

Garrison's History of Canada

Poetry

WONDERS AND MURMURS.

Strange that the wind should be left so free,
To play with a flower or tear a tree—
To range or ramble where'er it will,
And, as it lists, to be fierce or still;
Above and around to breathe its life,
Or to mingle the earth and the sky into truth:
Gently to murmur with the morning light,
Yet growl like a feroce fiend ere night;
Or to love and cherish and bless to-day,
What to-morrow it ruthlessly sends away!

Strange that the sun should call into birth
All the fairest flowers and fruits of earth,
Then bid them perish, and see them die,
While they cheer the heart and gladden the eye.
At morning its child is the child of spring,
At night 'tis a shrivelled and loathsome thing:
To-day there is life and hope in its beam,
To-morrow it shrinks to useless death;
Strange doth it seem that the sun should joy
To give birth alone that it may destroy!

Strange that the ocean should come and go,
With its daily and nightly ebb and flow,
To bear on its placid breast at morn
The bark that ere night will be tempest torn;
Or to cherish all the way it would roam,
To leave it a wreck in the sight of home—
To smile as the mariner's toils are o'er,
Then wash the dead to his cottage door—
And gently ripple along the strand,
To watch the widow behold him land!

But stranger than all that man should die,
When his plans are formed and his hopes are high:
He walks forth a lord of the earth to-day,
And to-morrow he holds him a part of its clay.
He is born in sorrow and cradled in pain,
And from youth to age it is labor in vain;
And all that seventy years can show,
Is that wealth is trouble and wisdom woe—
That he treads a path of care and strife
Who drinks the poisoned cup of life!

Alas! if we murmur at things like these,
That reflection tells us are wise decrees—
That the sun is not ever a gentle breath,
That the sea is often the bearer of death,
That the ocean is not always still,
And that life is chequered with good and ill—
If we know 'tis well such change should be,
What do we learn from things we see?
That an erring and sinning child of dust
Should not wonder and murmur and hope and trust!

Literature

THE TWO ORPHANS.

PART I.

Continued from our last.

'Was ye waitin' for anybody, my bonnie laddie?' inquired the old hag.

'I am waiting for my brother Willie,' he answered.

'Where is he?' she inquired coaxingly.

'He's up stairs, lookin' for my aunt Mary,' was the ready answer.

'Oh, my dear, your aunt Mary lives two closes down—your brother Walter has gone doon the back stair an' got her, an' they sent me to fetch ye to them.'

'Do you know my aunt?' inquired Willie, somewhat dubiously of the figure before him.

'Ken her? Bless ye, I'm her only servant. She tell'd me where I'd get ye.'

This was enough. Up sprang Willie, and the hag, catching him by the hand, hurried him down one close, up another, down a third, through by-lanes and filthy pigsty-looking places unfit for human beings to breathe in, dens of pestilence, horror, infamy, and death till she reached a small cellar door; when, dragging him in to the cellar, she paused, and, almost out of breath with her speed, looked at him.

'This is not my aunt's,' said Willie; why do you lead me to a place like this?

'Wheesht, bairn, wheesht; ye maun tak' all that jacket till I brush it, an' mak' ye clean an' neat before ye see your aunt.'

'I will not take off my jacket,' said the boy, firmly; 'so let me go from this place.'

'Ye'll no tak' aff yer jacket when I bid ye!' yelled the old hag.

'I will not,' said Willie, who now saw that he had got into a dilemma.

'Ye smatchet!' shrieked the bel-dame, as she rushed at him—'I'll son ga ye tak' it aff!

The door was still open, and Willie instantly fled towards it. Darting out, he took the first open way, and, winged with fear, fled over every impediment and through many a queer looking place—up stairs, and down stairs, till he stopped fairly exhausted. Having satisfied himself with a hasty glance that his pursuer was not in sight, he began to walk slowly; but still finding himself in a labyrinth of dingy, ill-looking buildings, he hurried through the narrow lane, and on a sudden the broad expanse of the sea burst for the first time on his view.

