possession of information deeply concerning me, and which I have sought elsewhere in vain, and feeling assured that I might rely upon your generosity. My name, sir, is Sorftish."

"What, really, Mr. Sorftish, the husband of—why, I really must ask your pardon," cried Simon, jumping-up from his seat and grasping

him by the hand. "I am really delighted to see you, and so will they all be. Really, there was no necessity for any such preface; they will all be delighted to see you."

Mr. Sorftish shook his head as if in doubt, and, after looking at Simon a considerable time in silence, said,

"You are very kind, sir, very kind. You say *all*. May I ask you is Philip—is *she* still in the country?"

"In the country!" said Simon. "Most certainly they are; and wonderfully successful Philip has been. I saw them only yesterday. They are both quite well."

"Thank you, thank you," said Mr. Sorftish, turning away his head to conceal his emotion. "That is all I want to know. I can scarcely hope to see them again."

"Not see them!" returned Simon, "why there is nothing in the world will give them both greater pleasure than to see you again and know you are well. I'll answer for them. Look! here's Mr. Plumley coming in—you remember Mr. Plumley? You wont mind seeing him, I'm sure."

"I shall be very glad," said Mr. Sorftish, casting his eyes nervously over his dress. "I am sorry I have been obliged to come as I am," he added, "but the fact is—and I may as well tell you the truth—I have had to walk and beg my way from the Southern States."

"Is it possible!—I'm very sorry," returned Simon. "But, pray don't think of any such things as apologies here, whatever you do. But here he is. Father," he said, putting his head out of the door, "will you just step in here a moment. You will be surprised when I tell you—I dare say you have entirely forgotten ——"

"Forgotten!" cried Mr. Plumley, falling back with a shock almost as soon as his eyes fell upon the stranger's face. "No! Why, by George, if it aint—Heavens! why—Lizy, Lizy girl," cried Mr. Plumley, rushing-out into the passage before Simon could possibly stop him, "here, here, here—he is come back! Why, Mr. Sorftish," he continued, rushing-in again and grasping him by the hand, "well, this is a pleasure, this is! By George, who could have believed this! Why, look here, Lizy girl," he said, as Mrs. Plumley presented herself in a great flurry, "whoever do you think this is?—Why, Mr. Sorftish come back, that's who it is."

"Oh, mercy," cried Mrs. Plumley, "never! Oh, how delighted poor Mrs. Sorftish will be!"

"There, Lizy, that's just what I always said," cried Mr. Plumley, giving the air a triumphant slap with the back of his hand, as though Mr. Sorftish's departure had only occurred that morning, and he had returned in time for tea. "I always said that Mr. Sorftish would come back! and here he is. Lor, this is something, this is."

"But I'm afraid, Mr. Sorftish, you are not well—you are looking fatigued," said Mrs. Plumley, looking with some little hesitation from the wanderer to her husband, and thence to Simon, and thence back again. "Wont you come into the next room where there is a fire, and ——"

"Not now, I think, thank you. You are very kind," said Mr. Sorftish, making motions of preparation for leaving, "very kind. But, not now, I think. I have gained the object for which I came—I was very anxious to know if they were in the country and well; and I thank you deeply for the kindness with which you have accompanied the information. But I think I should not stop this evening—not this evening, I thank you."

"What, by George, why, why—*go!*" cried Mr. Plumley, in utter confusion. "*Go!* Why, Lizy—why, Simon, this aint the thing, you know."

"No, no, no," said Simon, "we cannot listen to that, I assure you, Mr. Sorftish. You must really make-up your mind to consider this your resting-place for this night at all events."

It was with some difficulty that they prevailed upon him to remain: but the arguments they advanced were entirely unanswerable, and the comforts their hospitality suggested were so acceptable to his fatigued and worn-out body, that they ultimately prevailed, and bore him off in triumph as their guest for that night at least.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

Towards the evening of the following day, the whole party arrived from Toronto—Messrs. Kwack, Albosh, and Worzel having been duly hunted-up for the occasion from their several retreats—and, after a comfortable, cheerful, homely, thorough-going, farm-house tea, as a sort of gastronomic preface, they all gathered round the huge log-fire in a large circle, all seated in their proper positions according to their several relationships—and a very interesting group of relations some of them formed.

