

# THE STORY OF LAURA SECORD.

BY ERVEST CRUIKSHANK.

On the 17th October, 1868, at the pretty village of Chippawa, where she had lived for fifty years as wife and widow, died, at the age of ninety-three, "one of the most patriotic and courageous women of any age or country."

Born in 1775, in Massachusetts, the very foremost of the revolting colonies, Laura Secord, nee Ingersoll, came to the then unopened west of Canada, the infant of her father's family.

Thomas Ingersoll was a wealthy man, of good social position in Massachusetts, and his wife was Sarah, daughter of General John Whiting, of Great Barrington, Co. Berk, Mass., therefore Laura Ingersoll was born to affluence and station. But the Ingersoll blood was loyal, and could not brook the forsaking of oaths of allegiance and the compulsory terms of the new doctrines of a new liberty. Therefore, on the invitation of his old friend, John Graves Simcoe, who, as "Commander of the Queen's Rangers, a Royalist corps which had been raised in the revolted colonies, and had there done loyal service for the Crown," Mr. Ingersoll sought Canada, the home of the United Empire Loyalists, and, in accordance with Simcoe's views of the future of the country, sought to make his domicile, together with eighty or ninety families who came with him, in what is now Oxford County, on the banks of the Thames. Certain drastic measures on the part of a subsequent Government seriously interfered with the welfare of the little settlement, and Mr. Ingersoll himself removed to the newly set off County of York eventually settling in the Township of Etobicoke.

In the meantime the infant daughter was growing up, sharing hardships of which the present generation know nothing, laboring with her hands in concert with her mother and sisters for the comfort of the father and brothers whose lives had to be spent battling with nature, and in laying the foundations, deep and wide, of that civil and religious liberty we now, perhaps too complacently enjoy. In those days the means of education were small. Mothers and fathers whose learning and polish had been received at Harvard, William and Mary, and the numerous seminaries founded by the English Government, and the liberal tastes of wealthy colonists, saw with pain their own advantages denied to their children; but like brave men and true, they made the best of things, while imparting to their children such knowledge as they were able in the midst of stern labor, never omitted to avail for them of every opportunity that came in their way, whether it were the occasional visit of some university graduate on the search for a site of refuge, some civil officer whose duties placed him among them for a brief period, some clergyman whose widespread parish called him to periodical visits of Christian consolation and religious office, or some school, reached at a great expense of means, time, and labor, set on foot at an important centre, as at York, Kingston, or Newark. Of such intermittent, though, it may truly be said, thorough education, the heroine of the future partook a share; and as she developed into youth and beauty, she was fain to shine at the official functions and entertainments of her father's old and faithful friend, Major-General Simcoe, who was fittingly chosen, on the setting off, in 1791, of the western region of Canada into a separate province, as first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada.

At that period one of the most important families settled in the Niagara district were the Secords. United Empire Loyalists of the strictest type, they had espoused the King's cause with might and main, and as a consequence, the five brothers, with their families had to fly early in the struggle, leaving their estates, chiefly located in Rochelle, Westchester County, New York, and reaching Kingston and Niagara by way of New Brunswick as best they could. It is said that James Secord who married Laura Ingersoll, thus giving her the name Laura Secord, by which she is best known and will ever be commemorated, when only a child three years old had accompanied his mother in her flight through the wilderness, with four other homeless women and many children, to escape the tury of a band of ruffians who called themselves the "Sons of Liberty." After enduring frightful hardships for nearly a month, they finally arrived at Fort Niagara almost naked and starving.

Such terrible experiences were by no means uncommon. In numerous well-authenticated cases, the men of the Loyal families had to fly for their lives, leaving their wives and children, goods and chattels, estates and money, the latter in all instances a forfeit to the new Government, the former to enter an unknown wilderness, themselves and their little ones alike unprotected and unsupported, save by that deep faith in God and love to King and country which, with their personal devotion to their husbands, made of them heroines whose story of unparalleled devotion, hardships patiently borne, motherhood honorably sustained, industry and thrift perseveringly followed, enterprise successfully prosecuted, principle unwaveringly upheld, and tenderness never surpassed, has yet to be written, and whose share in the making of this nation to be equally honored with that of the men who bled and fought for its liberties.