A throbbing at the heart—a feeling of wonder and awe came over him: he seemed attracted towards it by some unknown spell. Onwards he went, unable to tell by what strange power he was attracted. An indistinct idea that he should meet with Walter crossed his mind, and he wandered on till he found himself at the sea-side. The shipping in the port of Leith lay on his left hand and hurrying onwards he soon reached the town. Wander-

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ing in bewilderment amongst the docks, he sat himself down upon the fluke of an anchor, and gazed with wonder at the high masts of a large vessel which was lying in the dock before him.

While thus busily engaged wondering at the strange sights around him, Willie beheld a negro suddenly come on the deck of the vessel. This was the first specimen of sable humanity which Willie had ever beheld, and his curiosity was still farther increased by observing that the negro carried a large basket filled with oranges in one hand, and a highly polished brass kettle in the other. All the stories which his brother Walter had told him about black men, orange-trees, and gold, flashed on his mind; and Willie actually thought that the poor negro before him must, of course, be some mighty black prince come to Scotland on an important embassy. The eager looks of the boy attracted the notice of the negro, and as he came up to him, the negro saluted him.

'Fine day dis, young massa.' 'Yes, Sir,' answered Willie, rising from the fluke of the anchor, and returning the negro's bow—'a very fine day, indeed, sir.'

'Sir!' When was poor blackey addressed so before! He stared, and the sorrowful look of the poor boy struck him with surprise.

'You take an orange, young massa!' he said, as he proffered one to Willie.

'If you please, sir—thank you sir,' and Willie applied the cool orange to his burning lips.

The negro still lingered, looking at him. 'You belong to dis place, massa?' he inquired.

'No, sir. I have walked a long way, and—and I have lost my brother Walter'; and the recollection of his trials brought the tears to the poor boy's eyes.

The negro drew near to him, and placing the basket of oranges and the brass kettle on the ground, sat down on the anchor beside him.

'No cry, leely massa—no cry. How you lose your broder?' he kindly inquired.

'He went to look for aunt Mary, and a bad woman came and took me away and wanted to strike me, and I ran away from her, and I have lost my brother,' sobbed Willie.

'Poor shild!' sobbed the good hearted negro. 'No cry—I will find your broder. Where is your fader and moder?'

'They are both dead,' said the poor boy with a fresh burst of grief.

'Oh, dear!—oh, me!' cried the negro, as he pulled out his handkerchief and alternately wiped the eyes of the weeping boy and his own, which overflowed equally fast.

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him on board of the vessel. Placing him on a coil of ropes on the deck, the negro hurried to the locker, and cold fowl, bread, and wine were placed before Willie in abundance, whilst the kind-hearted negro, dancing around him, and rubbing his hands with joy, pressed him to eat and drink to his heart's content.

While busily discussing the viands the captain and mate of the vessel came on board; and the captain, gazing earnestly at Willie, turned to the mate and said—

'Pratt, does that boy not remind you of my poor William who died last year?'

'I never saw a closer likeness,' answered the mate;—'the same age, look,—nay, every gesture the same.'

'Whose son is this?' said the captain.

'Nobody's, massa,' responded the negro; 'him poor orphan boy dat I find on the quay.'

'Poor little fellow,' said the captain, 'I will be a father to you.' He took Willie by the hand. 'Will you remain with me?'

'Yes,' answered Willie, 'looking up in his face; 'I will, if Walter can be got.'

From that hour Willie became the adopted son of the captain. Every effort to find out Walter proved in vain, and Willie sailed with his friend to Calcutta.

Thus were the two brothers separated in early life.

PART II.

Twenty years elapsed, and the boys who had deserted their native village were completely forgotten, when one day, to the surprise of the villagers, an elegant marble monument was forwarded to the care of the session-clerk, to be erected over the grave of Andrew Stenhouse;

the particular spot was pointed out, and a draft of £20 was enclosed to defray expenses. Two days afterwards another monument, equally elegant, was sent for the same purpose, and another draft for £20 was forwarded—both letters were signed 'W. Stenhouse.'

