

This was a straight hit. Jim was a widower and had been visiting Miss Crandall's maiden sister for some time. Everybody laughed heartily at Davy's home thrust, and Jim saw he had blundered badly in making any references to courtship, so he hastened to distract attention from himself by ridiculing Mr. McIntosh who was present at the meeting, and he joined in the laugh at Jim's expense.

"Luck at the young gentleman," said Jim with a malicious emphasis on "gentleman." "Luck at him will yiz? Do yiz see the illigant ring he bez on his finger, ay and his broad cloth shoot? Phew! smell the hair-oil on him! Ye'll have till work hard till keep up with yer perfume young man. Don't turn yer head too quick or yer high collar will cut off wan av yer ears and if ye lost yer ears yer own mother wouldn't know ye. Keep away from the light young man," said he waving his arm, "or the waggin of yer ears will put it out."

The chairman, who dreaded Miss Crandall's appointment was shrewd enough to see that Jim's tactics were creating sympathy for Mr. McIntosh, so he let him proceed with his personal abuse. The audience soon tired of it, however, and Jim's voice was drowned with loud cries of "Order, Order, Order Mr. Chairman."

When at last order was secured, the chairman asked that an application be handed in from each candidate in writing. This proposition was made with a view of placing Miss Crandall at a disadvantage. He knew she was not a good writer and he knew also that good penmanship is to the uneducated a certain evidence of great culture. He was not the only one acquainted with these facts, however. Sarah Crandall's father well knew them too, and was prepared for the emergency. He had learned "writin' and cipherin'" in the north of Ireland, and though he had lost nearly every eternal trace of his early culture, he had not lost the art of penmanship. As soon as written applications were called for, Tom Crandall's giant form arose from the corner in which he had sat as a silent spectator, and walking over with an air of stately superiority, he laid a sheet of soiled foolscap on the chairman's table, saying with solemn deliberation, "My daughter's epistle lies before you, sir." Mr. McIntosh had no written application, so he was asked to write one on a leaf torn from the old copy book in which I was writing the minutes.

While he was writing, the chairman opened Miss Crandall's application and handed it to me, asking me quietly to point out any faults I could find in it. It was a most extraordinary "epistle" consisting merely of the words:

"Sarah Crawford, Cartwright, Cannada, America." These words were written five times in as many varieties of penmanship; the difference between the lines being chiefly in the size of the writing, and the roundness or angularity of the letters. It was clear to me that the writing had been done by a man. I called the chairman's attention to this fact, and he said:

"Some of this does not look like a girl's writin', Mr. Crandall."

"Mebby not to your eyes, Mr. Stinson; and I suppose you are not to blame for your ignorance. Some people can only write one kind of handwritin', but you must understand that my daughter can write a variety of text hands, Mr. Stinson."

This brought a wild cheer from Miss Crandall's friends led on by Jim McCafferty.

While they were cheering I told the chairman she had two "n's" instead of one, in the word "Canada."

I notice that your daughter's spellin' is not good," said Mr. Stinson more than ever anxious to establish his own reputation for scholarship and to overthrow Miss Crandall's.

"What do you think is the matter with the spellin', Mr. Stinson?" demanded Jim McCafferty.

"She has two 'n's' in Canada and there should be only one," said the chairman.

For an instant there was a look of anxiety on the faces of the Crandall party, as they looked, first at their leaders, and then at each other. Anxiety was just deepening into gloom when the awful stillness was broken by one of the more independent of the McIntosh party who said:

"I think you are wrong Mr. Chairman, there are two 'n's' in Canada."

Instantly the dark faces shone again, bright with confidence and hope. "Of course there are two;" "Certainly;" "Everybody knows that;" and similar assertions were now shouted from every corner of the room. The Crandall party was unanimously in favor of two "n's," and their opponents were about equally divided. The appointment of a teacher was forgotten. The spelling of "Canada" aroused the intense interest of every man in the room. Interest led to action. Men sprang from their seats and rushed across the room to abuse their neighbors for daring to leave Canada with only one "n" in it. The chairman lost control of the meeting and it became a scene of wild confusion.

Seeing two-thirds of the meeting against him, the chairman became anxious. He turned despairingly to me, and whispered doubtfully, "Are you sure?" "Are you sure?"

some minutes. Then Jim McCafferty, emboldened by the teacher's opinion and the enthusiasm of numbers, came forward, and striking the table in front of the chairman, said:

"I'll bet my yoke of steers, agin a rooster, that you're wrong, Mr. Chairman."

No one dared to take the bet, and Tom Crandall, thinking the time for action had arrived, arose, and stretching his arm towards the chairman in a tragic manner, said with a look and tone of triumph and defiance:

"Ye'll find the punctuation of my daughter's epistle correct, Mr. Stinson. I wonder at an ignorant ould clodhopper darin' to preshoom to prevaricate with my daughter, a girl of rale larnin'."