Of enterprising temperaments and of large experience in the commerce of the time, the Secords set on foot lumber and grist mills, together with the accompanying trade at Newark, Queenston, and St. David's, and were soon counted among the successful men of the province. But they were more; they were Loyalists, and as such placed themselves upon the militia roll as defenders of Canada. As soldiers, each generation left a noble record to their children, and established a claim upon the gratitude of their country.

That the Secords were settlers in the true sense of the term, and not merely free-booting adventurers, as has been most unjustly said of the men of Butler's Rangers, is shown by the fact that immediately on the close of the Revolutionary struggle two brothers, Peter and James Secord, applied to Governor Haldimand, through Col. Butler, for the ironwork and stones necessary to the furnishing of a saw and grist mill, to be built close to the Barracks at Niagara. These furnishings they intended to buy in Lower Canada, but were informed that "the mill could

not be run as a private property, but that the materials would be sent up, and the Secords allowed a fair profit for managing it."

"It is almost certain," says Capt. Cruikshank, "that this was the first mill in the Province of Upper Canada, and it was beyond question the first built in the Niagara district." Moreover, these same brothers appear in the list of farmers to whom wheat for sowing was to be supplied by the Government.

Early in 1789 Major David Secord, whose military record is as remarkable for "hairbreadth escapes" as for heroic action, applied for and received a grant of "a single lot in the township of No. 1 (Niagara), in the district of Nassau," and later another grant of six hundred acres near the present village of St. David's, which probably received its name from him. During the war of 1812 he lost all he had by the pillaging of the American soldiery at Queenston, in which loss others of his family and his neighbors suffered, and by the burning of St. David's, where mills, houses, cattle, horses, and securities for loans, all perished in the conflagration. To these were added other losses at Toronto and other places during the course of the war.

During the war of 1812, the Secords, a numerous family, were active defenders of their country. The present writer has seen on various regimental rolls in the Archives at Ottawa the names of Major David Secord, Lieutenant Courland Secord, Quarter-Master Daniel Secord, Capt. Elijah Secord, Lieutenant John Secord, Sergeant James Secord (this was undoubtedly Laura Secord's husband. Under date of 29th June, 1812, he is enrolled as Sergeant in Capt. Geo. Law's Company, 1st Lincoln Militia). To these may be added others of the family, viz.: Abraham Secord, Edwin Secord, John Secord (age given in the company roll, 19), Joseph Secord, Solomon Secord, Stephen Secord—a list of loyal and patriotic men in one family it would be hard to match.

Nor was the Ingersoll family, so soon to be united by a marriage with the Secords, less distinguished for military ardor. In Vol. 15, M. G. Dominion Archives may be found the entry, dated 5th September, 1805, "Thomas Ingersoll, Captain of the Militia of Oxford, London District." This militia consisted of one captain (Thos. Ingersoll), one ensign, three sergeants, three corporals, and twenty-five rank and file, 4th June, 1805; but in 1804 the composition of said militia is stated as: one lieutenant, one ensign, three corporals, one drummer, and forty-five rank and file. Henceforward, so far as available records go, the history of both the Secords and Ingersolls is absorbed in the history of the War of 1812.

Not long was it to remain so! The strife that proved to the full the patience and heroism of Canadian men, brought to the surface the devotion and courage of Canadian women. Loyalty is a principle, not an epithet.

The first year of the war was past, and the invaders had gained nothing. Irritated by the want of success of their arms, the American people, always excepting the saving few, raged the Government, and the Government replied by throwing into the fields all the money and forces it could raise. By land and water the struggle was continued, and during the first portion of the campaign of 1813 the Americans scored several important successes. In June they held Fort George, and it had become the headquarters of their general, who, irritated at finding he had picked up a shell with nothing in it, inflicted on the inhabitants within his limits, which covered Queenston and reached on towards Burlington, many unnecessary restrictions. Every male from the age of the boy to that of the octogenarian was put on parole, and forbidden to leave his immediate home on any pretence whatever.

