

## COLLABORATEURS.

By S. D. SCHULTZ.

## CHAPTER I.

It was in August at Pine Bay, a favorite summer resort on the St. Lawrence, almost within sound of Atlantic breakers, that Sydney Archer met his affinity, and awoke to a new world. He had been assigned a roving commission to write up a series of articles on all the points of interest from the lakes to the sea. The *Toronto Gazette* had given him a most congenial task, and he fairly revelled in the delightful prospect of studying the quaint, old-century style of the *habitants*, with their primitive, unsophisticated ways; the picturesque villages; the child-like faith in the virtue of clerical rule; the monasteries; and historical battle-fields, with their memorials to matchless valor and self-sacrifice, not forgetting the stories of martyrdom of the brave pioneer voyageurs, animated by the desire to make new conquests to the creed of light and civilization.

They were introduced by a mutual college friend. Ethel Grant was on her vacation, and unfeignedly pleased to meet a graduate of the University, at which she had now reached the dignified status of a senior, for next term she would essay the crucial "finals."

Archer was certainly interested, though he boasted of unsusceptibility to the charms of the most captivating siren.

They passed through the conventionalities of sea-side existence—rowing, tennis, bathing—promenades at the nightly concerts on the pier, lolling in hammocks on the cool verandah, and languidly regaling their intoxicated vision with the glories of sky, sea and forest.

Archer had shunned women, and consequently experienced little sympathy from them, whom he regarded as frivolous beings, their whole existence concentrated on keeping up with capricious fashion, and transported into frenzied ecstasy over some unsightly gown, or a "perfect love of a bonnet."

Ethel Grant was a revelation, something undreamt of in his philosophy.

He unbosomed himself in the most unreserved manner, not that Ethel manoeuvred in any way to draw him out. The upshot was that before a week had elapsed, Ethel was thoroughly initiated into his past history, and attracted by the delicate suggestion of implicit confidence, conveyed in his impulsive candor. He seemed to anticipate every wish, being a model of spontaneous gallantry. His face, with its regular features and lit up with a pair of honest dark-blue eyes, was indicative of lofty purpose. In other respects, he differed little from the ordinary run of humanity.

With every succeeding day, Ethel

went up higher in Archer's estimation, and occupied an increasing share of his attention. This ascension in the graduated scale of Archer's regard was an unconscious process, as far as he was concerned. He looked for the ordinary blue stocking of a co-education institution, oneprating of the restraints of womanhood, the tyranny of man, and drawing fanciful pictures of the millenium, when woman's sway would metamorphose society.

She, however, proved an unassuming maiden, whose dominant characteristics were amiability, charity of thought and kindness of heart. What more could the most fastidious desire? Not one, over whose eyes and hair the sentimentalist might rhapsodize, but assuredly prepossessing, with graceful carriage and a figure whose rounded lines of beauty would rivet the eye anywhere.

They exchanged ideas on the usual gamut of subjects. Archer readily saw that Ethel was well read, and was more than pleased to discover a lady undergrad. who did not bore him to death with parrot-like rehearsals of textbook lore. But what caught his fancy most of all was her inimitable mimicry of the French Canadian *patois*. With perfect accent and appropriate gesture, she could bring up vivid pictures of the bargeman with his wife Julie, and the rustic on the rudely constructed hay cart, belaboring his beast and giving expression to threats, promises and warnings. There were also the lumberman and the peasant, with their provincial ways and amusing vernacular.

Archer, after vainly inducing her to contribute some of these dialectic sketches to magazines, where he said with assurance they would be welcome, obtained permission to write them up.

It was the evening prior to Archer's departure, which he had delayed from day to day on various pretexts, and he was vexed that his delightful stay should be of such brief duration. The day had been sultry, the stifling heat having rendered any attempt at exertion out of the question, but with the twilight, a mild, balmy breeze with just the faintest suspicion of mountain snows sprang up, fitfully rippling the waters in its course. The evening was voted in society parlance "perfectly delightful," and a full moon with a subdued, misty color of molten gold was creeping out of the southeas'tern horizon.

Some intrepid sport had lit a bonfire from drift wood, bleached and dried into tinder by a month of sun-scorching rays, on a small, rocky island in full view of the hotel.

The Pine Bay open air concerts were becoming very popular. Suburban trains ran every fifteen minutes, and there were no ire-provoking delays.

This evening, Archer and Ethel were seated on the verandah, surrounded by a host of city people. These came ostensibly to enjoy the music and change of scene, but really to see "who were there," "whom they were with," and "what they had on." There was a ceaseless, monotonous hum and buzz of idle chatter. The air was full of gossip. At Archer's elbow sat a pair of pert *demoiselles*, whose lynx-eyed chaperone had button-holed a victim a few feet distant, and was absorbed in giving vent to "views." Who has not prayed for a fire alarm, a dog fight or any other excuse to escape listening to those self same hackneyed "views" or "opinions"?

Said Ray Hilton, a vivacious brunette with admiring eyes: "Doesn't Fred Langton look swell in that yachting suit? I wonder whom his trim craft is named after? I suppose you heard that he has christened her 'Ruby'?"

"Oh," exclaimed Bessie Somerville, with an appreciative giggle, "you're quite ancient. That piece of intelligence was called in out of harm's way fully a month back. I will give you the very latest. Langton and others left last week for the yachting regatta at Angel's Cove, in Maine. Whether they got tied up in a monsoon, or the compass was deflected from the magnetic line by electrical disturbances has not been divulged, but it has been murmured that Langton's knowledge of navigation is very amateurish. Anyhow, they never put in an appearance at the races, and there is a well-founded rumor that they wandered about aimlessly for days, buffeted by wind and wave. Langton's yachting enthusiasm has noticeably depreciated, for he was heard enquiring for quotations on the best style of Peterboro."

"Bessie, look at Gerald Leslie's face. What a guy, with those plasters hiding the ugly gashes received in that lacrosse match at Scotia Park last Saturday."

"Ray," chimed in Bessie, whose saucy blue eyes had been busy elsewhere, "there's Susy Carruthers flirting desperately with Charlie Walton, and poor unassertive Annie Hirschell sulking at the window with Ted Bolton, and pretending to be unconcerned!"

"What a spectacle of a bonnet Lucy Winters has!—and fancy, all bedecked with flowing streamers. She must have been rustivating or doing missionary work at Metlakatlah," chirped Ray in reply.

"Oh, the very latest," gurgled Bessie. "I've just sighted the Ashertons. See! They're talking to those dapper Yankees on the other side of the band-stand. It is decidedly *outré*, and the laugh of the town. You know, when old Doctor Clayton shuffled off, they sent a wreath, which was duly given a place on the freshly-raised mound. A week after-