

PREFACE.

TRUTH, in many instances, is like medicine, exceedingly unpalatable when administered by itself, but, if disguised and carefully mixed in a tasteful vehicle, is usually acceptable and admirably borne even by persons troubled with mock modesty and tender nerves ; thus it is that the Author in the following pages combines it with fiction. If some of the characters in this narrative do not happen to please the literary *epicure*, it is not intended that they should ; and if any of the scenes—all of which are drawn true to nature, without any attempt at color or varnish—should shock the feelings of those who have had little or no experience of life, then the writer is content, from the simple fact that the desired effect is produced, and the practical results salutary. That there are hundreds, yea thousands, of living *fac similes* of Theodore Bloat running at large upon society and infecting the youth of the land, no one need attempt to deny ; for, unfortunately, there are but too many to testify that, like Harman Abbott, they have been ensnaringly victimized at the hands of such men ; in that character, therefore, I have endeavored to draw a life-like portrait, at least as far as was compatible with the general features of the story.

I have been asked by several, ~~before~~ ^{when} the story was first published weekly in the *Flora Observer*, whether the greater part—if not the whole—was not true, or whether it was from imagination ? because that, if from the latter, they never read a novel so *very natural and life-like*. I shall state here, in case there should be any who might be disposed to ask similar questions, that it was not written from any one case which came *specialy* under my notice, but from close observation of human character, and with such feeble efforts at imagery as I was enabled to command.

I have entitled it "A New Dominion Story," because I saw fit to bring the two chief heroes to Canadian shores ; and in giving the finishing touch to the picture (or just as the curtain drops,) have endeavored to draw such a striking contrast between them, at the death-scene of Bloat, as cannot fail to recall to the mind of the reader all he has perused, even from the forlorn Clara as she stood by the pawn-office, sobbing under the dim gas-light, to the impressive sight in the bar-room. I should have made the tale more Canadian in character, such as painting more minutely the peculiarities and numerous advantages of the country, but conceived it to be out of place—running to extremes it might be termed—in a work like the present. Shortly after I commenced writing the story a friend, who is considered a ready writer, and, if I am to judge from his physiog., a sharp, nipping critic, too, volunteered the opinion, that it was easier to begin a novel than to complete one successfully ; whereupon I ventured to offer one also—I don't remember whether it was with fear and trembling—and unhesitatingly replied that in my experience it was the *reverse*. I must say, before concluding, that I feel highly favored and gratified at the many flattering expressions of opinion I have received regarding this little work, and sincerely hope that all who peruse these pages will give the verdict in my favour, by acknowledging the moral therein contained to be worthy of their notice : then, and only then, shall I be rewarded for my labour.

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