There were Simon and Lizy, *they* were together—of course they were together, and oh! what a change—no one would have believed it—no one *could* have believed it unless they had seen it, or had experienced precisely the same thing themselves and knew all about it, which of course a great many have and do; then there were Philip and Clara, *they* were together; and then Mr. Dale and Alice—yes, *they* were together—and supremely happy and beautiful and gentle did Alice look; and there were Mr. Worzel and, yes—Miss Plumley, the victim of days gone by—*they* were together, and what serenity and confiding sweetness on the one hand, and what jolly, red-faced contentment on the other hand, were there at the same time as a necessary concomitant!

Then there were McCameron and Mrs. McCameron, and Matilda, who was once more happy in the affections of her much-loved home, although there was still a shade of thought and pensiveness on her countenance that perhaps would never leave it. Then there was the elder McCameron; and below him again were Messrs. Kwack and Albosh; and further on again, to make the whole thing complete and unquestionable, William and Timothy—Timothy the most indispensable of all: while the whole circle was appropriately crowned at the top and made complete with the host and hostess—the ruling spirits of the whole assembly, the good genii of these Adventures and of all the adventurers that have appeared upon this stage from the first page to the last.

But these were not all. There were yet two more of the party. On Mr. Plumley's left there sat an individual who appeared to be very much careworn and emaciated in countenance, and, although he was well and neatly attired, it was easy to perceive that he had recently suffered some heavy privations, and that he was still very much depressed and enervated. By his side sat Mrs. Sorftish, who it was also easy to perceive had but very lately been subjected to a total undoing of all the undoable portion of her nervous condition.

There had been a great scene. There had been great crying and bewailing, and confessing, and promising, and self-condemnation, and repentance; but it was all over now—a reconciliation had been effected, and they were both the happier for it: and it is to be hoped that the unfortunate wanderer had returned a wiser and better man, after so many years of absence and distress and reflection.

Altogether, it was such a party as would unquestionably have done the heart of any one living a considerable amount of good even to have looked upon. And there was abundant grounds for the supposition, that not only the heart, but the soul, body, and appurtenances generally of Mr. Plumley, derived an amount of good from the contemplation thereof that never could, by any reasonable possibility, have proceeded from any other known source: notwithstanding that at times he appeared to be seized with a certain slight aberration of ideas, and fell more than once into a series of singular irregularities, not among the least remarkable of which was the somewhat original and amusing process by which he sought to convert a variety of ingredients placed upon a side-table for the purpose, into the old familiar punch.

There were several comfortable-looking bottles, with unmistakable labels, one would have thought, hung round their necks—there were jugs of boiling water, pyramids of sugar, and regiments of lemons; and all they evidently required was a little presence of mind to put them into proper contact, which Mr. Plumley proceeded to do by throwing the whole lemons into the hot water and trying to squeeze them in a body into the necks

of the bottles, and then pouring the water on to the sugar, and then the sugar altogether into the water, and then the contents of the bottles into one another, and on the table, and about the floor, and then shaking them all up together, and then placing an empty jug, with a cloth carefully laid upon the top, to brew upon the hob; all of which being brought to a successful termination, he seated himself again, with an air of supreme satisfaction, in the midst of the circle, around which his eyes had been wandering incessantly during the whole process—for it had evidently become to him, to all intents and purposes, a charmed circle, beyond which, for the time being, there was no escape.

