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AGNES.

My sister and I were left orphans at an early age, but not too soon for me to be able by my small salary, as a clerk, in addition to the sum left by my poor father, to make both ends meet and to keep up appearances. I was sixteen, and had been through the usual course of instruction attained by boys of that age in the colonies, when the death of my father (my mother had died years before) occurred, and put an end to any dreams I may have had, or my father might have entertained, towards further prosecuting my studies. It is probable that on my part they were very slight, for youth is ever restless under restraint, and freedom from school and lessons is a great temptation to discard study. To look down upon schoolboys and affect the manner of the uppermost feelings, generally speaking, in a youth of sixteen. But situated as I was, there was but one course for me to follow: to get to work as soon as possible and make money to support myself and sister, and to provide for her education. She was six years my junior, and required every attention. I took lodgings at a cheap rate, continued my sister at the school she was attending, and prepared to face the world.

My first step was to look out for a situation, and I shall not soon forget the trepidation I experienced when I started on this most disagreeable expedition. Our home was in the city of Quebec, the former capital of Canada; and as I tramped through the streets of that old fashioned city on that

bright morning in June some dozen years ago, I felt as desolate and hopeless as a human being could well be. I trudged down to the Lower Town, the business part of the city, and looked for my fate. My father had been in the lumber trade, but being so young I had never been made acquainted by him with any of its intricacies, and knew nothing of his business friends or associates. I felt more and more convinced that on myself alone depended my fortune. I walked along the principal street, jostled by the busy crowds, and read the numberless signs which decorated the windows and doorways, but on none could I see whether the firms mentioned were engaged in lumber or fish oil. Insurance signs I could make out, chandlery shops were plain, and exchange windows spoke for themselves. For hours I walked up and down the street, beaten down by the scorching sun, and pushed about by the heartless throng. Weary and disconsolate I went home, having been unable even to summon up sufficient courage to ask the name of a single business firm. My little sister noticed my dejected looks and with her girlish talk endeavored to brush away my cares. After a sleepless night I rose with an aching head and burning eyes, but determined to put on a bold front and cast about once more for luck. In passing through the street I came across a quondam fellow student, and accosted him:

"Hullo! Spiers, where are you going?"
"Hullo! old fellow; how are you?—but I