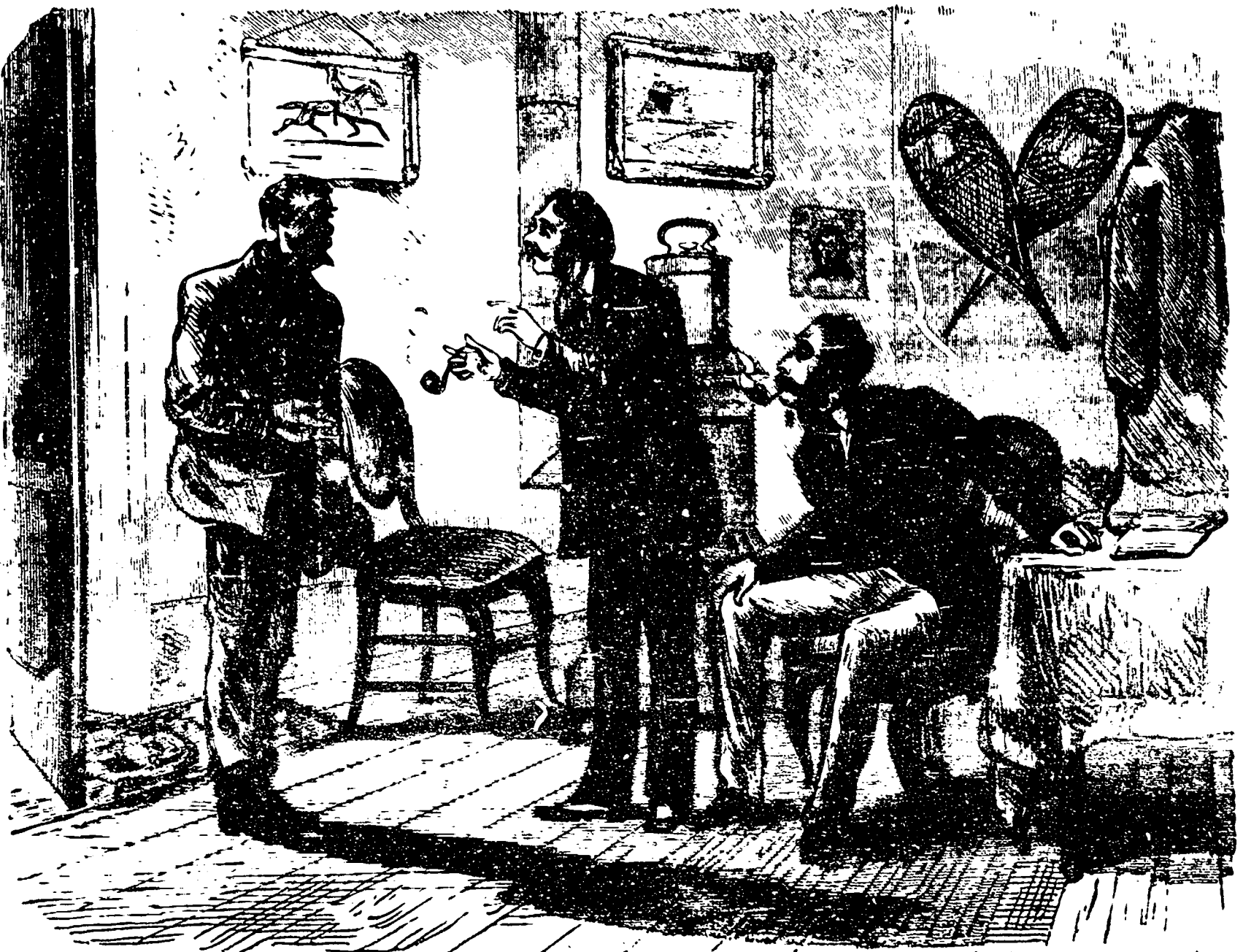


MONTREAL

Vol. I.—No. 5. MONTREAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1873. PRICE FIVE CENTS, OR SIX CENTS, U.S. Or.



MR. FARRER FINDS A SUBJECT.

