

REDMOND O'DONNELL; OR, LE CHASSEUR D'AFRIQUE.

CHAPTER II. MRS. VAVASOR.

The London express, due at Castleford station at 7.20, rushed in with an unearthly shriek, like Sinbad's black monster, with the one red, fiery eye. There were five passengers for the town—four men and a woman. The train disgorged them and then fled away, shrieking once more, into the black October night.

A wet and gusty autumn evening, a black and starless sky frowning down upon a black and sodden earth. A bitter blast blew up from the sea, and whirled the dead leaves in eddies before it. The station, dreary and isolated, as it is in the nature of stations to be, looked drearier than ever to-night. Far off the lamps of the town glimmered athwart the rain and fog, specks of light in the eerie-gloom.

The four male passengers who had quitted the train hurried with their portmanteaus, buttoned to the chin, and with hats slouched forward over their noses—honest shopkeepers of Castleford, but looking villainously brigandish in the light of the station lamps. Only the female passenger remained, and she came tripping up the platform with a little satchel in her hand, crisp and smiling, to the chief station official.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but can you tell me if the carriage from Scarswood Park is waiting for me?"

She was a beautiful little woman. Two great dark eyes of lustrous light beamed up in the official's face, and a smile that lit up the whole station with its radiance dazzled him. She had feathery black ringlets—she had a brilliant high color—well, a trifle too high, probably, for some fastidious tastes—she had teeth white and more glistening than anything the official had ever seen outside a dentist's show-case—she had the tiniest little figure in the world, and she had—as far as the official could judge, for the glitter of her whole appearance—some three-and-thirty years. With the flash of her white teeth, the sparkle of her black eyes, the glow of the rose-red cheeks, she dazzled you like a sudden burst of sunlight, and you never stopped to think until afterward how sharp and rasping was the voice in which she addressed you.

The carriage from Scarswood? No, it had not—that is to say the official did not know whether it had or not.

Would the lady be pleased to sit down? There was a fire in here, and he would go down and ascertain.

"I certainly expected to find it waiting," the little lady said, tripping lightly after him. "Sir John knows I am coming to-night. He is such an old friend of mine—Sir John. It's odd now the carriage isn't waiting—tell them when they do come, Mrs. Vavasor is here."

"The carriage has come," announced the official on the moment. "This way, madame, if you please."

The close carriage, its lamps, glowing like two red eyes in the darkness, its horses pawing the ground, its coachman stiff and curly on the box, was drawn up at the station door. The official held the door open—she thanked him with a radiant smile, and then Sir John Dantree's carriage was flying through the darkness of the wet October night over the muddy high road to Scarswood Park. Little Mrs. Vavasor wiped the blurred glasses, and strained her bright black eyes as the vehicle whirled up the avenue, to catch the first glimpse of the house. It loomed up at last, a big black shadow in the darkness. Lights gleamed all along its front windows, and the distant sound of music floated out into the night. Mrs. Vavasor's fascinating face was at its brightest—the sparkle in her eyes sparkled more than ever.

"A party—a ball perhaps. Let me see, the third of October—why la petite's birthday, of course. Miss Dangerfield, heiress of Scarswood, is just seventeen to-night. How stupid of me to forget it." She laughed in the darkness and solitude, a little low laugh not pleasant to hear. "I wonder how poor dear Sir John will meet me, and what account he will give of me to his daughter? It couldn't have been pleasant for him to receive my note. I dare say by this time he thought me dead."

She stepped out a moment in the rain, then into the lighted vestibule, then into the spacious entrance hall, where Mrs. Harrison, in a gray silk gown and white lace cap, and all the dignity of housekeeper, met her courteously.

"Mrs. Vavasor, I think, ma'am?"

Mrs. Vavasor's enchanting smile answered in the affirmative.

"Sir John's orders are every attention, ma'am, and he was to be told the minute you arrived. This way, if you please, and you're to wait here, ma'am, until he comes to you."

She led the way upstairs, and threw open the door of a half lit, elegant apartment, all bright with upholstery, curtains, and carpet of blue and gold.

