

A SEWAGE ROMANCE.

(Dedicated to the City Health Office.)

CHAPTER I.

"Oh rivulet, that glidest, &c."—*A Leaf from a Diary.*

When I was young and knew no better, I used to think that a rivulet or running stream was one of the most refreshing sights one would want to look upon on a dry and dusty day. It is so nice to fancy them purling prettily along—between mossy banks "where the wild thyme grows," where the golden feather glows in the summer sun, and the sweet-briar rose "wastes its fragrance on the desert air." But rivulets on the sidewalks are cats of a different color. Let me record how the happiness of my life was well nigh wrecked at the delta of several rivulets which seemed to issue from a forest of radishes, onions and parsley, intersected by a miniature iceberg, which somehow had floated thither and grounded in the doorway among sawdust.

It was ten o'clock a.m. in the month of August, 1884, just after the great New York earthquake. It was hot, hazy and lazy; the atmosphere seemed to close in around one, like a crowd where some one has fainted. I really did not feel like getting up a hot dinner, so ma said we'd just have something cold. Ah! my mother, your speech was prophetic. Suddenly the door bell rang. I shook down my Mother Hubbard, and tripped singingly to the door. It was a letter from Alcibiades. "My dear Miss Enthusia. I must have your decision to-day. Come and have a nice trip to Hamilton and back, it is beautifully cool on the water. If you come I will take your presence as consent—if you do not come, then farewell for ever! A. R. R." Good gracious! didn't I just rush up stairs and frizz up my hair in double quick time, tore off my Mother Hubbard, popped on my lovely new white muslin, fluffed all around me like a cloud, buttoned on my new high heeled boots, and before ma could get time to ask what all the cyclone was about, I rushed down stairs, snatched my fan and parasol, threw Alcibiades' note into her lap, and was out the front gate quicker than winking. Ma screamed out of the window that she would lock up the house and take the cars to Parkdale for the day. But I heard her as in a dream, and kept posting down Yonge-street for all I was worth. Ye gods! What if I should be late—and I had loved him so long—my Alcibiades, the best fellow that ever wore a felt helmet. Oh! in fifteen minutes more he will know at last.

Was it fate? I had come to a group of rivulets, I slept, slid, flopped, like a white swan! Some one ran out and lifted me up; I tried to stand—but I reeled and knew no more!

CHAPTER II.

"And to be wroth with one we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain."—*Coleridge.*

Alcibiades Rufus Ruddythatch paced up and down Milloy's wharf with the restless impatient ante-dinner air of the lion in the Zoo. A thin line of smoke darkening the haze that hung over the Humber, denoted the approach of the Southern Belle. Alcibiades noted this, and his dark-rolling eye turned up towards Yonge-street with an expression of hope versus despair. "She cometh not, he said." What to him was the coming of the Southern Belle, so long as the Toronto Belle came not. That was what he wanted to know. Down poured the crowds—stout maters, fat paters, slim daughters of Eve—of all complexions from the spirituelle blonde to the buxom *la belle Africaine*. And yet, "she cometh not, he said." And now the twin funnels of the boat are distinctly visible, prospective passengers pre-