Puzzled beyond all measure at this singular coincidence, the session-clerk applied to the minister of the parish, who, equally puzzled, referred him to the neighboring town clerk. Eager to know how he ought to act, the old man set out, and after some travelling arrived at the burgh, and called at the office of the town clerk, whom he found in deep consultation with the town-fiscal upon a very singular affair; and the story of the two tombstones seemed to perplex them more and more.

It appeared that the town-clerk acted as factor upon a large property in the neighborhood of the proprietor of which had gone to India, where he had died without leaving any will. The town-clerk had advertised for heirs to the property, and, to his surprise, two female parties had come forward, each claiming the property, and each stating that she was the only surviving child of the deceased proprietor. To add to the mystery, each was married to a party calling himself 'W. Stenhouse.' The letters were compared, and the fiscal pointed out that the husbands styled themselves both 'CAPTAIN.' When the session-clerk told his story, the letters were taken from him, compared with those held by the town-clerk, and the handwriting was found to agree.

At the mention of the £20 sent with each letter, the eyes of the two functionaries glistened; and causing the session-clerk to indorse them, they advised him to leave both drafts with him. He did so, and civilly bowing him out, the two functionaries sat down, and eyeing each other shrewdly for a while, burst into a fit of laughter.

'Well!' cried the town-clerk, 'this is what I call a good beginning.'

'Cash them and half them.—Is't a bargain?' replied the fiscal.

'Agreed!' said the town-clerk; and they adjourned to the Branch Bank in the burgh, and having cashed the two drafts, each party pocketed £20 sterling, with an air of as much satisfaction as if performing a most virtuous and praiseworthy action.

'Now,' said the town-clerk after buttoning up his pocket, and slapping it gently to make sure all was right—'Now, I think we may stand a beatsteak and bottle of wine off this, and mature our plans while discussing our dinner.'

So said, so done. They were soon seated in a snug parlor in the town inn, and the result was a deep-laid

rascally plan to turn the state of affairs to their own private benefit.

It was agreed that the fiscal should write to one of the Captains Stenhouse, requesting him to come to Scotland, and bring all the documents proving his claim and that of his wife to the property in question, whilst the town-clerk was to write to the other captain to the same effect. Thus both were to draw private emoluments from the case. If the town-clerk's client should turn out to be wrong in his claim and the fiscal's client happened to be right, then the fiscal was to adopt criminal proceedings against the town-clerk's client, the expenses of which proceedings were, as usual, to be paid by the public, and which expenses the worthy pair were to half betwixt them. If the fiscal's client were found to be in the wrong, and if he had money, he was to be frightened out of a good round sum and allowed to escape. Thus a double interest in any event was to rise out of the affair.

They accordingly wrote their respective letters and retired home-wearied, each resolved, in his own heart, to try and dupe the other—the fiscal secretly resolved to pounce upon the town-clerk's client the moment he arrived, and trick the town-clerk out of the business—whilst the town-clerk secretly determined to annihilate the fiscal by communicating to the lord advocate the slightest error he might commit, and there by get him dismissed from his office. The two rogues parted in the most cordial and friendly manner each maligning the other for a knave and a fool.

Ten days afterwards the two captains, accompanied by their wives arrived in Arnoek. They put up at separate inns, and having refreshed themselves, each waiting on his respective man of business. The fiscal was waiting with impatience for his victim when Captain Stenhouse was announced; and a tall, handsome-looking man, with a fine open, military bearing, dressed in a suit of plain black, entered the room. The fiscal at first felt his heart almost dying within him as he glanced at the manly form before him. The person appeared to be about thirty years of age. Although exposure to foreign climes had somewhat darkened his cheek, yet the brow was lofty and white as Parian marble. After the usual salutations were over, the fiscal, rubbing his hands with glee said—

'You are Captain Stenhouse?' 'I am.'

'From Calcutta?' 'Yes.'

'You have retired from service?' 'I have.'

'Were you married in Calcutta?' 'No; in London.'

'To Miss Grant, daughter of Colonel Grant, of Appleby?' 'The same.'