General Vincent had retreated before the invading force to Burlington Heights, and the situation looked very unpromising, mainly owing to the absence of necessary reinforcements, when a brave man, Col. Harvey turned the scale of events in some measure by a successful night sortie upon the enemy, on the 5th of June, at Stoney Creek. Seeing that the Loyalists, though cast down, were by no means destroyed, Dearborn thought to crush them in another quarter, and in some measure retrieve the prestige lost at Stoney Creek; and it seemed a very easy thing to do. At the crossroads at Beaver Dams, by which only could Vincent receive supplies or reinforcements, was posted, in DeCaw's (or DeCew's) stone house, Lieutenant Fitzgibbon with a picked company of thirty men, volunteers from the 49th—Brock's old regiment—in charge of certain stores. To take this post was to open up the whole peninsula, and for this errand Col. Boerstler, a gallant officer who had already distinguished himself, was ordered to prepare himself. He was in command of the 14th United States Infantry one twelve and one six-pounder field guns, with ammunition, wagons, etc., a few cavalry, and volunteers; in all, six hundred and seventy-three men—a mountain to crush a mouse! But so confident were the Americans of their ultimate success in annexing Canada, "the people" indeed regarding it for some time as a mere walk-over, that they were heedless of certain precautions in an enemy's country, and talked—among themselves, to be sure; but the old proverb that says "stone walls have ears" was exemplified on this occasion; for hints of the intended night surprise fell from the lips of certain of the American soldiers in the house of James Secord, where, by the right of might, the invaders were wont to make themselves free of such comforts as it afforded.

James Secord had been desperately wounded at the Battle of Queenston Heights, and was at home under parole. But Lieutenant Fitzgibbon must be warned; his chance against the force that was to surprise him was nil. Moreover, the country must be saved. And who could do it? The dilemma was soon settled; the loyal heart of the devoted wife was touched to the core at the peril of the time, and Laura Secord, rising to the occasion, essayed a task which strong men might justly shrink. Whoever now should travel from Queenston to Beaver Dams would find a fine stone road to traverse all the way. Skirting the lovely and fertile vale of St. David's, he would be filled with admiration, not more of the natural scenery than of the fine agricultural

district dotted with substantial homes that would greet his eye on every hand. On the north-west, as he advanced, another fertile valley of great extent would come into view. At three points within the valley the spires and tall chimneys of manufacturing villages would meet his vision, while on the shores of the blue waters of Lake Ontario, stretching away in the distance, two considerable port towns would be distinguishable. At the back of the valley the traveller's eye would rest upon high bluffs, richly wooded, curving south-westerly, and losing themselves in the high plateau on which he was advancing. He would also observe with much admiration the stupendous piece of engineering that crosses the valley from the high land at his feet to the lake shore, the Locks of the Welland Canal; and travelling a little further, until he stopped by a magnificent cantilever bridge. Turning to the left of the bridge, about fifty yards from the river bank, he would see a fine memorial stone to the memory of the killed at Beaver Dams.

Not such was the valley nor such the road in 1812, when Laura Secord essayed her journey of patriotism and mercy. The whole of the valley was a black swamp traversed by innumerable creeks, full of wild creatures, and across which no path led. The road was a quagmire, and, moreover, was not open to peaceful travel. To have pursued a direct route to Fitzgibbon at DeCew's would have been a trying and toilsome journey indeed, but the delicate woman, the mother of four little children, was forbidden even that. The enemy's pickets were out on all the road; she would have to travel through the swamp, climb the heights at Twelve-Mile Creek, push her way through the beech woods, and reach DeCew's from the back. The distance involved was the smallest item of the terrible journey. The thickets of the swamp, with its underbrush, the lurking-places of the wolf, the wild-cat, the bear, and the rattlesnake; the pathless wilderness of its oozy bottom, its solitude, its terror, these were the real hardships. Even the mountain, its steep sides, its brawling stream, its dark mantle of virgin forest, was not so terrible, for, once upon it, she might meet a British picket; she did not count on Indians, a sufficient terror in themselves if come upon unawares.

But duty had to be done, and Laura Secord did it. Leaving her home, her sick husband and young children—not without many a scalding tear, we may be sure, though all signs of agitation had to be concealed—the brave woman set forward on her journey, all unprepared for it indeed, for she did not dare alter her usual early morning attire by one iota, and had to circumvent three American sentries before she reached St. David's, one at her own gate, where the pretence of a strayed cow sufficed, the other by the true story of a sick brother at St. David's.

