



"THE VARIOUS CITY CANDIDATES ARE PROSECUTING THEIR CANVAS ENERGETICALLY."—Daily Paper.

THE MYSTERIES OF LONDON (ONT.)

NOT BY THE AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIES OF LONDON (ENGLAND).

PART I. A DISAPPEARANCE IN THE DARK.

Bright streamed the radiance of the summer gas and the purer lustre of the electric light on the glittering stores on Dundas street. All was fairy-like as where the same scene is depicted by the artist of the forthcoming London part of *Picturesque Canada*. Mortimer Collins, the youthful reporter of a leading local journal, observed the glittering scene with melancholy gaze. That evening's game at billiards had gone against him, his wealth was at an end, and it was in vain to betake himself to the Tecumseh bar-tender, who is the friend of mankind, but does not give credit. To the impecunious there is little pleasure in contemplating richly furnished store-windows. Mortimer Collins bent his steps to the public promenade in Victoria Square. There under the blooming chestnut trees beside the central fountain, he saw Selina, loveliest blonde in the city, daughter of a very wealthy resident, the Hon. Silas Stoddart. She wore a bewitching over-the-garden-wall straw hat with *marguerites*, and a dress of rich sage green, trimmed with a lustrous material of a lighter shade of the same colour, with a suggestion of gold and embroidered flowers in satin. She was joined by a man of sinister appearance, who beckoned her away. She seemed to obey with reluctance. They were shadowed by a second figure, a tall man, muffled in a dark cloak. Mortimer followed, grasping his stout Irish blackthorn, and resolved, if needful, to die in the rescue of Selina. They quickly passed to a dark street leading to the river bank, and as the corporation of London are no more liberal than that of Toronto in supplying street lamps to the distant parts of the city, the place was as black as a bottle of ink in a barrel of pitch at the bottom of the sea. Mortimer could see their figures in faint outline, in a moment more they had disappeared. Had they sunk into the recess of a subterranean passage? Mortimer searched, but in vain. Next day he could discover no trace of the place of the mysterious event, as to which he kept silent, fearing to damage his professional reputation as a newspaper man, to which of course, veracity, and the absence of any tendency to exaggerate, were of the first importance.

PART II.—A DISAPPEARANCE IN THE SUNSHINE.

A week, and the hot sun of a June Sunday

afternoon shone fiercely on Mortimer Collins, as he walked listlessly past the new Opera House. It was closed, as were all other places of refreshment: added to which Mortimer was in his usual state of impecuniosity. He passed on for about a mile to a street composed of a number of private houses. One of these was a spacious mansion, whose garden, cool with fountains, and fragrant with tropical flowers, arrested Mortimer's attention. In a sumptuous dining hall he could see the black servants busied in preparing a banquet. They were ranging champagne glasses of the purest crystal: they were heaping silver ice-pails with the costly flasks. Mortimer gazed without a thought of envy, but with a longing he could not repress to have were it but a few hours' experience of some such life of luxury. He had stood some moments absorbed in this reverie, when his shoulder was touched by a black servant, who respectfully invited him to enter, as his master desired to see him. In an inner room stood a gentleman of commanding address, with dark hair and eyes, who invited him to dine. They sat alone in the banquet room. After dinner his host handed Mortimer a cigar box and said, "This box contains two dozen of those regalias which you said just now you liked, also bills for ten thousand dollars. A like sum will be paid you every month for a year. During that period this house and all that it contains are yours. Whether you will retain the position depends on your action when we next meet. Two conditions. Not a word of thanks, and keep entirely aloof from all former acquaintances. Now farewell, till the decisive hour arrive."

PART III. SUNSHINE.

The happy months passed by. Mortimer avoided all his former associates, who knew he had got suddenly rich, and thought he was proud. Mortimer became a total abstainer, and sought amusement in the society of the lovely, cultured *belles* of London, above all of Selina. She at length consented to be engaged to him.

PART IV. THE SYNDICATE OF ASSASSINS.

About this time startling and mysterious crimes occurred all over Canada. No one could trace them. The policemen were kept out of the way of all able-bodied and suspicious persons, and assisted plenty of helpless drunkards and women.

One evening Selina was walking with her lover near the scene of the event recorded in

our First Part. Impelled by irresistible curiosity Mortimer implored her to tell him all. Love which she could not control forced her to divulge the key to the mysterious experience.

The stranger, Mortimer's benefactor, was her uncle, the respected Hon. Silas Stoddart. With a secret key she opened an iron door in a secret place covered by the river shrubs. Stoddart, who was her uncle, not her father, had compelled her silence by threats. She had learned from a secret source that he had been killed by an accomplice in a brawl. She told of a dark plot to secure the persons of Oscar Wilde, Goldwin Smith, and Gordon Brown, and to force them, by compelling them to endure each other's society in the luxurious underground chambers, to surrender their wealth. Oscar was to be fed on a diet of alternate lilies and sunflowers, till he gave up the proceeds of his lecture-tour. This diabolical plot, of course, fell through, but it is believed by some that the "Syndicate of Assassins" did overpower the members of the Pacific Railway Syndicate, and that these gentlemen sleep in nameless graves, while the band of robbers, dressed in their clothes, carry on successfully the business of plundering Canada.

C. P. M.



"BEATS COCK-FIGHTING."

*Emigrant from the Land o' Cakes has been ringing and knocking for the last half-hour at the empty house next door to Smythe's.*

*Smythe* (putting his head out of his own window)—"Hallo! There's no one lives there."

*Emigrant*—"Is'n a this number forty twa?"

*Smythe*—"Yes. Who are you looking for."

*Emigrant*—"Ow, just my gude brither, Sandy Mackay."

*Smythe*—"Mackay, oh! he's off to Winnipeg."

*Emigrant*—"Lord bless me! This beats cock-fichtin! I've been this twa days lookin' for my relations 'o'wer the toon, an' deil a word can I hear about ane o' them, but juist they're awa the Winnipeg. It's awfu' to be a stranger in a strange land an' every keevin' soul belongin' tae ye awa to Winnipeg. Hoo mony mile is it frae here?"

THE ALDERMAN'S REASON WHY.

"What? vote for Kilvert? No, sir, oh! no, no! I'd far sooner vote the Grip ticket in toto; Of Kilvert, believe me, I'd more than my fill, oh! Why, he cheekily called me an *armadillo!*"

"An *armadillo!* why, man, perillion Were as much to the point; what he said was *Chameleon!*" "Why, for that I'd forgive him, and cancel the bill, oh! But it wasn't *Chameleon* but—*Armadillo!*"

AMBIT. CRT.