'She was the only child?' 'Yes; but you will find from these documents all the information you want,' said the captain. 'During the time you are perusing them I will take a short walk. I will be glad to meet you at the inn to dinner.'

He rose as he spoke; but the fiscal, assuming an air of sly confidence, said—

'I have no doubt that the documents you have handed to me are all correct; but I must inform you in confidence, that there is a fellow in this town who is assuming your name, your rank and character; and he brings with him a female claiming the name and status of your lady.'

'Impossible!' exclaimed the captain with indignation.

'It is true,' rejoined the fiscal. 'Rest there just one moment, and I will convince you of the fact.'

So saying, he dispatched one of his clerks to the town-clerk to ascertain the result of his inquiries, and the young man returned with the following note:

'DEAR SIR,—Secure your man instantly. My client is a dashing young fellow—the real Simon Pure. He says that he is Captain Stenhouse lately from Calcutta. He has retired from service, and was married in London to Miss Grant, daughter of Colonel Grant of Appleby, who is the only surviving child.—Yours, etc., A. C.'

'Read that,' said the fiscal triumphantly, as he handed the note to Captain Stenhouse, who glanced it over, and angrily exclaimed—

'There is some mistake here, or else the person must be, or is the

ter.' 'The very conclusion I have arrived at,' cried the fiscal.

'Take whatever steps you think necessary,' replied the captain. The documents there are quite sufficient to prove our right.'

'Most happily, sir—proud to serve you, sir,' said the fiscal, bowing as if his backbone went upon a spring.

'You dine with me to-night,' said the captain, as he rose to depart.

The fiscal mumbled something implying a consent, and the captain walked forth. No sooner was he gone than the fiscal congratulated himself on the clever manner in which he had outwitted the town-clerk's client, to have him apprehended and committed for trial on a charge of 'falseness, fraud, and willful imposition.'

After leaving the fiscal, Captain Stenhouse walked towards the churchyard, but had scarcely got beyond the burgh when he encountered an elderly man leaning upon a stick. The captain paused and fixed his eyes on the face of the old man who slightly touched his hat and returned the scrutiny, whilst his features changed into rigid astonishment.

'John Thomson of Brookmyre, if I am not much mistaken?' said the captain, as he advanced and held out his hand.

'Merciful Providence!' exclaimed the old man. 'It cannot be—' 'Your nephew, Walter Stenhouse who ran away from you about twenty years ago,' said the captain, kindly, shaking hands with him.

'God bless you, my dear laddie!' said Thomson, as the tears rolled down his cheeks. 'I have prayed night and day for this, and my prayers have been heard at last. But where is my bonnie Willie?—is he with you?'

'Alas!' exclaimed the captain, as the tears came to his eyes, 'I lost him on the streets in Edinburgh, the day after we left your house; and, from that day to this, have never heard of him. Long and weary have been my searches after him; but alas! all have been fruitless.'

'Woe's me, woe's me!' exclaimed the old man, weeping bitterly; 'I was not prepared for this. Ah me! grief is still mingled in the cup of joy!'

To be Continued in our next.

A TRICK OF THE ZOUAVES.

We commend the following authentic story to the attention of the innumerable admirers of the French Zouaves, who have won such a conspicuous place in military history.—The Arabs of the Beni-Snassens tribe are great amateurs of gunpowder, and never neglect an opportunity of prowling about the French camps and offering the soldiers large sums for the coveted article. They said they would give me fifty cents if I did. Their 'em all along the gallery up there; there they are. I ain't going to do it.' He went to the door, and we heard him smash the bottle on the steps. He came in and went up to the table and commenced to write his name, but he couldn't do it; so he braced himself, and caught hold of his arm, but he could not. Says he, 'Look here, that my mark.' Then the ladies came up and shook hands with him, but he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and now and then wiped a tear away. 'Stick to it,' says one.—'All right, Joe,' all right.'

Some three years after that I was in that same place, and whilst going along the street, I saw a gentleman coming along dressed in a good suit—nice black hat, boots cleaned, and a nice shirt collar, with a lady on his arm. I knew it was Joe. Says I, 'You stuck to it, didn't you?' 'Yes, sir, I stick to that pledge, and the girls have stuck to me ever since.'