"Well," said Mr. Plumley, looking round in a sort of mysterious rapture after he had placed the empty jug upon the hob and seated himself with that supreme satisfaction just mentioned, "this is a time, this is. By George," he added, looking abstractedly at the several young couples that formed one side of the circle, and that certainly might have made a very much more metallic heart than his lose its balance, so to speak, for the time, and fly-off into a variety of unwonted aberrations, as his evidently did,—"by George, if this isn't a sight to see, why, why, by George, what *is* a sight, that's the question? Lor, Mr. McCameron, if this aint miraculous, what is? Who could ever have hoped to see this! There, sir, if I aint reg'larly b'wildered with this here sight, why I was never b'wildered with nothing, that's what I wasn't. Just to look upon it. By George!"

"Well, I must confess, you seem a little bit bewildered, George dear," said Mrs. Plumley, looking round upon the punch confusion.

"Eh, eh?" said Mr. Plumley, following her eyes, and appearing to wake-up a little as he examined the nature of the "brew" upon the hob, "why,why, by George, what's this! Why, Lizy girl—there, there, I told you I was b'wildered—I told you so. Why, I've been and made a reg'lar mess here—a reg'lar mess.—Well, it's no use, I can't do it—I'm b'wildered—I knew I was. You must do it, girl—you must indeed. Lor, what a mess I've made, to be sure! Well, the fact is, my nerves arn't equal to it. They always was weak, and here's a proof of it. You must do it, Lizy girl. By George!"

After this difficulty was overcome, which it ultimately was by the joint exertions of Mrs. Plumley and Simon, and everything was properly established for the evening, Mr. Plumley again remarked,

"Well, friends, as I understand it, it aint our intention to make this, this time, a party of regular merriment and fun like, although I shall look forward to that before long; there's the weddings, they're coming, I can see that plain enough, and that'll be the time, and a pretty time that will be, I can see that; but what we are metfor this evening is to go over a little remniscence of by-gone days, so to speak, and I dare say we shall all have at least something to say on such an occasion, when we think how we have all been linked together in such a singular manner for so many years, and how strange everything has come about,—I dare say we shall all find something to say. And such being the case, Mr. McCameron is going to lead the way for us, and I am sure we shall all listen to what he has got to tell us with the deepest interest; that I am sure of."

It was the elder McCameron that he referred to; and as this appeared to have been pre-arranged, the old gentleman at once commenced, in the midst of the most profound silence, the following narrative:

"It is now forty years ago since I left Scotland with a wife and two children—a boy and a girl—for Germany. From some cause or other, after my settling on the Continent, the correspondence with my friends at home began gradually to decrease from year to year, until it ultimately ceased altogether: and I lost all knowledge of them, for the most part, it appears, forever in this world. Whether the fault rested with me or with my friends, I have never been thoroughly able to decide; but I suppose, being weaned away by new associations formed in a new country, I had my full share in the negligence which led to it. For nearly twenty years we lived in the utmost happiness and contentment, entirely engrossed in the little world of our own family, and a few choice friends whom we had gathered about us; when a circumstance occurred, which, while it entirely destroyed our happiness for the time, had the ultimate effect of breaking-up our home altogether, and separating us all in this world forever. There was admitted into our family-circle a young man of the name of Blackbourn, who was well introduced, and who, from his apparent goodness and nobleness of disposition, became very soon an object of respect and esteem with the whole family; and I believe we all had the greatest confidence in his honor and integrity. But unhappily we had very soon to learn that our confidence was