At St. David's she entered the swamp, through which she guided herself by those signs of the points of the compass known to most settlers in those times. But she lost herself more than once, and the moon was rising as she reached the further end. All that long, hot summer's day, from daybreak to moonlight, on the 23rd of June, she had traversed the haunted depths of an impenetrable swamp, alone, hungry, faint, and for the most part of the way, ragged and shoeless. Even to-day we can judge how long it would take to destroy every article of attire in a thicket full of thorns and briars, of branches and fallen trees, of water and bog. Wild creatures alarmed her, for the rattle snake often strikes as he springs his alarm, and the wild-cat drops from the high branch without warning, or pursues his prey perseveringly until he is sure of his aim. Once only she faltered, and it was at the dread cry of wolves; but they passed her by, and she went on trusting more than ever to the hand that guides the world.

Crossing by means of a fallen tree the Twelve-Mile Creek, then a swollen and considerable stream, for rains had been heavy for days previous, the heroine climbed slowly and painfully the steep sides of "the mountain," and on the ridge encountered a British sentry. O, joyful sight! A friend once more! By him she is directed to Fitzgibbon, still however some miles distant. Her heart is lighter, for she is within British lines. But oh, how heavy are her feet! She enters at length upon a little clearing, the trees have been felled, and their twigs and branches strew the ground; they crackle beneath her tread. Suddenly she is surrounded by ambushed Indians, and the chief throws up his tomahawk to strike, regarding the intruder as a spy. Only by her courage in springing to his arm is the woman saved, and an opportunity snatched to assure him of her loyalty. Moved by pity and admiration, the chief gives her a guide, and at length she reaches Fitzgibbon, delivers and verifies her message, and faints.

It is a wonderful story. To-day, when we are lost in admiration of the pluck of a Stanley, a Jephson, and a Stairs, with their bands of men diving into the heart of Africa, we may reasonably ask ourselves which was the greater, theirs or Laura Secord's. The distinction is only a difference of climatic conditions; the end was the same, the unity and glory of the British Empire, and the heroism is surely equal.

Fitzgibbon's prompt action, his success, and his promotion for it, are matters of history. To Mrs. Secord he was ever grateful, and never failed to show it on occasion. Promotion came to him, but there was no reward for Laura Secord, whose self-denying devotion to her king and country led to it. Nor did she look for reward, save that achieved by the success of her errand. But to-day, when we are gradually awakening to a better appreciation of the heroes who gave us by preserving to us, our liberties, we know that Laura Secord ought to find a place among them. We have been less susceptible to greatness than the ancients, in whose Pantheon the deities were not all gods. Nevertheless, we have not been wholly unmindful; but we have contemplated doing the memory of Laura Secord some honor; we have approached our Provincial Legislature for a grant to be expended on marking her last resting-place, in Drummondville Cemetery with a memorial stone somewhat worthy of her and of us. We are ready to open a subscription list on the part of the men and women of Ontario, if so it should be desirable to supplement such grant as we may obtain, in order to carry out to the full our sense of the heroine's deserts.

Within the last decade a great awakening of interest in the details of our history has been remarked in our literature, and it is not to be wondered at that the romantic story of Laura Secord's heroism has touched

the imagination of our poets. Mair, Macfar, Jakeway, and others, have sung of her in harmonious strains, while many a green leaf has been laid on her lowly tomb by others. Mrs. Chamberlain, of Ottawa, whose first husband was Col. Fitzgibbon, writes: "I had heard so often from Col. Fitzgibbon all about Mrs. Secord. In my eyes she was more of a heroine than is generally known, for, like the Lady Godiva, her journey was performed, not exactly without any clothing, but next to nothing, being only a flannel petticoat, and whatold-fashioned people call a bed-gown; in fact a short night-dress worn over the petticoat. I am not positive about this last, but I think she had neither stockings nor shoes on. If fully and properly dressed she never could have passed the sentries, and really appeared, as she likely did every morning in search of her cow."

But Mrs. Harriet Smith, the third child of Laura Secord, and who is still living, said to the writer: "I remember seeing my mother leave the house on that fateful morning, but neither I nor my sisters knew exactly on what errand she was bent. She had on house slippers and a flowered print gown; I think it was brown, with orange flowers; at least a yellow tint is connected in my mind with that particular morning."

Mrs. Edgar, whose fine book, "Ten Years of Peace and War," forms so valuable an addition to our historical records, in telling Mrs. Secord's story, says: "As to Laura Secord's reward, it has come to her in the fame that rests on her name whenever the story of 1812 is told. "The heroine lived until the year 1868, and sleeps now in that old coherety at Drummondville, where lie so many of our brave soldiers. There is no 'Decoration Day' in Canada; but if there were, surely this woman is entitled to the laurel wreath."