"How very nice," Mrs. Vavasor remarked, glancing pleasantly around; "and you are the housekeeper, I suppose, my good soul? And your young lady is having a party on her birth-night? How pleasant it must be to be only seventeen, and handsome, and rich, and a baronne's daughter."

Mrs. Vavasor laughed that sharp little laugh of hers that rather grated on sensitive ears.

"Miss Dangerfield is handsome, no doubt, Mrs. Vavasor—"

"Harrison," the housekeeper responded, rather stiffly. "And Miss Katherine is very handsome, indeed, in my eyes. I'll tell Sir John you're here, ma'am, at once, if you'll please sit down."

But it pleased Mrs. Vavasor to stand—she turned up the lamps until the room was flooded with light, then walked over to a full-length mirror and looked at herself steadily and long.

"Fading!" she said; "fading! Rouge, French coiffures, enamel, belladonna, and the rest of it are very well; but they can't make over a woman of thirty-seven into a girl of twenty. Still, considering the life I've led—"

"Ab, what a bitter fight the battle of life has been for me! If I were wise I would pocket my wrinkles, forego my vengeance, keep my secrets, and live happy in Scarswood Hall forever after. I wonder if Sir John would marry me if I asked him?"

The door opened and Sir John came in. Little Mrs. Vavasor turned round from the glass, folded her small hands, and stood and looked at him with a smile on her face.

"How very pale, and grim as the grave. So for a moment they stood, like two duellists waiting for the word, in dead silence. Then the lady spoke:

"How do you do, Sir John? When we parted I remember you found me admiring myself in the glass; when we meet again, after fifteen years—Dieu! how old it makes one feel—"

"Not admiring yourself this time, you understand. I sadly fear I have grown old and

ugly in all those hard fought years. But you—you're not a day older, and just the same handsome stalwart soldier I remember you. Won't you shake hands for the sake of old times, Sir John; and say 'you are welcome to a poor little woman who has traveled all the way from Paris to see you?'"

She held out her little gloved hand. He drew away with a gesture of repulsion, and crossing to the chimney-piece leaned upon it, his face hard and set, in the light of the lamps.

"Why have you come here?" he asked.

"Ab, Chet! hear him—such a cruel question. And after fifteen years I stand all alone in this big, pitiless world, a poor little friendless woman, and I come, to the gallant gentleman who fifteen years ago stood my friend—such a friend—and he asks me in that cruel voice why I have come!"

"That will do, Mrs. Vavasor—this is not a theatre, nor am I an appreciative audience. Tell me the truth, if you can—let us have plain speaking. Why have you come here? What do you want?"

"That is plain language certainly. I have come here because you are in my power—absolutely and wholly in my power. And I want to stay here as an honored guest just as long as I please. Is that plain enough to satisfy you, or would you like me to put it still plainer?"

Her deriding black eyes mocked him, her incessant smile set his teeth on edge. Hatred—abhorrence—were in his eyes as he looked at her.

"You want money, I suppose? Well, you shall have it, though I paid you your price long ago, and you promised to trouble me no more. But you can't stay here; it is simply impossible."

"It is simply nothing of the kind. I have come to stay—my luggage is down yonder in the hall, and you will tell them presently to fetch it up and show me to my room. I do want money—yes, it is the universal want, and I mean to have it. Eight thousand a year and Scarswood Park, one of the finest seats in Sussex. And such an old family!—baronets created by James the First, and knights centuries and centuries before! How proud your daughter must feel of her ancient name and lineage!"

And Mrs. Vavasor laughed aloud, her tinkling laugh that struck shrilly on hypersensitive ears.

"You will leave my daughter's name out of the question, if you please," the baronet retorted haughtily; "such lips as yours sully her name. If you had one spark of womanly feeling, one grain of self-respect left from the life you have led, a woman's heart in your breast, you would never come near her. In Heaven's name go—I will give you anything, anything, only don't insist upon staying here."

For answer she walked back to the mirror, and deliberately began removing her bonnet, gloves, and mantle.

