

erally. But it is on Sunday; and this is Sunday.'

It certainly was three o'clock on Sunday morning.

'Gracious heavens, man!' exclaimed the lieutenant, 'is this a civilized country? Don't you know that you will play the very mischief with our vagus nerves?'

The clerk clearly thought he had nothing to do with our vagus nerves, for he simply turned and lowered another lamp. So the lieutenant lit his candle and departed, muttering to himself.

'Dan!'s?' we heard him growl, as he went up the wooden stair. 'All aboard for Dan!'s? Confound me if I ever come within a dozen miles of Dan!'s again!'

CHAPTER XXXV.

A THOUSAND ISLANDS.

THE next day was Sunday, still, calm, and blue; and we sat or patiently walked along the wooden pier, waiting for the steamer that was to come up the broad waters of the St. Lawrence. The river lay before us like a lake. The sun was warm on the long planks. There was not a flake of cloud in the sky.

Hour after hour passed, and the steamer, that had been detained in the fog of the preceding night, did not appear. We got into a drowsy and dreamy state. We watched the people come and go by the other boats, without interest or curiosity. Who were these, for example, this motley group of Indians, with their pale olive complexion, and their oval eyes like the eyes of the Chinese? They spoke a guttural French, and they were clad in rags and tatters of all colours. Hop-pickers? The squalid descendants of the old Iroquois? And when these had gone, the only man who did remain was a big sailor-looking person, who walked up and down, and eagerly whittled a bit of wood. Him we did regard with some languid interest; for hitherto we had not seen any one engaged in this occupation, and we wished to know the object of it. Surely this was no idle amusement, this fierce and energetic cutting down of the stick? Was he not bent on making a peg? Or in sharpening his knife? Suddenly he

threw the bit of wood into the river, and shut up his knife with an air of much satisfaction: the mystery remains a mystery until this day.

Perhaps it is to beguile the tedium of waiting—and be it remembered that the Lake of the Thousand Islands lay right ahead of us, and Niagara too; while at Niagara we expected to get letters from England—that one of us begins to tell a story. It is a pathetic story. It is all about a bank clerk who lived a long time ago in Camden-town, and who used to walk in every day to the City. One day, as he was passing a small shop, he saw in a corner of the window about half a dozen water-color drawings in a somewhat dirty and dilapidated state; and it occurred to him that, if he could get these cheap, he might have them fresh-mounted and framed, and then they would help to decorate a certain tiny house he had his eye on for a particular reason. He bought the pictures for a few shillings, and he very proudly carried them forthwith to a carver and gilder whose shop lay in his line of route to the City. He was to call for them on the following Monday. He called in at the appointed time, and the carver and gilder seemed suddenly to recollect that he had forgotten the drawings; they would be ready on the next Monday. The bank clerk was in no great hurry—for the fact is, he and his sweetheart had quarrelled—and he somewhat listlessly called in on the next Monday. The drawings, however, were not ready. And so it came to pass that every Monday evening as he went home to his lodgings, the bank clerk—with a sad indifference growing more and more apparent in his face—called in for the water-colours, and found that they were not in the frames yet, and promised, without any anger in his voice, to call again. Years passed, and quite mechanically, on each Monday evening, the bank clerk called in for his pictures, and just as mechanically he walked home without them to his lodgings; But these years had been dealing hardly with the bank clerk. His sweetheart had proved faithless, and he no longer cared for anything that happened to him. He grew negligent about his dress; he became prematurely gray; he could not trust his memory to the fulfilment of his duties. And so in time they had to ask him to resign his situation in the bank; and he became a