

twenty, and now possessed a graduated scale of voracious infantry which must in the metropolis have severely worn his energies and Mrs. Wellbeloved's patience, but which, out here, was his most promising source of wealth. The elder boy, nearly nineteen, had added a hundred acres to the original government concession, and as the others grew up more would follow. Already Mr. Wellbeloved's house and barns began to take on an air, if not of wealth or even comfort, of sufficiency, which as one looked into his bronzed face and clear eyes, and listened to his cheery voice, gave promise that the time might come when the patriarch should bless his sons and daughters, and his sons-in-law, and daughter-in-law, looking out upon a scene of civilized beauty and fertility, and dividing among them no mean inheritance. Such scenes have been witnessed in earlier settlements, and in the antecedent district of Lake Simcoe, along whose cultivated shores I have travelled to Muskoka; and such scenes will be remembered over and over again as the tide of population laps on and into the forest wilds of Ontario.

"Well," I said "what's the story of that place? It seems odd that it should be deserted like this. Why don't *you* take it up?"

"Me, sir! No, thankee. I'd not own a rod o' that soil for its pavin' in gold. No, no! There's blood on that land, and let some stranger come an' wipe it hout."

He wiped the beads from his forehead (the day was hot) and began:

"The man that took hup that concession was a gentleman, leastways, sir, you know, a gentleman by birth. 'Is father were a Lunnun laywer, you've 'eard of 'im, old Bytheway that used to 'ave the big cases at the hold Bailey. The hold man, he made his money an' spent it, an' this 'ere boy he made none, an' spent what 'is father made. 'E were sent to Heton, then to Hoxford, an' afterward 'e went were 'e weren't sent—leastways not by direction—to the Devil. The young 'ooman that lived an' died in that 'ouse were acquainted with me. Lucy Burridge, that were her real name, though she were called "Lucinda Burriada, the helegant *dansews'*—she were in the *corpus de balley* at the Varieties Theayter in the Strand, I dessay

you know hit? \* \* Yes? Well, sir, I were scene-shifting in that theayter for seven years, an' five years afore that at Drury Lane. I could teil you some queer stores! If you want to know something' of life, you get up in the wings night after night, and watch the stage, you'll see something' of the bad *han'* the good o' 'uman nature. Why, sir, I've seen cruelty, an' revenge, an' kindness, an' forgiveness, an' charity, played far more real behind the canvass scenes I were a-shiftin' than it were on the stage or before it. One night I see a young girl, which her name was Sairey Podge, from a dirty little street in the Borough, but she was a pretty one to look at, an' danced like a slyph, an' she 'ad a partikler rival, a 'alf Hitalian girl, as bad a little shrew for temper as never you saw. Well, one night hin the Christmas pantomime—'twere last Christmas ten year—this girl, La Rosa, she broke behind one of the scenes where Sairey was waitin' to jump out like a fairy, as she was, an' I says to my mate, "Look out for squalls there, Lorry—they two'll fight," for I've seen girls fight behind the scenes before now. Well, sir, the Hitalian almost bounced into the other's arms. Sairey drew back a minute, an' looked straight hat 'er. The other was glowin' with passion an' spite, an' *my* fear was that Sairey's face was agoin' to be spoiled, when I see Sairey 'old hout both 'er 'ands, an' I 'eard 'er distinct-like, cry hout, "Oh! Miss Rosa, I'm so sorry!" an'. will you believe it, sir? the poor Hitalian laid 'er 'ead on the hother's shoulder, an' cried like a child! In a minute the stage-master called out, sharp, for "Miss Podge," an' she dried 'er tears an' went hout an' danced so beautifully, the pit nearly went mad with 'er. Oh, yes, sir, there's 'uman natur' behind as well as before the scenes, an' the great Scene-shifter above He watches it.

"Well sir, Miss Lucy, afterward Missis Bytheway, wer' a clever dancer, an' likewise, sometimes took a small part, for she were as pretty a girl as I ever seen hon the stage, an' I've seen hall the swells you know. They're wery partikler hat the Varieties, you know; hit's only the roval family, an' two or three wery speshul parties as gets the *hentree* there. I dunno 'ow that young Bytheway got in;