"As I intend going down and joining your party presently, and being introduced to the county families, I think I will go up to my room at once, if you please, Sir John—by the way, is Mr. Peter Dangerfield one of your guests on this happy occasion? It strikes me now I should like to know him. He is your only brother's only son and heir-in-law—after your daughter, of course. How awkward for that young gentleman you should have a daughter at all. And the estate is strictly entailed to the nearest of kin."

There was a gleam of almost dangerous malice in her eyes as she turned from the mirror. "Yes, I am really anxious to make the acquaintance of Mr. Peter Dangerfield."

He turned almost livid—he made a step towards her.

"You would not dare," he said huskily!

"You wretch! You would not dare—"

"I would dare anything except being late for Miss Dangerfield's birth-night party. Just seventeen! a charming age, and an heiress, and a beauty, no doubt? Ah! what a contrast to my waning youth. I grow melancholy when I think of it. I was seventeen once, too, Sir John, though to look at me now you might believe it. Ring the bell, please, and let that nice old creature, your housekeeper, show me to my room. And when I'm ready—say—at ten o'clock—you will come for me here, and present me to your guests. No, really, baronet—not another word to-night on that subject. These serious matters are so exhausting; and remember I've been travelling all day. Ring the bell."

He hesitated a moment, then obeyed. The look of a hunted animal was in his eyes, and she stood there mocking him to his face. It seemed about as unequal a contest as a battle between a huge Newfoundland and a little King Charles, and the King Charles had the victory this time.

Mrs. Harrison answered the bell; in the brief interval to word had been spoken.

"You will show Mrs. Vavasor to her room," Sir John said shortly and sternly, turning to go.

"And I will be dressed by ten, and you will call for me here," responded Mrs. Vavasor gaily, over her shoulder. "How fortunate I have been in not missing the opportunity of offering my congratulations to Miss Dangerfield."

And then humming a gay French air, Mrs. Vavasor followed the housekeeper up another broad oaken stairway, along a carpeted corridor and into a velvet-hung chamber, bright with firelight and waxlight, luxurious with cushions, chairs, and lounges, fragrant with hot-house flowers, and rich with pictures.

"Your trunks are in the wardrobe adjoining, ma'am," Mrs. Harrison said; "and if there is anything I can do or if Miss Katherine's maid—"

"You good creature!" Mrs. Vavasor answered. "No, I am my own maid—I haven't eight thousand a year, you know, like your darling Miss Katherine, and can't afford luxuries. Thanks, very much, and—good night;" and then the door closed gently in the housekeeper's face, the key was turned, and Sir John's guest was alone.

She stood and looked round the room with a smile, that incessant smile that grew just a trifle wearisome after the first half hour or so.

In the golden gleam of the light the tall mirrors flashed, the carpet looked like a green bank of June roses, the silken draperies shimmered, and the exotic in their tall glasses perturbed the warm air. Outside the rain beat, and the wind blew, and the "blackness of darkness" reigned. She listened to the wild beating of the storm in the park with a little delicious shiver.

"Is it like my life?" she said softly.

"Have I come out of the rain, and the wind, and the night, to the roses, and the waxlights, and music of existence? Or is the gypsy, vagabond instinct too strong in me, and will the roses fade, and their perfume sicken, and the lights grow dim, and I throw it all up some day, and go back to the old freedom and outlawry once more?" The cedar palace and purple robes of the king look very inviting, but I think I would rather have the tents of Bohemia, with their freedom, and the stars shining through the canvas roof."

An hour later she descended to the long drawing-room a lady—a stranger to all there. She appeared in their midst as suddenly as

though she had dropped from the rainy skies, a charming little vision, in amber silk and Chantilly flounces, and diamonds, and creamy roses in her floating feathery black hair.

"A little lady whose cheeks outshone all roses, and whose eyes outshined her diamonds, and whom Sir John Dangerfield introduced to his guests as Mrs. Vavasor."