'Some people think when they have persuaded a drunkard to sign the pledge, they have done. It's a mistake; it's then he wants your help. He is at the bottom of the bill, lower than the common level; he must climb; it's hard work; he commences tremulously, feeble, doubting; he raises his feet, he gets little way, and becomes faint; you see he's about to give way; run and put a little peg right under his feet; there, see he resists, he's tired; he starts again, fearing as he goes higher, he gazes around him and looks weary; he has worked hard and stops; put another peg right under his feet; he rests; help him up; peg him right up; and when he gets up, he'll look and see those little pegs all along, and he will not forget them, but bless and remember you.'

'How every one may preach—' All cannot preach from the pulpit; but there is a kind of preaching that is permitted to all men, and often times this kind is most effectual. Offices of kindness to the bodies and souls of those around us, words of encouragement to the weak, instruction to the ignorant, of brotherly kindness to all, hearty devotion to the services of religion, in our families and our closets, as well as in the sanctuary; in a word, earnest, active, self-denying love to our fellow beings, springing from our love to God—this will form a most impressive sermon, a most convincing proof to the world around us, that we have been with Jesus. All Christians are called on in this way to preach the gospel; and woe to them if they neglect the call.

'The World Owes me a Livino.'—Does it? Really, young man, we would like to know the reason of the World's great indebtedness to you? And who do you mean by the 'World?' Is your reference to all, or any, who may be persuaded to trust you for segars, oyster suppers, livery horses, new coats, &c. Shall we understand, that while you earn little or nothing, you have a right to spend your thousands? Queer justice, that; wonder, if all the world should act upon such principles, it would keep right side up? Yes, you who sport your cane, by an extra twist, upon the side-walk, and pay two shillings per day for segars; who forgot your tailor and shoe bills; whose hands are too soft to labor for an honest living—you should hesitate before making such an assertion. Don't be too certain, then, that you are right. Let us ask. What have you done, to bring the world in debt to you? How many more blades of grass grow for your toil? How many trees have you planted? How much have you added to the productive wealth of the world? What have you discovered? What invented? What

widow's tears have you dried!—What orphan have you rescued from poverty and sin? To what youth, sorely tempted, have you extended the friendly hand, and kept them from falling? Is the world, to-day, richer, wiser, better for anything you have done, by toil of hand, heart, or brain? If not, then cease your silly talk about the world's owing you a living. It owes you no such thing. It owes you only a fair chance to exercise the powers God has given you, and that it has bestowed upon you, and if you don't improve it, the worse will be your own.

A SCRAP FROM GOUGH.

I was lecturing in a small town once, and when the lecture was over, persons came up to sign the pledge. A number of young ladies were standing by and looking at the signers with interest. Directly some of them came to me, 'Mr. Gough, go out there at the door and get Joe to sign the pledge.' 'Why, I don't know Joe.' 'Well, he is standing out by the door.' Out I went, and standing there was a poor fellow, with an old tattered cap on his head, torn shirt, dirty clothes, old boots, and a woe begone look. Says I to myself this must be Joe. 'How do you do, Joe?' said I. 'How do you do, sir?' 'Joe, I want you to sign the pledge.' 'What for?' 'Why, Joe, those ladies in there sent me after you.' 'What, who? why I didn't think I had a friend in the world.' 'Come on, Joe, come on,' said I. He stopped, and said, 'Look here, some fellows told me to bring a bottle of liquor in the meeting to-night, and get up and drink, and say, 'here's to your health!' They said they would give me fifty cents if I did. Their 'em all along the gallery up there; there they are. I ain't going to do it.' He went to the door, and we heard him smash the bottle on the steps. He came in and went up to the table and commenced to write his name, but he couldn't do it; so he braced himself, and caught hold of his arm, but he could not. Says he, 'Look here, that my mark.' Then the ladies came up and shook hands with him, but he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and now and then wiped a tear away. 'Stick to it,' says one.—'All right, Joe,' all right.'

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