And in writing on a matter less directly dealing with the story of woman's heroism, Mrs. Herbert says: "It gave Gen. Herbert and myself the greatest pleasure and interest, last week, to visit Niagara and its ever-memorable surroundings, especially the field of Lundy's Lane. I trust the spot where Laura Secord rests will be marked by a monument worthy of the brave and noble spirit we all must honor."

As sings Charles Sangster:—  
"The hero deed can not expire,  
The dead still play their part."

Raise high the monumental stone!  
A nation's fealty its throils.  
And we are the rejoicing heirs,  
The honored sons of sires whose career  
We take upon us unawares  
As freely as our own."

## EVOLUTION OF THE RACE-HORSE.

The Development of the Thoroughbred is Entirely the Work of Man.

In so far as a creature endowed with life can owe its existence to human hands, the race-horse may be said to be man-made. Horses were an important factor in early nomadic life, and were cherished by their owners, and the progress of civilization, so far from breaking this bond, has apparently strengthened it. The animal is not now so essential to human welfare and convenience; science has furnished other means of transportation, and is in a fair way to take all the heavy loads from his back; but in the degree that he ceases to be a mere beast of burden he is transformed into a source of entertainment and pleasure. From a rough and hardy creature, subsisting on such rations as chance and convenience might provide, and suffering the hardships and hazards of toil and adventure, he has gradually evolved into a combination of nerves, intelligence and trained muscle that has but a family likeness to his early progenitors.

It differs from them in the same measure that the American Beauty or the La France rose differs from the little five-petaled pink flower that blooms by the roadside. Like those floral triumphs he is a product of scientific culture. It is not chance that has given him that particular build, that slenderness and lightness that to the expert means speed. His masters have wanted these developments, and they have studied sire and dam and the pedigree of each until they could name in advance the qualities of the offspring. And having secured a horse that has within him the possibilities of outdoing his ancestors they treat him as a precious belonging, as indeed he is. A groom always in attendance like satin; he is fed and housed and exercised with as much care for his comfort as for a child's; and royalty itself is not looked after with more solicitude. The attention that ancient Greeks used to give to their own bodily training is given by modern men to the racehorse, and, as a result, he is a marvel of physical perfection. And after all this? Why, when he has been tested and his paces tried he is put upon the racetrack, where his beauty and grace and swiftness please the sight and thrill the pulses of the watching thousand as no other spectacle devised for public pleasure could ever do.

### English Meadows.

How and when men first learned to make hay will probably never be known. For haymaking is a "process" and the product not simply sun-dried grass, but grass which has been partly fermented, and is as much the work of men's hands as flour or cider. Probably its discovery was due to accident, but possibly man learned it from the pikas, the "calling-hares" of the steppes, which cut hay for the winter. That idea would fit in nicely with the theory that Central Asia was the "home of the Aryan race," if we were still allowed to believe it, and hay-making is certainly an art mainly practiced in cold countries for winter forage.

Probably there are no meadows in the world so good as those in England, or so old. Yet from the early Anglo-Saxon times old meadow has been distinguished from "pastures," and has always been scarce. Two-thirds of what is now established meadow land still shows the marks of ridge and furrow; and from the great time required to make a meadow—ten years at least on the best land, a hundred on the worst—men have always been reluctant to break up old pasture. The ancient meadows, with their great trees and close rich turf, are the sole portion of the earth's surface which modern agriculture respects and leaves in peace. Hence the excellence of the meadows of England and the envy of the Americans.

## HALF BUFFALO, HALF HORSE.

A Remarkably Equine Freak Captured on the Plains by six Cowboys.

Five years ago six venturesome cow-boys, tired of the monotony of driving cattle to Kansas City, formed a partnership to hunt buffaloes on the plains. The lads signed a contract to work for a year, when the cash derived from the sale of the skins was to be divided and the firm dissolved.

The boys operated in Arizona, Wyoming and Manitoba, with a view of supplying with hides the Northwestern Canadian markets which were at that time scantily stocked. The hunters had bad luck for the first few months and were about to abandon the venture, when one morning they ran across a large herd of wild buffaloes.

The animals were in especially good condition and more swift of foot than the average buffalo. At a signal from the leader of the herd, the others scampered behind him at a rapid gait. After a day's maneuvering the cowboys were able to make a close inspection, and at once detected that the leader had more of the characteristics of the horse than of the buffalo. They determined to lasso the leader first.