(For the Favorite.)
HARD TO BEAT.

A DRAMATIC TALE, IN FIVE ACTS, AND A PROLOGUE.
 BY J. A. PHILLIPS,
 OF MONTREAL.

Author of "From Bad to Worse," "Out of the Snow," "A Perfect Fraud," &c.

ACT II.
 ACROSS THE RIVER.
 SCENE IV.

MISS HOWSON MAKES A CONQUEST.
 Miss Annie Howson sat alone in her parlor anxiously expecting a visit from the Doctor, and when she heard the door bell ring, she, imagining who it was, opened it herself in preference to waiting for the servant.
 "What a naughty man you are, not to have called on me for so long a time," she said when they were seated together in the parlor.

"How could I be sure you wanted to see me?" He asked the question in the tone of a man who felt confident he could receive but one answer.
 "You may be certain I am always pleased to see you."
 She looked down for a moment, and blushed slightly, and the Doctor, emboldened, drew up nearer to her.
 "You almost encourage me to tell a secret," he said, "You are so kind. May I?"
 "I suppose so," she answered, half affecting not to understand him. "Women are always fond of secrets."
 "Mine is a very important one to me."
 "I hope it is nothing wicked!" she said, looking up to him with a soft gentle light in her eyes which said very clearly that she did not think he could in any way be connected with a wicked secret.
 Hard as he was, and passionately as he loved her he could not repress a slight blush, the question was so pertinent to his thought. But he quickly recovered and even managed to smile as he placed his arm round her waist and drew her gently towards him whispering:
 "Nothing very wicked, unless it is wicked to love you."
 She made a very slight movement as if to draw away from him, but he pressed her a little closer and took her hand, which remained passive and unresisting in his, as he continued:
 "Yes, Annie, I love you tenderly, ardently,

sincerely, with all the strength and passion of my nature. I have loved you from the moment I first beheld you, but feared to speak dreading you might think me too presumptuous. But I can resist no longer, I must know my fate tonight. Tell me, can you care a little for me?"
 He drew her still closer to him and pressed the hand she did not withdraw, and her head dropped gradually towards him until it rested on his shoulder.
 This was exactly the kind of love-making Miss Howson liked. She could not have believed any man loved her if he stood calmly before her and told her so. She did not exactly care that he should drop on his knees, but that arm around her felt very comforting, it suggested protection and all that sort of thing, and the occasional pressure of her hand was very pleasant.
 She had had many flirtations and several proposals before, but none which came so nearly up to her idea of how a man should tell a girl he loved her. The words he used certainly did sound very much like dozens of similar speeches she had read in the cheap literature she was so fond of, but what of that, they were so sweetly uttered.
 Until now she had only thought she loved the Doctor, now she felt sure of it, and a slight sigh of pleasure escaped her as she allowed him to draw her still a little closer to him.
 "Look up at me, darling, and let me read in your eyes, whether there is any hope for me."
 She raised her head for an instant, and looked

at him with happy tears standing in her lustrous eyes. Ere she could replace her head upon his shoulder, he drew her blushing face towards him and kissed her.
 "And you will be my wife?"
 She did not answer in words, but her eyes replied for her, and as he drew her to him again and pressed her unsuspecting lips, he felt that he had almost accomplished his object.
 "Annie Howson and one hundred thousand dollars."
 Yet at that moment there arose before him the remembrance of another woman he had once loved as passionately, and he involuntarily shuddered as he thought of the terrible means he had decided on for extricating himself from the dangerous position in which he was placed.
 "Harry," said Miss Howson, and she flushed up a little as she used the word, for it was the first time she had addressed him by his christian name. "Harry, I'm afraid you will have trouble with papa in getting his consent."
 "Do you think so?"
 For the first time the possibility of a refusal from Mr. Howson occurred to him. His acquaintance with that gentleman was very slight, and not particularly cordial, and it now seemed to him very likely that he would refuse to give his daughter's hand to a man of whose past life he knew nothing, and with whom he had been acquainted for less than a year.
 Continued on page 80.