lamentably misplaced. He was known to us but a few weeks; but in those few weeks he succeeded in so insinuating himself into the favour of our dear misguided girl, and of so cruelly poisoning her mind, that he first induced her to contract a clandestine marriage with him at a distant village church, and subsequently to leave her home altogether and return with him to England, without our knowledge or consent, or indeed without leaving to us a parting word of any kind. Poor girl, poor dear girl," said the old man, removing the tears from his eyes, "she never had another opportunity; we heard from her no more. Whether she was carried from her home by force, or what the circumstances were, we could never tell. It must have been a strange influence that could so have changed her. From her cradle, she was the most good, and loving, and dutiful of children. Her brother was dotingly fond of her, for she was the dearest and best of sisters; and although everybody said she was very handsome, and I scarcely knew how handsome she was myself until now," he said, looking towards Alice, "she never evinced anything like vanity in her beauty; indeed she appeared to be the only one indifferent to it. Poor dear, dear child, we could never explain it; it is a very strange mystery. How greatly she must have been deceived I cannot tell, and have never had and never can have the means to know. Her poor heart-broken mother survived the shock but a few weeks. But little more than a month afterwards, she died while I was in England in search of our misguided child. Our poor boy, who had always entertained the deepest love for his sister, was driven nearly distracted by this two-fold calamity; and I was afterwards told by friends, for I saw him no more, that he swore upon his mother's grave to avenge her death, and to make the culprit expiate his two-fold crime with his life. He left for England, and I lost sight of him, never to see him any more. Soon after I received information that they had all left England for America, and I set-out in search of them to this country. But I have since found that the information was incorrect. My poor dear girl found her grave in England, very unhappily and very young: she survived her mother but two years, but two short years, and very unhappy I fear they were—very, very unhappy," he said, shaking his head sorrowfully to and fro, while the tears rolled copiously down his cheeks. "Her brother," he added, after a long pause, "it seems followed the culprit about the world for nearly fifteen years, waiting for the opportunity of carrying his resolution into effect, while at the same time he was enabled to watch over the safety of one of the two children whom she had left to the world. He followed him to the forests of Canada, and, after several years spent in the same manner, it seems he ultimately lost his life in endeavouring to carry his long-nursed resolution into effect; and the culprit escaped, but only to become the inmate of a mad-house, where," he added, looking to his brother and thence to Alice and Simon, "we have seen his end. Gordon," he said, grasping his brother by the hand, "I have kept this from you hitherto, for reasons which you will understand. We have both suffered from the same unhappy cause; we have suffered heavily; but we have forgiven him—may he be forgiven. We were both but robbed of our dear ones for a time. Yours is again by your side; and mine, I thank Heaven, are restored to me as they were when I last saw them so many years ago: there is no change," said the tearful old man, putting-out his hands towards Alice and Simon, who crossed-over and seated themselves by his side, "my dear children," he continued, pressing them both in his trembllng arms, "there is no change—the same, the very same, after twenty long years. Thank God I have found you, my children, and you are the same that I had lost."

There was a long pause after this, and each one looked at the other through their tears in silence, until the old man, looking-up and addressing his brother again, resumed: "I have the chief of this history, Gordon, from William here, who was with Blackbourn from the first, and from documents written by my son himself and intrusted to William's care the night, it is supposed, before his death. You knew him, Gordon: he went by the name of Bolton."

"Is it possible!" said McCameron; "poor fellow, poor fellow."

"If I might be allowed," said William, seeing that the old man appeared to have finished, "I would just say one word in explanation of anything that might seem strange on my part. The reason I remained with Mr. Blackbourn so long was that—I shall always remember it—the day before poor Mrs. Blackbourn—your mamma, Miss," he said, turning to Alice, "was—was taken from this world, she said to me, 'William,' she said, 'my dear little girl'—you was very little then, Miss—'has no friends in the world; will you promise me, William,' she

said, 'to take care of her as far as you're able, and see that no harm comes to her?' 'I will, mum, I *will*, mum,' said I, 'and I'll never see no harm come near her as long as I live, if so be that I can help it.' And having made that promise, and on such a solemn occasion too, I felt it was my duty to try to keep it. Not that Miss Alice have ever wanted any protection from me, but still it was my duty to be by in case, and that's the reason; and I am proud at least that I have lived to see you, Miss, out of everything like danger, and surrounded by all your best friends, as I see at the present time. And I am sure if I had been able to do ten thousand times more than what little I have, I'm sure this here night would more than pay me a thousand-fold."

Alice pressed his hand, that had done so much for her for so many years, and looked her gratitude to him through her tears: but her heart was too full to admit of words. The old man laid his hand upon his shoulder, and thanked him also with looks that no words could possibly have rendered more acceptable.

