

Fairlie's beaded thread of thought came to an abrupt finale, and he started up in astonishment at Mr. Grant's next remarks.

"It doesn't make much difference now. The money you owe me is a mere drop in the bucket to my liabilities. Perhaps I wouldn't have been so easy with you if I hadn't suffered the tortures of the damned for weeks past, trying to keep afloat and make ends meet. My own misery led me to sympathize with you in your sorrowful plight. 'A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.' I am a ruined man, and intend assigning for the benefit of my creditors to-day."

CHAPTER IV.

After the close of the rebellion Archer was sent to the Pacific Coast. The C.P.R. was being rushed along with all rapidity, and the *Gazette* thought it an excellent idea to furnish the mercantile public of the Eastern Provinces with careful reports on the possibilities of trade development and the nature of prospective commercial relations with British Columbia. The Western Province, with its wonders of scenery, its sky-soaring mountain peaks capped with perpetual snows; the mighty torrents rushing in foaming, restless flood; the cool cascades leaping from lofty summits; glaciers glistening and dissolving the warm sunbeams into a glory of prismatic colors; the giant forest growths and the quieter pictures of wooded valley and grass-waving plain, was so utterly beyond anything that Archer had ever experienced, that he could only marvel in dumb admiration at the revelation of surpassing wonders. It seemed to him that everything had an unspotted freshness, a wildness associated with freedom and glorious opportunity. Nature had constructed everything on a colossal scale. Men living in the shadow of the gigantic, towering Rockies, and stupendous pines, must needs assimilate something of the might and vastness of their environment. The pioneers of British Columbia had made a record in keeping with their surroundings. They were above the petty differences which divided the people of the east into cliques and sects. Archer was struck with the contrast, and he hoped that the tide of emigration from the older Provinces with its bigotry, intolerance and narrower life, would not mar the possibilities of British Columbia in the march of light and liberty by introducing the narrower creed of picayunish religious and racial prejudices, poisoning government and giving birth to suspicion, hatred and jealousy. He hoped that British Columbia might be spared the implacable rancors of Orangeman and Catholic, with their imported Irish feuds and traditional enmities; that she might

be spared the discords and estrangements—so inimical to healthy political development—of separate schools and dual languages. The public schools were the real cradles of the nation, and there would be nourished that broadness of spirit that would afterwards sweep away artificial class restrictions and level inequalities and preferences to one common plane of equal privilege and impartiality.

Archer had returned to Toronto with his mind a picture gallery of gorgeous Western scenery. He had gone into ecstacy over the varied views along the railway; but, amid all the grandeur, the capital city—Victoria—the Western gate of future commerce, left impressions most lingering. Victoria, with its winding arms of the sea, its shores fringed with vari-tinted foliage, its glimpses of Mount Baker, towering into the clouds and robed in a filmy veil of ghostly mistiness, the range of rugged, frost-crested Olympians, rearing their cloud-piercing heights protectingly over the Straits, that nestled contentedly far beneath, the sloping verdure-clad hills, the calmer, peaceful pastoral delights filled Archer's mind with all the splendor of variegated tint and color, seeming more like some extravaganza from fairy-land than the real, unaided handiwork of Nature.

(To be continued.)

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