This, too, was greeted with applause, and for a moment it seemed as if the meeting would resent the insult to Miss Crandall and to "Canada," by making a personal attack on the chairman and myself. However, I made a diversion by asking Davy Sinclair if "he had any book in which the word 'Canada' occurred?" This seemed to meet with general approval, but Davy could find no book in the house except the Bible and Ayer's Almanac. There was no hope of finding it in the Bible, so Mr. McIntosh and I took the almanac and scanned it page by page, while the meeting held its breath. At last I found a statement of a remarkable cure effected through the use of "Ayer's Sarsaparilla," and signed "James E. Serts, Thorold, Canada."

Seizing the book, I rushed to Jim McCafferty and asked him "How many 'n's' he could find in Canada?"

For a moment he seemed grateful for the safety of his steers; but he was not ready to acknowledge defeat yet.

"Where's this almanac printed?" said he; "in Canada or the States?"

I acknowledged that it was in the States.

"Well, I'll take no Yankee spellin'," said he; "they're awful ignorant craytures over there. No loyal man would stand by Yankee spellin'."

This sentiment met with general approval, and seemed to strengthen the opinion in favor of two "n's."

"I am sure I saw it with only one 'n' in the *Globe* to-day," said an old gentleman.

"An' who'd take a rebel rag like that fur authority?" contemptuously enquired Tom Crandall; "not me, anyway."

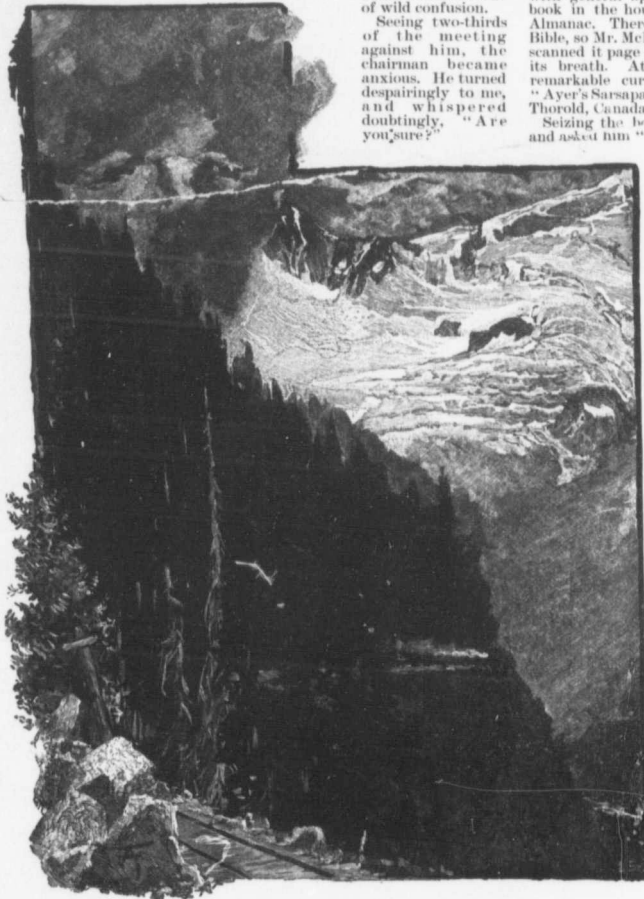
The majority fully agreed with him that the *Globe* could not be an acceptable authority. Mr. McIntosh said, however, that he was wrong, and fearing new revelations spoke vaguely of "typographical errors."

I knew that Davy Sinclair took the *Leader*, the popular Conservative paper of the time, and I asked him for a copy. No copy could be found, however, and Davy explained apologetically that "after Sunday his wife commonly used the paper to light the fire."

Just at that moment I noticed that Mrs. Sinclair had not burned all her *Leaders*, for her entire best room was papered with them. I called the attention of the meeting to the fact, and in an instant forty earnest students were engaged in studying the walls of Davy's room. After a long search "Canada" was found, spelled with one "n." There was no appealing against the *Leader*. The Supreme Court had decided in my favor. I had narrowly escaped the imputation of being a "Yankee" and a "rebel," and had become the hero of the hour.

Jim McCafferty covered his defeat and restored good humor by saying, "I'm surprised to find the *Globe* and *Leader* agreein' in anything."

Miss Crandall's appointment was now out of the question. Her blunder had brought her friends into disgrace and she could not be forgiven. Mr. McIntosh was a fellow-sufferer with the majority, and having been on the same side in the spelling question their sympathies were drawn out towards him. Jim McCafferty generously proposed that I should be the teacher, and my recent exhibition of "extraordinary larnin'" led the meeting to join



ROSS PEAK GLACIER.