"There is one more thing, Sir, that perhaps I ought to explain," continued William, addressing Gordon McCameron. "Perhaps both Mr. Bolton and me, Sir, might have done something to prevent what took place with Mrs.—with—in your family, Sir. It was perhaps very wrong that we did'nt, Sir—very wrong; we both felt it, Sir. But Mr. Bolton, although perhaps he didn't show it much, had a great love for Miss Alice, and he thought she was very lonely without any one to talk to her or to be with her, and I had some such thought too; and we thought, Sir, that—that your daughter might be company for Miss Alice, and we perhaps never thought that it would turn out altogether as it did, and so we didn't interfere. It was very wrong, I know; but I hope, as things have turned out after, and there seems such a Providence in it altogether, that you will forgive what we did wrong in that, Sir."

"My dear mon," said McCameron, "there is nothing to forgive. It is all a strange dispensation; and it has worked many great and good ends, and perhaps we may all be the happier for it yet. The way in which all our troubles have worked together for good, must strike you all, my friends, as very strange—very strange."

"It's truly wonderful," said Mr. Plumley, "that's what it is. And when we think what it's all come to, and above all what it all seems likely to come to," he added, with his eye still upon the young folks and his mind upon the results which present appearances augured; "if it aint, why it's literly mirac'lous, that's what it is—mirac'lous. To think that Timothy too should have been such an instrument to it at first," (Timothy turned away his head and looked steadfastly at the fire), "to think that he should," continued Mr. Plumley, "it's astonishing. To think that when he brought that little bit of a baby home on that cold night here, twenty odd years ago, that all this should come out of it. It's more than wonderful, that's what it is, and that's all we can say."

Seeing that there was a general silence after this, and that Mr. Plumley looked towards him, Mr. Kwack quietly buttoned-up his coat and rose.

"Friends," said Mr. Kwack, "it has been truly said that the vicissitudes and the fortuitous concatenation of circumstances that have led to the present homogeneous elucidation, are mysterious and inscrutable. And truly, from what we have heard this evening, and from what we have all witnessed for ourselves, we may say that such is categorically the case. But although I can lay no claim to having played a very worthy part in the romantic drama, I trust you will allow me to congratulate you all on the happy consummation which has now been arrived at, to be followed, as we have every reason to hope, by an indefinite period of love, happiness, and prosperity. For my own part, I feel proud to be allowed to participate in the rejoicings on this occasion, and deeply grateful at the same time, that, from other fortuitous circumstances, I am made, with my friend Mr. Albosh, a participant in the hope of a prosperous and happy future. And I feel it my duty before I sit down to return my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments to my esteemed friend and patron, Mr. Seek, for having, as he has this day informed us, dispelled the darkness of our future prospects by procuring for both my friend and myself an appointment under her Majesty—in her Majesty's Customs—whereby we may not only defy necessity in the present, but, by energy, perseverance, and integrity, may ultimately, according to our individual merit, advance in the social labyrinth. It is my intention from this moment, as I believe it is that of my friend, to forego altogether the peculiar line of study and investigation in which I have hitherto been engaged, and to apply myself wholly and solely to the study of those peculiar branches