Who was Mrs. Vavasor? Women looked at her askance—the stamp of adventures was on her face and raiment. The rouge was artistic, but it was rouge; the amber silk was shabby; the Chantilly, a very clever imitation, the diamonds Palais Royal beyond doubt. And then Sir John was so pale, so gloomy—the old soldier, not used to society masks, showed his trouble all too plainly in his perturbed face.

"A woman not of their order—and the ladies' bows were frigid and chilling as the baronet presented her."

But the men—what did they know of shabby silks and brownish faces. They saw a brilliant fairy of—well, five-and-twenty summers, perhaps—by lamplight—with the eyes and teeth of a goddess.

"But, Miss Dangerfield, Sir John—Miss Dangerfield! Miss Dangerfield!" Mrs. Vavasor cried, tapping him playfully with her fan; "those people are not the rose, though they have come to-night to do honor to that gorgeous flower. I am dying to behold Miss Dangerfield."

The stormy blue eyes of the Indian officer flashed; he gnawed his mustache, with an oath only heard by the lady on his arm. Her shrill laugh answered it.

"For shame, Sir John! So ill-bred, too! And that face! You look like the Death's-head the Egyptians used to have at their banquets. What will people say? There, I see her—I see her! That is Katherine."

She stopped short, still holding Sir John's arm, and a vivid light came into her black eyes. The baronet's daughter was advancing on the arm of Mr. Gaston Dantree.

"Katherine," her father said, bringing out every word with a husky effort, "this is Mrs. Vavasor, a very old friend—acquaintance." If his life had been at stake, he could not have said "friend."

"You have heard me speak of her; she is our guest for the present."

He turned abruptly, and walked away. Katherine Dangerfield held out her hand for the first, the last time—to her father's acquaintance. Their eyes met, and on the only occasion, perhaps, in all her seven-and-thirty years of life, those of the elder woman fell. The bright gray eyes of the girl looked straight through her, and distrusted and disliked her with that first glance.

"My father's friends are always welcome to Scarswood," she said it very briefly and coldly. "May I beg of you to excuse me now, I am engaged for this waltz to Mr. Dantree."

She was looking her best to-night and almost pretty; but then "almost" is a very wide word.

She wore pink tissue, that floated around her like a rose mist, with here and there a touch of priceless old point, and a tiny cluster of fairy roses. She had pearls on her neck, and gleaming through her lovely auburn hair, a rich tea-rose nestling in its silken braid.

She looked graceful; she looked unspcakably patrician; she carried herself like a young princess. And the vivid light in Mrs. Vavasor's black eyes grew brighter as she watched her float away.

"She has her mother's face," she whispered to herself; "she has her mother's voice—and I hate her for her mother's sake! A home in Scarswood forever, the feshpots of Egypt, the purple and fine linen of high life, would be very pleasant things, but revenge is pleasanter still."

One of the gentlemen to whom she had, at her own special request, been introduced, came up, as she stood, and solicited the pleasure of a waltz.

"I am sure you can waltz," he said; "I can always tell, by some sort of Tersi-chorean instinct, I suppose, when a lady is, or is not, a waltzer."

Mr. Peter Dangerfield was right at least in this particular instance; Mrs. Vavasor waltzed like a fairy—like a French fairy, at that.

She and the baronet's daughter whirled past each other more than once—Katherine with her brown hair floating in a perfumed cloud, her lips breathless and apart, and her bright eyes laughing in her partner's face.

"Is she in love with that very handsome young man, I wonder?" Mrs. Vavasor thought; "and is he rich, and in love with her? If so, then my plan of vengeance may be frustrated yet."

"Mr. Dangerfield," to her partner, "please tell me the name of that gentleman with whom Miss Dangerfield is dancing? It strikes me I have somewhere seen his face before."

"Not unlikely, he's been everywhere. His name is Gaston Dantree, and he is, I believe, a native of the State of Louisiana."

"An American! He is very rich, then—all those Americans are rich."

"Dantree is not. By his own showing, he is poor as a church-mouse; his only wealth is his Grecian profile and his tenor voice." There was just a tinge of bitterness in his tone as he looked after the handsome Southerner and his partner.