It took four days to separate him from his companions, and while he appeared to be subdued from fear, he made a fierce fight for liberty. As soon as he was tripped off his feet, he raised himself on his hind legs, plunged in the air and turned on his captors. The animal was found to have all the symmetry of a perfectly formed yearling colt. The head, ears, nose, shoulders, haunches, and legs were those of a horse. The dull sleepy eyes, the shaggy coat and thin tail, covered with tufts, and the hoofs belonged to the buffalo species.

The cowboys realized that they had secured a prize and went to work to tame him before an introduction to civilization. It was a more difficult task than they counted on, and five of the owners finally sold out to the other. For three years this boy labored with his prize, but the best he was able to do was to get the animal to respond to a powerful twitch tied around the nose and attached to a stout stick. While the animal was being tamed the hoofs began to spread, and when it was five years old, it was shod and trained to answer to a bit in the mouth.

A prominent horse dealer of Toronto was informed this Spring of this peculiar freak of horse flesh. Negotiations with the cow-boy resulted in its purchase, but before the animal reached Toronto a liberal bonus induced the original purchaser to sell it to a dealer in Utica, N. Y.

Imperial Prince, as the half-buffalo, half-horse is named, recently arrived in Utica, but has not yet been shown in public. Large royalties have already been offered for the right to exhibit Imperial Prince throughout the country, as it is believed he is the only specimen that has ever been captured.

He is now trained to the saddle and can be ridden by a child. The gait is more of a lope and he is inclined to amble rather than to walk. He is six years old, weighs 1130 lbs., and stands 15 hands 3 inches.

### We Build the Ladder.

Heaven is not reached at a single bound,  
But we build the ladder by which we rise,  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to the summit round by round  
I count this thing to be grandly true,  
That a noble deed is a step toward God,  
Lifting the soul from the common sod  
To a purer air and a broader view.

We rise by the things that are under feet,  
By what we have mastered of greed and gain,  
By the pride deposited and the passion slain  
And the vanquished hills that we hourly meet

We hope, we aspire, we resolve, we trust,  
When the morning calls us to life and light;  
But our hearts grow weary, and ere the night  
Our lives are trailing the sordid dust.

We hope, we aspire, we resolve, we pray,  
And we think that we mount the air on wings,  
Beyond the reach of sensual things,  
While our feet still cling to the heavy clay.

Wings for the angels, but feet for the men,  
We may borrow the wings to find the way,  
We may hope and aspire and resolve and pray,  
But our feet must rise or we will fall again.

Only in dreams is a ladder thrown  
From the weary earth to the sapphiric walls;  
But the dreams depart and the vision falls,  
And the sleeper wakes on his pillow of stone

Heaven is not reached at a single bound,  
But we build the ladder by which we rise,  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to the summit round by round  
—J. G. Holland.

### Convenient Paper-weight.

An Italian cure was about making a journey. Many friends called to say goodbye, and as had happened before each gave him a paper on which was jotted down a list of things which the writer wished the traveller to purchase for him. Only one of these friends accompanied his memorandum with the necessary money.

This one friend's commission the cure carefully executed, and delivered the articles to him.

When the others called for their goods, he said:

"Soon after I sailed I took out all your papers to look them over and classify them on the deck before me. Suddenly there came a gust of wind, and they were all blown away. I could not remember what they contained, and so I could not do your errands."

"But," they objected, "you brought what so-and-so asked you to get."  
"Oh yes," said the cure. "You see he enclosed the cash with his memorandum and that kept it from blowing away."

### Turned the Tables Upon Them.

Mr. J., owing to the jealousy of his fellow clerks, was daily subjected to many petty annoyances. One day his enemies thought they had hit on a plan which would amuse them and add to J's discomfort. So, when J. entered the office they one after another came up and said to him in a tone of horror:

"Why what is the matter with you? Are you ill? You look simply ghastly."  
Mr. J. sat listening quietly for a few minutes; and then suddenly, to the surprise of everybody, got off his stool and slipped into the manager's office.

A short time only had elapsed when the manager appeared followed by Mr. J., and addressing the astonished clerks said:  
"As Mr. J. is so unwell, I have granted him permission to take a day or two's holiday, so you must divide his work equally amongst you until he returns."