of knowledge which my occupation may involve, and that may qualify me for advancement according to the rules and regulations therein prescribed. By this means, we hope to make ourselves competent and useful as her Majesty's servants, while at the same time we may render ourselves in some degree worthy of the favor and distinction that has thus been conferred upon us. I would just make this remark in conclusion, that I am now, after mature consideration, convinced that my studies and acquirements have not been directed hitherto in a proper course. I have been from my youth a great admirer of Johnson, and have spent much time in making myself acquainted with him ; but I feel now convinced that that time has been to a great extent wasted; that I have therein been pursuing the shadow and neglecting the substance—feeding and decorating the ideal, while I ought to have been satisfying and clothing the physical—in short, dreaming while I ought to have been working,—and I am sorry for it. Another chimera which I have been vainly pursuing, has been the amelioration of the masses ; but I see plainly enough now, that before we can do anything towards ameliorating the masses, we must first ameliorate ourselves. And I am not surprised that the masses should have laughed at an individual talking about ameliorating *them*, when it was very plain that he didn't know how to ameliorate himself. I see plainly enough that a people's champion in rags is about the same thing as a dead crow in a corn-field—a monument of its own folly and a warning to the rest. With all this, friends, I have done forever ; and I trust I shall not make the worse servant for having found the folly of trying to be everybody's master before I was my own. Friends, I again congratulate you on the happy consummation of events of which we are here this evening to recount the reminiscences."

Mr. Kwack's remarks met with the general approbation, and, by the time he had concluded, a great deal of the sadness which had been caused by the former narrations had passed off, and the company began again to assume an aspect of cheerfulness. Mr. Kwack being seated, his friend Mr. Albosh took his place.

"While humbly adding my congratulations to those of my friend who has just sat down," said Mr. Albosh, "I have just one remark that I would wish to make. My friend has told you that he has found it expedient to change and discard many of his former views and former pursuits ; and he has also intimated that *I* have thought it advisible to do the same. Without going into detail, I may assure you that such is the case. As you all know, my mind has been engrossed all my lifetime in scientific discovery and research. Well, I have to inform you that I have just made *the* great discovery of my life ; it is this : that the pursuit of science in any shape as a means of profit or future greatness to a poor man, is precisely what the Jack O'Lantern is to the traveller. It looks all very fair and bright and alluring at the outset, but the very road over which it conducts us is through a bog, and the farther we go the more we get bewildered and entangled, until we find ourselves deserted in darkness and the very heart of a quagmire : in short, it is the direct road to everything that is ruinons and vexatious. Such being my altered views, friends, I leave you to form your own opinions on the probabilities of my future conduct. I shall merely add my humble acknowledgements and thanks to those of my friend, for the very generous and disinterested kindnesss of our friend Mr. Seek, as has been explained to you ; and congratulating you all on the happy consummation of events, I resume my seat, assuring you that the overflow of my feelings at this moment could scarcely be characterised as anything approaching a bagatelle."

After this Mr. Worzel rose and offered a few remarks on the various incidents in the domestic drama in which he had been honored with a part ; and he spoke in many instances with truly touching effect—in fact, so much so that a silent tear was seen to steal serenely forth from the fountain-orb of the fair spinster by his side, especially when he delicately alluded to the approaching nuptials between himself and that lady. After which Mr. Josiah Sorftish made a penitent speech, in which he heartily deplored the past, and concluded by saying that for the last nine years he had been disciplined in a severe school—he had been admonished for nine long years of his unnatural and unworthy conduct by the most terrible adversities, and he trusted that the future would prove that the discipline and admonition had not been in vain. After which Philip had his say, and Simon had his say, and Timothy made a great speech, and Mr. Plumley summed it all up in the greatest speech of all ; and then all had a say together, and the girls took their turn *en masse*, and of course very soon had the best of it : which we trust will be received as a just and sufficient excuse for our immediately quitting

the field, inasmuch as it could scarcely be expected that we could follow successfully through the interminable labyrinth of hopes and fears and delights and conjectures and tender impossibilities that immediately obtained.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE END.