"My face is my fortune, sir, she said," hummed gaily Mrs. Vavasor. "How, then, comes monsieur to be here, and evidently first favorite in regards of Sir John's heiress?"

"His handsome face and musical tenor again. Miss Dangerfield met him at a concert, not three weeks ago, and behold the result! We, poor devils, minus classic noses, arched eyebrows, and the voices of archangels, stand out at the cold and gaze aloft at him in Paradise."

"Does Sir John like it?"

"Sir John will like whatever his daughter likes. An human creature persistent enough can do what they please with Sir John. For his daughter he is her abject slave."

The bitterness was bitter than ever in Mr. Peter Dangerfield's voice; evidently the heiress of Scarswood and her handsome Southerner were sore subjects.

He was a pale-faced, undersized young man, with very light hair and eyes—so light that he was hopelessly near-sighted—and a weak, querulous voice. It was just a little hard to see Scarswood slipping out of the family before his very eyes through the headstrong whims of a novel-reading, beauty-loving, chit of a girl.

He, too, was poor—poor as Gaston Dantree himself—and at thirty, mamma was the god of his idolatry, and to reign one day at Scarswood, the perpetual longing of his life.

"And Miss Dangerfield is a young lady whose slaves must obey, I think; and Scarswood will go out of the family. Such a pity, Mr. Dangerfield! Now, I should think you might prevent that."

She made this audacious home-thrust looking full in his pale, thin face, with her black, resolute eyes.

The blood flushed rosy to the roots of his dull yellow hair.

"I mind no madame,"—with a hard laugh— "I stand a chance. I'm not a handsome man."

"Miss Dangerfield—I am a woman, and may say so—"

"All the greater reason, why she should worship beauty in others," Gaston Dantree, without a son in his pocket—a foreigner, an adventurer, for all we know to the contrary, will one day reign lord of Scarswood. See them now! Could anything be more lover-like than they are, Mrs. Vavasor?"

He spoke to her as though he had known her for years. Some rapport made those two friends at once.

She looked where he pointed, her smile and glance at their brightest.

The waltz had ended; leaning on her handsome partner's arm, the last flutter of Miss Dangerfield's pink dress vanished in the green distance of the conservatory.

"I see; and I in spite of appearances, Mr. Dangerfield, I would mind betting—my diamonds say, against that botanical specimen in your buttonhole—that Mr. Gaston Dantree, Grecian profile, tenor voice, and all, will never reign lord of Scarswood; and for you—why you know the old rhyme:

"'He either dreads his fate too much, Or his deserts are small, Who fears to put it to the touch, To win or lose it all.'"

She walked away, with her last words, her over-mocking laugh coming back to him where he stood. What did the woman mean? How oddly she looked and spoke. How could she prevent Gaston Dantree marrying Katherine? But the last advice was good—why despair before speaking?

"To win or lose it all!" repeated Peter Dangerfield, stroking his feeble, colorless mustache. "By George! I will try. She can but say so."

There was a call for Mr. Dantree on the instant—Mr. Dantree was wanted to sing.

Mr. Dangerfield stood where he was, and saw the dark-eyed tenor emerge leisurely from the conservatory, and—alone. He sat down at the piano; his slender, shapely hands flew over the keys in a brilliant prelude. Everybody was listening—now was his time. Katherine was in the conservatory yet. He made his way slowly down the long vista of rooms to where, at the extreme end, the green brightness of tropic plants gleamed in the lamplight.

She still stood where her late companion had left her, in the recess of a window, her robe of pink tissue shining rosyly, her jeweled glances softly. Tall tropic plants spread their fan-like leaves about her; the air was rich and faint with exotic odors, and over all the soft abundant light poured down.

Gaston Dantree's song floated in—an Irish song, half gay, half sad, wholly sweet—and a brooding tenderness lay on the girl's face—a great happiness, new and sweet—and made it almost beautiful. The rain lashed the windows, the wind of the October night blew in long, lamentable blasts through the rocking trees; but the storm and darkness without only made the contrast within the more brilliant.

"Katherine!"

She neither saw nor heard him until he was close at her side. She lifted up her dreamy eyes, her trance of bliss over.

