

NEW DOMINION MONTHLY.

MARCH, 1873.

JOHN KANACK'S EXPERIENCES.

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SPROUTING.

They tell us that A was the first of the letters invented, and that it was originally the picture of an ox ("Aleph"); first the ox, then the ox's head; then a mere outline, ∇ ; then the outline reversed, for convenience in writing, A. But it seems to me that "I" comes first and most naturally; for nearly all my acquaintances begin their letters with I; and, to tell the truth, I had a dip of ink on my pen to begin these sketches by saying "I—." Then I thought I would do violence to egotism for once. Yet "I" by itself is certainly the most important of the letters; and ought by right to come first. Under such influences, almost every author begins, either in text or preface, to say something about himself—who he is and where he comes from—and especially if he is of a "good family." Now the Kanacks are an old family; we have authentic documents showing that our direct ancestor came over from the Old World in an antique vessel of gopherwood, many years before the launching of the "Mayflower." And another proof of our being one of the "first families," in the best sense of priority and seniority, is that when Americans and other foreigners speak of the people of Canada, they call us all Canucks, or as more properly spelled, *Kanacks*—after the name of the first settlers.

As might be expected, my first remembered glimpse of the sky was through the green branches of the maples. In fact, sun and moon have always been associated in

my mind with the woods and trees. It was long before I could convince myself that the moon did not move through the branches, or that the sun did not go down among the woods to the west of us, for a horizon without trees was to my childhood a thing contradictory and impossible. The river Erne (*Eern* as our neighbors called it) was a mile or two away—not that I did not know the distance, but there were various points at which to strike the river. The straggling village of Gorton, with its half-built single street and its great red weather-boarded mill, was a few miles up the stream; and the Lake with its blue waves and watery horizon, was more than a day's journey further down. We had a post-office, with the latest improvement of a semi-weekly mail, nearer than Gorton. It was Skeendle, as spoken on our concession; but Skendle as stamped (by the smoke of a tallow candle) on the back of our letters. It was two miles away; just along the next concession. And around it were a grist-mill, a blacksmith shop, a shoemaker, and—a distillery. Skendle was ambitious at that time of being a town; an unworthy ambition it has long since abandoned. It is now a picturesque little place, with more churches than stills, more stores than taverns, more shade-trees than sidewalks, and more decent people than rogues. Perhaps I may flatter myself that the influence of the Kanacks has not been lost upon the place.

Probably everyone has the habit more or less of thinking his own people are *the* people, and that all the rest of the world