READER! there is little more to be told. And although that has doubtless already become to you a self-evident fact and might appear a somewhat unnecessary announcement, if you will be good enough to turn to any, or even all the precedents that have gone before, you will find that that is nevertheless the proper, orthodox opening for the concluding chapter. Yes. We have but little more to tell. In fact, what can we have to tell that is not already divined and appreciated by you, my dear reader? Shall we tell of Lizy—how, like the bursting-out of the bright sun from a dark cloud, that happy, joyous, radiant smile again beamed upon her countenance; how the lustre again returned to her eye and the bloom to her cheek, and how she was precisely ten times more lovely, and ten hundred times more happy than she had ever been before, or could ever by any earthly possibility have been at all, without that very same interlude of doubt and uncertainty and distress through which she had passed? shall we go still further and expose our utter inefficiency by attempting to portray the superlative happiness, the love and elysium which followed upon that "happy event" at which it has been our sole object and design from the very first to the last, successfully to arrive? shall we tell—no. We shall do nothing of the kind. For we will not do you the injustice, my dear reader, to suppose for a moment that all this and so much more, even to those small presentations of affection and love, with papa's eyes and mama's chin, and so forth—without which, either implied, expressed, or imagined, as you are fully aware, a tale of this sort could have no possible object in its existence—has not already been discussed in your imagination, and settled according to your own views and tastes and inclinations—with which it becomes us not to interfere.

Shall we then tell you of Alice, of *her* happiness and her goodness; and how at the very same time that Lizy became Mrs. Seek, she became Mrs. Dale, and of all the happy events and *ad*vents that followed upon that happy exchange? and shall we go on further and depict the unsullied course of prosperity and success through which *Mr.* Dale advanced, until he suddenly found himself seated beside his friend in the Canadian Legislature? and shall we go on further still and—no; certainly not: for that were to suppose, my dear reader, that you had no imagination whatsoever, and required to be enlighted upon self-evident facts. Precisely the same may be said of Clara and Philip. Inasmuch as you are already perfectly conversant with the fact, it can serve no possible purpose for us to go on to state that *their* happiness was unsullied, their prosperity unmarred; that their youth was spent in elysium, and their age in paradise, and that neither care, trouble, anxiety, nor misfortune were ever known to cast their shadow on their way. This is all a settled fact, as immutably fixed in the laws of fiction, as, in the laws of nature, is the revolving of the earth upon its imaginary axis.

Such being the case, we draw the veil around them, and, just intimating—lest it should not have occurred to you so forcibly as in the other instances—that we place the amiable spinster, the once victimised Selina, and the tender-hearted, jolly-faced Joe in the same happy catalogue—a pair of paragons in contentment and domestic bliss, and leaving you to picture to yourself, if you feel disposed to do so, that amiable creature with a round, chubby, red-faced epitome of Joe upon either knee, and the very quintessence of motherly affection and pride in either eye; we leave them one and all entirely at your disposal, and bid them a long farewell.

Of the McCamerons we may say that they still live together in their quiet retirement, as happy and contented and beloved as such noble and generous qualities as we have seen them to possess, must inevitably render their possessors

wherever they are found. While Matilda is a world of happiness to them in their quiet home, their children who are without in the great world are the constant source of pride and pleasure to them in a thousand ways; and what with the constant interchange of visits—now a Plumley party, and then a McCameron party—and the unremitting manifestations of friendship and affection on all sides, they are continually realizing some new pleasure, and for ever distilling fresh happiness through the whole of the charmed circle in which they move.

"Lizy girl," said Mr. Plumley returning from a trip to Toronto some considerable time after all the great events we have here briefly alluded-to had taken place,—"Lizy girl, what do you think?"

"I can't have the least idea," said Mrs. Plumley.

"Well, I believe Mr. Kwack and Mr. Albosh are going to be married."

"Lor, you don't say so," said Mrs. Plumley. "Dear me, what a blessing that would be for them, George dear."

"Yes," continued Mr. Plumley. "I am not quite certain; but Simon thinks so too. They didn't say anything to *me* about it when I saw them yesterday morning, but what I judge a good deal from is this: As I was walking down King Street in the evening, just below the Rossin House there, I all of a sudden heard a voice that I of course recognized immediate, say (this was all I heard, you know,—I don't know of course what led to it) '—— elucidates to me that *two* in this country can live just about as cheap as one, if not contumaciously cheaper!' And on looking round, what should I see but Mr. Kwack, arm in arm with a very respectable, well-looking young woman, who was a smiling her consent to what he was a saying in about as plain a English as ever I saw. Well, I had scarcely had time to observe this, when I heard another voice close behind, say, as distinctly as possible, 'I've just discovered that the cost of furniture for *two* would be but a mere trifle—in fact, a bagatelle.' There," continued Mr. Plumley, "considering that they are both getting-on surprising well in the places that Simon found for them and are just going to have a rise, what do you think of that?"

