

was, apparently unconcerned, and with the traces of sorrow still imprinted on her face.

The visitor announced himself as Edgar Martin, asked to see Mr Varny, whose acquaintance he had made some time before during the Assizes. He hailed originally from Lotbinière, but had come further West, to study law in the district of Montreal. During his studies in that city, his tall, commanding person, graceful manners and agreeable conversation won him admission into the best society, while his talents and a remarkable gift for popular oratory made him a marked favourite in the political circles of "Young Canada." Indeed, in a short time, he attained the highest rank among the enthusiastic, generous spirits who were to the crisis of 1837 what the "collaborateurs" of *L'Avenir* were in the transition period of 1849. When he received his license to practise law, he selected Belœil as his abode, whither he carried with him the best wishes of his friends, and where it was expected he would become the local leader of the party of action.

A young lawyer, struggling for a livelihood in a country town or village, soon gets rid of his youthful illusions. He is not slow to learn that something more is required of him than pretension and gasconade. Edgar Martin had not been many months in his new sphere, when he resolved to apply himself strictly to his profession, and settle down to domestic habits. Being uxorious, like most Canadian youths, he cast about him for a suitable match, and thought the ensuing winter would be well spent if he used it in making a choice and succeeded in his wishes. He had heard of Samuel Varny and his beautiful daughter. The stories circulated against the farmer kept him aloof for a while, but when he made his acquaintance, he was so pleased with the open, frank manner of the farmer, that he asked and obtained leave to visit him and his family. It was in answer to this invitation that he called, as we have just related.

It is not essential to the interest of our narrative that we should enter into the details of the interview between Rosalba and Edgar. It will suffice to know that they took to each other at once, and, probably without being conscious of it themselves, engaged their affections irrevocably the one to the other. Indeed, it was a case of love at first sight. Edgar obtained permission to renew his visit, and though Belœil is some sixteen or eighteen miles from Varennes, not a Sunday passed without his attendance at the mansion. Of course, this sedulous attention could have only one result, and to it the course of our history leads us at once, leaving aside some intermediary events, which we shall take up further on.

One Sunday in June, about six months after his first visit, Edgar called with the intention of making a declaration to Rosalba. She seems to have anticipated him, for instead of coming forward to meet him, as she used to do, she managed that he should first have a private interview with her father. Edgar improved his opportunity, and after a few common-

places, turned the conversation toward Rosalba. The old gentleman, taking the hint at once, responded with characteristic French impetuosity,

"Yes, Edgar, yes. I never imagined that your sole object in coming out to my mansion was to chat with an old foggy like me. I knew you must have an eye on my daughter, and am glad of it, Edgar, glad of it. She is worthy of you, I believe, and I can't say more than that."

"Far above me," answered Martin, looking a little sheepish, though the glitter of his eye betrayed the immense joy which he felt. "Yes, I would venture to ask your assistance in advancing my suit."

"As to that," replied the old man, "I had rather not interfere. It is a matter between you and Rosalba. I managed that business myself when I was young, and so must you. If she asks my advice, I will put in a good word for you, but I must not otherwise influence her will. I presume you would like to see her this very afternoon, so we had better step into the other room where the ladies are waiting for us, with, perhaps, something nice to eat and drink."

"Ah! here you are at last," exclaimed Rosalba, who went forward to receive the two as they entered the large sitting-room. "I thought you would never end discussing your old politics."

"Are you quite sure, Rosie, that we talked politics all the time?" asked her father, playfully pinching her cheek.

"Why, certainly, nothing else could have kept you so long."

"Ask Edgar, then, ask Edgar. He will probably tell you what else we talked about."

Of course Rosalba blushed, and hushed up. Her little game had been betrayed. Edgar, too, drooped his eyes and looked troubled.

The father and the mother glance at each other and smile, knowing all about such things. The rest of the family take no notice of this love scene, and little Agnes—the youngest child—puts everything to rights by rushing up to Martin and asking to be taken into his arms. She is the *enfant gâté* of the whole house, and a great favourite with the young lawyer. When all had been seated at table, she climbed on his knee and was soon busily engaged foraging in his coat and vest pockets. She was of much assistance to him during the light luncheon that followed. Being seated beside Rosalba, he, of course, improved his golden chance as much as he could. Now a compliment, then a question, next an anecdote, all with wonderful effect, as he fondly fancied. But when he ventured on some expression a little warmer or more tender than the rest, he would suddenly duck his head into the white neck of Agnes, as if half ashamed of himself, or else squeeze her plump arms.

"You pinch me, Mr. Edgar," she would cry out.

"Ah! little fairy," he inwardly murmured, "if you knew how sorely I am pinched myself."

Justice was done to mother Varny's nice