

faced, bright-eyed, quick-eared young man, who understood several languages. He had overheard a part of the foregoing conversation, and, in the twinkling of an eye, spun out two wine-glasses on the marble counter, filled them to within a line of the brim with an aromatic golden liquor, then added to each a bead or two of *Martell*—just a *larme*, as the French would say.

The Canadian sipped his glass, with the dainty leisure of a Parisian, as if to savour the sweetness of every toothful. The American, on the contrary, after the fashion of his countrymen, tossed his off, at one draught, and smacking his lips loudly, exclaimed:

"Capital! With such an appetizer as that, I think we can indulge in an oyster supper. Have you Canadians any national variety of the mollusk?"

"Yes, the *Caraquette*, a small oyster, rather salt, but very succulent."

"Well, let us have a dish of them."

The two Canadians were shown into an upper room, where they were soon busily engaged in enjoying the luxury of their repast. The sharp air which he had breathed, and the sparkling glass of bitters had edged the appetite of the American, who found his oysters so delicious that he called for a second plate. His spirits, too, were with the comfort which his warm meal produced. He could not help comparing his present sense of luxury with the deadening chill which he had experienced only half an hour before. He looked at the thick velvety carpets, the heavy, green damasks hanging at the window, the soft, scintillating gasolier, the lambent heat pleasantly reflected on the mica plates of the central stove, and he felt a delightful sensation of well-being creep over his whole person, as he lay lounging diffusely in his arm-chair.

"I enjoy this immensely," said he to his companion.

"I am glad to know it," was the polite answer.

"Yes, I have something of the artist's eye for contrasts. To me they are the poetry of life, as to graver thinkers they are its philosophy. I enjoy this warmth, because I think of the storm outside."

"Our Canadian life is full of contrasts, and I am, therefore, certain you will like it," said the stout man, who seemed to drift naturally into the current of his friend's thoughts. "Our life is very much like our climate—a rough cold exterior, but warm happy homes."

The American turned his chair, as if to listen more attentively.

"We seem a retrograde people, yet we have all the elements of progress. This must have struck you, as it does all your countrymen who come here."

The American was too courteous to make a definite reply.

"Then, we have much ignorance among us; the literary vocation is not encouraged, although we have a world of native talent."

The American listened with increased interest.

"Next, we are a timorous, shame-faced people, inclined to exaggerate our littleness and to magnify the prosperity and resources of our neighbours."

"I have noticed something of this already," said the American.

"The remark applies particularly to the French population, who are the original holders of the soil. Many of them are backward, unambitious, and seemingly doomed to perpetual inertness. One of our former governors had the impudence to brand them as an 'inferior race.' The insult has rankled, but it has not had the result of stimulating the great majority. There is a large class of French Canadians who look upon their English fellow-citizens as their betters. They hanker after inter-marriage with them; affect their manners; speak their language to the neglect of their own beautiful tongue."

The American smiled, and answered that he was acquainted with this species of folly. He had seen examples of it, at home, among the Irish and Germans, where the young brood, for some nameless cause, get ashamed of their fathers and nationality to palm themselves off for *native Americans*.

"It is a disgusting hallucination," said he.

"Especially," resumed the Canadian, "where there is so little reason for it, as in our case. For—and here please mark the contrast which I intend to enforce—the French colonized this country, civilized it, fought heroically for it, dutifully obeyed the new domination forced upon it by the capitulation of Quebec, and ever since—that is, for a hundred years—have held their own, spite of every physical and moral obstacle. They have reason to be ashamed neither of their ancestors, nor of themselves. Their existence to-day in the new world, after two centuries and a half of hardship, is a phenomenon."

"A phenomenon to be proud of," said the American.

"Their history, from the days of Champlain to our own, is a romance."

"I know that Quebec is the historic Province of the Dominion; Nova Scotia comes next, but her most pathetic annals are dated from the days of the valorous Acadians. I have come to study that history, and should be pleased to do so, with the guidance of such a philosophic spirit as yours."

"Thank you," replied the Canadian. "I presume to know less the history of my country than the social and domestic character of my countrymen. This I have studied deeply, with the many opportunities which have been exceptionally my lot. I should be most happy to assist you with any experience of mine in this special study."

The American inquired particularly into the rebellion of 1837. With its political results he was sufficiently well acquainted, but he seemed anxious to know whether the movement had had any marked effect on the internal condition of the people.

"The rebellion you refer to," replied the Canadian, "marks an era in our history. It is an event to date from. To men of my generation

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