pare their paper parcels, maters hunt around for that boy—but yet Alcibiades paces the wharf—alone. He perspires! he agonizes! He lifts his helmet, revealing a broad, high forehead, so high and broad that it extends clear to the crown, he mops it, and settles the helmet on again. He sets his teeth, he faces toward Yonge-street, and, climbing up on the high gate post at the top of the wharf he gazes long and earnestly. The Belle is now in, the cargo is being unloaded, and the passengers to Hamilton are fast filing along the gangway. Alcibiades descends from his coign of vantage, but his face is drawn and white, his moustache droops, a wild look is in his eye, and his countenance bears the impress of despair. Nevertheless, he makes a bee line for the Belle, crosses the gangway, tumbles somehow up stairs, and takes a seat on the deck with the air of one booked for shores Plutonian under the ferryman'ship of the venerable Captain Charon. And now his lips move—listen—"False, heartless, flirt! but you shall not, no, by Heaven! you shall not get the chance to mock at my misery. I will end at once the existence you have rendered intolerable by your heartlessness." With these words the unfortunate man made a rush to the prow and threw himself down headlong. "A man overboard!" was shrieked by a thousand throats, as the people made a rush to the stern of the vessel; but what was their surprise to find Alcibiades sitting upright in the water, which only yielded to his weight like a softly padded lounge, while with both hands he held his nostrils tightly, as if to exclude some subtle essence that shocked his olfactory nerves. The cause of this singular phenomenon was soon explained. When Alcibiades in desperation leaped from the vessel, he found that, instead of sinking to the bottom as he intended, he merely made an indentation on the surface, the abundance and solidity of the sewage flowing in at this point being such that it had formed a kind of oily gelatinous cushion, several yards thick, and of such rubber-like elasticity as to support not only one, but any quantity of men. To sink was impossible. On the whole Alcibiades might have been worse, but scarcely had he time to take in the situation, when his nasal organ, which was unusually vast, was saluted by the most infernal combination of smells ever experienced by mortal olfactories. Instinctively he seized his nose with both hands, he sickened, swooned, and the summer sun shone down on Alcibiades Rufus Ruddythatch lying still and helmetless, on the bosom of the sewage receiver in Toronto bay!

CHAPTER III—AND LAST.

"Oh! is it thus we meet?"—*Jean Ingelore.*

"Do I dream? What voice is that I hear in the female ward?" said Alcibiades feebly, as he opened his eyes next morning in the hospital to which they had borne him all unconscious from the bay. "Oh! that's a young girl who got her ankle sprained yesterday, and they are going to take her home now. She got a letter from her beau to meet him at the Southern Belle, and when the poor thing was hurrying down to meet him her foot slipped in one of them darned swamps in front of a green grocer or butcher's door. She fainted, so they brought her here. She raved all night about Alcibiades somebody—" Here Alcibiades leapt clean over the head of the garrulous nurse, pulled some clothes on himself, and running his fingers through his hair, he staggered into the female ward. A wild shriek rang through the corridors—"Alcibiades!!" "Enthusia! oh, is it thus we meet," and, thus were reunited two faithful hearts, who had well nigh been divided for life by a sidewalk rivulet.

JAY KARELLE.



THE DRESS REFORM.

How do, Mr. Brown?

You have the advantage of me, sir.

Don't you "Sir" me! Don't you know your own wife, just because she's adopted the reformed dress?

WANTS AND THINGS.

The "Bartender who is well acquainted with the commercial trade," didn't want to say he was used to staying up all night waiting for the game to finish: but he means that.

A man who wants a cutter requests applicants to "enclose testimonials, and salary expected." It is an understood thing that he would return the testimonials, but most persons would prefer a guarantee that he would send back the money.

An unemployed youth seeks a job as bartender, saying "wages no object." This will admit of a variety of constructions, prominent among which is the one that although the young man is indifferent to wages he might be able to avail himself of chances.

The condition of the poor fellow who, "as office clerk or copyist—would fill the place of one leaving for holidays," may better be imagined than described. His trouble will be to find a "copyist or clerk" who can afford to take holidays and pay for it—that is, outside the civil service.

"A young man (married) desires a situation as bookkeeper or correspondent." You are puzzled to know whether the bracketed word is apologetic or used as an extra inducement. It is a fact, however, that a married man is generally the better bookkeeper—if his wife gets hold of the books.

A situation is wanted "by a young lady—as music teacher or help for young family." You see she has such a taste for music she wants to be identified with it either as producing it herself or being around when making it. She will succeed.

The young man who pines for employment as "collector, cashier, or any position of trust," seems to think it necessary to add that he can furnish "references and security, if required." Of course no such thing as that is needed in these days. Any wide awake cashier can find security in Canada, if he comes from the States—oh, Eno?—and as to references, well, the newspapers will supply them.

"A young gentleman lately out from England, wishes to acquire a practical knowledge of farming, and is open for a year's engagement on a large farm." There is no mistaking the sort of a chap this is. He means to eat with the family, have meat three times a day, and no opposition to seeing the old man's best-looking daughter to and from church and singing school.