Mrs. Plumley thought it decidedly ominous. You, my dear reader, may think of it just what you please. At this stage of affairs, it is simply our duty to record the fact as it is,—yours to put your own construction upon it.

"Well," continued Mr. Plumley, "it's a great blessing, Lizy, to see that Mr. and Mrs. Sorftish live so comfortably together since he has returned. His brother tells me he is wonderfully altered, and he is now the very best of husbands and they seem quite happy together. And Philip says, since Josiah has gone into partnership with him the business has prospered even more than it did before; and he don't know how they would do now, he says, one without the other. So that's a great blessing, aint it, Lizy girl? And what do you think Josiah was telling me besides, Lizy? He says he read in a paper a short time ago that both those Yankee scoundrels who robbed him of the money and who we have had so much trouble with at different times, have been committed to prison somewhere, I forget where, in the States, for forging the numbers on bank-notes—that is, making ones into tens, and so forth, you know. That's just what I should have expected of them. So you see, their career is stopped, for some time at all events. That's what I have always said, Lizy," said Mr. Plumley in conclusion, nodding significantly at his wife; "no good can ever come of dishonesty, say what you will, and after all I can't see as it ought."

Thinking, my dear reader, that you might be inspired with a similar opinion, we came to the conclusion that this was the proper way to dispose of our two sharp acquaintances from the other side of the line: the amount of punishment and extent of retribution to be inflicted, is, with the other matters, left entirely with you to decide upon and with your imagination to realize.

Timothy continues the same remarkable little phenomenon in fustian as ever. With the exception of one little bald spot of about the size of a penny-piece in the very centre of his tight little head, it is impossible to discover the slightest semblance of a change in any portion of either his mental or physical development. He is precisely the same eccentric little biped as when we first picked him up jogging through the rain and sleet on that memorable night on London Bridge. It is needless to say that he still lives with the Plumleys, and that he fully intends dying with the Plumleys, should that very improbable event take place within the lifetime of any of the family. To say he was happy, would be to suppose that it were possi-

ble for him to be *un*happy,—a supposition which has no foundation in fact. The only approximation that he was ever known to show towards it being on one occasion, a short time ago, when Mr. Plumley presented him with a pretty considerable "roll" of bank-notes, the result of his savings in his behalf, and suggested the advisability of his doing something on his own account. Whereupon he put forward the most distressed and troubled countenance that he was ever seen to wear, and proceeded to say, that he was very sorry if he had been and given any offence; he was reg'lar unconscious of it, if he had; but to go for to think that such a s'geston should ha' come from his old master in that there manner, was like killing him by inches on the spot—that's what it was, reg'lar.

William has gone to live with the McCamerons, where he is still esteemed as a faithful servant, and respected as the kind and ingenuous protector of their children, for so many years, against the wild passions of a misguided and poisoned soul, and against the inclemency and privations of the inhospitable forest.

Thus, then, we have conducted them all to their proper goal—to that meridian-point from which we would not willingly disturb them. Like a good, affectionate parent, we send them forth into the world contented and happy and prosperous. And hark! the bell is already jingling—the curtain falls, and our dream is at an end.

Reader! we have wandered a long journey together—we have passed through many scenes and talked-of many things. I would fain hope that our communion has not been in vain—that a friendship has already been cemented between us—that it may yet be improved in the future; and that while this is our first meeting on the Great Highway, it may not be our last, and that the next may add but another link to a long chain: and with the sincere expression of this hope, I lay down my pen, and wait for your response to reinspire it.

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