"Oh, you, Peter! What an odious habit you have of stealing in upon me like a cat. I never heard you."

"You never heard me, Miss Dangerfield? You need hardly tell me that. You were listening far too intently to Mr. Gaston Dantree to hear anything else."

"Was I?" retorted Katherine. They rarely met, those two, except to quarrel. "Well, all I can say is that Mr. Gaston Dantree is very well worth listening to, which is more than I can say for you, cousin Peter."

"You mean I'm not a singing man, I suppose, Kathie? Well, I admit my brains do not lie in my throat and lungs."

"Nor anywhere else, Mr. Dangerfield."

"And when is it to be, Kathie?" Mr. Dangerfield demanded, folding his arms; "when are all to offer our congratulations? Such a flirtation as yours, my dear cousin, with this Apollo Belvidere from the Southern States, can have but one ending."

"And such a flirtation as yours with this pretty Mrs. Vavasor, from nobody knows where, came, but one ending, too, I suppose, responded Katherine, coming up to time bravely. "She is some five or six years your senior, I should think; but, where true love exists, what does a little disparity of years signify? A case of love at eight; was it not, cousin?"

"You might have spared me that taunt, Kathie; you know very well who it is I am so unfortunate as to love."

"Upon my word, I don't. My little cousin Peter, his loves and hates, are subjects that trouble me very slightly. There! Mr. Dantree's song is done, and they are playing the Lancers. Suppose we leave off quarrelling and go and have a cousinly quadrille?"

"Not yet, Kathie. I can't endure this suspense no longer. No, you shall not go; I will be heard! To watch you as I have watched you to-night with that man would simply drive me mad!"

"I don't want to be watched, and I do not suppose Mr. Dantree does, either. You mean Mr. Dantree, don't you? And, Peter, don't put on that tragic face; it isn't your style, dear. You're too fair complexioned. And what business is it of yours, and why should it drive you mad?"

"Little need to ask, Katherine. You know only too well—because I love you. Kathie, don't look like that! I love you, and you know it well. I haven't had thoughts or eyes for any living creature but you since you first came here. Ah, Kathie! Listen to me. Don't laugh, as I see you are going to do. I love you with all my heart—better than ever that fellow can do—and I ask you to be my wife. Katherine, don't laugh at me, for Heaven's sake!"

But the warning came too late. Katherine broke out into a ringing peal of laughter, that the music happily drowned.

Peter Dangerfield looking desperately in earnest, very, very yellow, and, with folded arms, stood glaring at her in an uncommonly savage way for so tender a declaration.

"I beg your pardon, Peter, but I can't help it. The idea of marrying you—only five feet five inches, and an attorney, and my first cousin's first cousin should never marry, you know. What would papa say, you silly little boy, if he could hear this?"

"My uncle knows," the young man answered, with sullen anger; "I spoke to him a month ago."

Miss Dangerfield opened her big gray eyes. "Oh, you did? That's what he meant, then, that morning after the concert. I remember; he tried to plead your cause. And you spoke to him first; and you're a lawyer, and knew no better than that! No, Peter; it is not possible. You're a nice little fellow, and I think a great deal of you; and I'd do almost anything you wanted me, except marry you. That's a little too much, even for such good nature as mine."

"Then I'm to consider myself rejected?"

"Now, Peter, don't put on that ill-tempered face; it quite spoils your good looks, and you know you have none to spoil—apart, I mean. Well, yes, then; I am afraid you must consider yourself rejected. I really

should like to oblige you in this matter, but you perceive I can't. Come, let us make it up—I'm not angry—and take me back to the drawing-room for my dance. It is a sin to lose such music as that."

"In one moment, Katherine. Will you answer me this, please? Is it for Gaston Dantree I am refused?"

"Cousin Peter, I shall lose my temper if you keep on. If there were no Mr. Dantree in the case I should reject you all the same. You're very well as a first cousin; as a husband—excuse me! I wouldn't marry you if you were the only man left in the world, and the penalty of refusing you to be to go to my grave an old maid. Is that answer decisive enough?"

"Very nearly! Thank you for your plain speaking, Kathie." He was white with suppressed anger. "But lest we should misunderstand each other in the least, won't you tell me whether or no Mr. Dantree is to be the future lord of Scarswood Park? Because in that case, for the honor of the family I should endeavor to discover the gentleman's antecedents. A classic profile and a fine voice for singing may be sufficient virtues in the eyes of a young lady of seventeen, but I'm afraid they will hardly satisfy the world or Sir John."

"For the world I don't care! For Sir John, whatever makes me happy will satisfy him. I am trying to keep my temper, Peter, but don't provoke me too far—it isn't safe. Will you, or will you not, take me out for the dance? I am not accustomed to ask favors twice."

"How queenly she says it—the heiress of Scarswood!"

His passion was not to be restrained now. "And it is for this Yankee singing man—this new adventurist—this negro minstrel in his own land, that I am cast off?"

She whirled round upon him in a storm of sudden fury, and made a step toward him. But rage lent him courage; he stood his ground.

"You little wretch!" cried Miss Dangerfield, "how dare you stand there and say such things to me? How dare you call Gaston Dantree an adventurist? You, who would not presume to call your soul your own in his presence! Negro minstrel, indeed! You wretched little attorney! One should be a gentleman to judge gentlemen. That's why Mr. Dantree's beyond your judgment! Don't ever speak to me again. You're very off an insult. To think that I—I would ever marry you, a little rickety dwarf!"

(To be continued.)

Canadian News.

Rev. Father Whalen, chairman of the Separate School Board at Ottawa, left the city recently, and owing to a deadlock, his successor has not been appointed. The French and English-speaking elements cannot be brought together.—Mail.

L'Evénement of last night contains a long and interesting letter from Paris by its editor, Senator Fabre. Speaking of Mr. Wurtelle's mission to France, Mr. Fabre says that he was successful in both objects he had in view, viz., the completion of negotiations with the French bankers concerning the new provincial loan and relative to the Credit Foncier Franco-Canadienne. On the last point, Mr. Fabre states that he assisted at a re-union at the Banque de Paris, held to define the objects and the mission of a delegate of the bank to be sent to Canada, and to regulate the last details prior to his departure.

There were present at this re-union Mr. Joubert, Vice-President of the Bank, Mr. Cohen Davaers, M. Sautter, M. de Molinaré, M. Thois, and Mr. Wurtelle. It seems that the mission of M. Thois is to ascertain what sort of a field Canada will offer for the operations of the Credit Foncier, and also whether it will be most advisable to leave the capital at 25,000,000 francs, or to increase it to 50,000,000. M. Thois, who sailed from Havre about a fortnight ago, remains in New York until the arrival of M. de Molinaré, who was to have sailed a week later. The latter gentleman, an eminent French publisher, will write in the Journal de Debats a series of letters intended to shed light upon the resources of this country, and the opportunities which it offers for European speculation.

It is stated that the recent seizures of tobacco at Quebec, by the officers of the Collectors of Inland Revenue are more serious than is generally supposed. From the result of enquiries made and calculations estimated, it appears that some four thousand pounds in the case of tobacco has been seized, some of it being worth as much as \$2 per pound. The seizures were made in fifteen different establishments, almost all of the retail dealers in the city having thus suffered. The tobacco so seized was confiscated in virtue of the Act last session of the Dominion Parliament, sanctioned on the 7th of May, 1880, which prohibits the sale of any cut tobacco except in stamped packages. This law has not been enforced in Quebec until within the past few days. No instructions have been forwarded to the trade relative to the working of the new law, and consequently our dealers remained in ignorance of its provisions until their large stocks of tobacco were seized in their stores. The trade complains that it has not been instructed what was required of it, and also that the tobacco now seized was a portion of that which was in store when the new law was adopted, and which has already paid duty. It appears that this fact is not sufficient to prevent seizures, that the tobacco in stock when the new law was sanctioned should have been sent back to the manufacturers, according to the authorities of the Inland Revenue Department, to be repacked and stamped.