

Firth the white salt covered the decks, and began to rise upon the masts. The cargo was too heavy. The ship dipped, and the water she swallowed made it heavier still. They were now in the middle of the Firth. The sky was black as a pail. A low moaning wind swept over the sea. Geysing was frightened; but he thought she would hold a little more. And so she did; but that was the last. She began to go round and round like the mill, and then settled heavily down in the dark waters, and as she disappeared beneath the surface, the grinding still went on, and the unearthly song of the slave women mingled with the cries of the drowning king.

Why is the sea salt? That is why the sea is salt. The mill works to this day. If you will listen at the whirlpool called the Swelchie in the Pentland Firth you will hear its rumbling amid the roaring of the eddies, and understand how the product of that wonderful mill has by this time salted the whole ocean.

This is the only true original legend of the salting of the sea, the others are counterfeits, manufactured by unprincipled monks in the middle ages, who ought to have been prosecuted.

A specimen of their manufacturing, Marion?—of such trash! You are as exacting as Froth or Geysing either, but if you will have it, here goes.

Once on a time there were two brothers, one rich, and one poor, and when it came to pass that all men were preparing the Yule feast, the poor brother found himself without a mouthful of food in the house or a penny to purchase it. In this extremity he laid his case before his rich brother, and he ought him to give him something, that he and his wife might have wherewithal to make their Christmas meal. The rich brother looked sourly at him, and seemed about to refuse, but at length he tendered him a shank-bone of ham, on condition that the other would do whatever he should desire of him. The promise was made; and then his benefactor, giving him the shank-bone, told him with a bitter smile to go to—

Hush, never mind! Very well. The poor brother went away, and as he was about to start for the road to hush! The place was not so far off, however as he thought, nor the way so difficult to find, and he met with many obliging persons who were very willing to direct him. When the shades of evening began to descend, he reached an immense palace illuminated from the top to bottom, and he said to himself, Surely this is the place! He was right. For in a shed close by there was an old man with a long white beard splitting wood for the Yule feast, and he told him, in reply to his question, that that was assuredly his destination.

'Go in boldly said he, 'for you are not empty handed: you will find many there anxious to buy your bone, and to give a good price for it; but take care that you accept of nothing in exchange but the mill behind the door.'

The poor man accordingly knocked, the door flew open, and a whole legion of the inmates crowded round him bidding eagerly for his bone.

'Alas!' said he, 'it is the only thing I have that I can call my own; and it was intended to furnish a dinner for my wife and myself to-morrow. But if you must have it you shall, provided you give me in exchange that hand-mill behind the door.'

The gentlemen were at first surprised, then indignant, then grieved. They were free traders. It was their business to buy in the cheapest, and sell in the leastest market they could, and although determined to have the shank-bone, they were loath to make so valuable a return. The poor brother, however, was as resolved as they; and the end of it was that the arrangement he insisted upon was agreed to, and he carried away the mill.

'Now what shall I do with this?' said he to the old man as he passed.

'Make it grind your dinner, or anything you

will, replied the old man.

'And how am I to stop it when I have done grinding?'

'That way!' and he showed him the secret.

It was late ere he got home with so heavy a load, and placing it on the table, he sat down exhausted and began to wipe his brow.

'And is this all you have got?' said the wife, uncertain whether to scold or to cry. What has detained you so long? Did you not know that I had not even two chips of wood in the house to lay across the hearth to boil the Yule pudding? What is the use of a mill with nothing to grind? In reply to this, her husband merely turned round the mill ordering what he wanted, and first came out a pair of candles, then a tablecloth, then meat, then beer, and in short everything requisite to furnish a feast.

The wife was amazed, and questioned and cross-questioned her husband about the miracle, but the difficulties in her pursuit of knowledge were insuperable. All his conversation was addressed to the mill, and it was in the words of Froth—Grind this! grind that! grind the other thing! In three days they had a whole household of comforts and luxuries, and they then sent to invite their friends and relations to a banquet. When the rich brother came he was ready to expare with envy.

Where in all the world have you been? said he.

'I have been behind the door!' replied his brother, and that was all he could get out of him. The other importuned him to sell his mill, coming day after day, and increasing his offer, as he saw it grinding all manner of things; till the possessor, tired of turning it, appeared to relent, and at length sold the wonderful mill for a large sum of money.

It was night when the mill was delivered to the rich brother, who on the following morning told his wife to go out and spread the hay after the reapers, promising to prepare breakfast himself. Her back was no sooner turned than he shut the door, placed the mill upon the table, turned it violently round, and trembling with expectation, commanded it to grind herrings and till every dish in the house was full. Then the stream overflowed the table, and then the floor; the unskillful miller turning the handle in every possible way to endeavour to stop it. All was to no purpose. On flowed the torrent; and when, afraid of being drowned in the kitchen, he rushed into the parlor, it followed him there, and he had barely time to escape by the window, pursued by an ocean of breakfast. He never stopped till he reached his brother's house.

'Take it back!—take it back!' cried he, 'or the whole parish will be suffocated in herrings and porridge!'

'What will you give me if I take it back?'

A bargain was made; and the cunning grinder, who had foreseen this result, was now a rich man, and had the mill to boot. He built him a house—or rather a palace—on the sea shore; and in the wantonness of his wealth covered the walls with plates of gold, and it shone far out to sea.

Among the mariners who sailed in near the shore to see this marvel was one whose trade it was to peril his life in carrying through dangerous seas the rock-salt that was then so valuable a commodity.

'Can your mill work salt?' said he.

'That it can,' replied the man of the golden palace. Whereupon the mariner bade higher and higher for the treasure, till its owner reflecting like a sensible person, that he had already a superfluity of the good things of the world, and that a mill manufactured in a certain place of evil repute must at one time or other work evil to the grinder, consented to sell it for a very large sum of money. The new purchaser, overjoyed at his success, and laughing in his sleeve at the simplicity of the seller, carried off his prize at once, and was no sooner on the open sea than he set up the wonderful mill, and turning it quickly round, commanded it to grind salt. I need not

add, Marion, that it worked only too well, that it continued to obey long after the bones of its luckless owner were bleaching at the bottom; and that at this moment it still keeps grinding, grinding, with such effect that notwithstanding the rivers of fresh water it receives, the sea remains salt, and will remain salt for ever.

Not so good as the other? No more it is; but there is a gleam of truth here and there in it for all that. Do you not think, dear friend, that there are times and places when the faith is young and strong—when giants are not monsters, fairies not preternatural, and talismans not impossible? Do you not sometimes feel as if, like the goddess of old, you had bathed in the fountain of Youth, and returned to the thoughts and associations of your unwithered years? Believe me that fountain is no dream of poetry, no invention of romance. Its waters float in the air you even now inhale, they cool your fevered brow, they reanimate your drooping heart, and, seen through this enchanted incantum, the lovely picture before us is a realization of the visions that once haunted your young bosom of the distant world. But a shade has fallen upon the scene, a stronger breath ruffles here and there, as if with a dream, the slumbers of the Firth; the distant city looms out more sternly from the opposite shore; the clustering houses on the left have a colder, sharper look, and the filmy smoke of Abergour rises in heavier masses from the hill. Yes our cloudland is descending, and we with it—but slowly, gently—to mingle with the material earth. Come, our way lies through these forest-paths. But as we go, let us pause every now and then to enjoy a farewell glimpse of the view through the opening trees, to inhale the rich breath of the hawthorn where it hangs over our path, to listen to the trickling waters by our side, and to that faint song from some viewless chorister of the grove,

'And watch the dying notes, and start, and smile!'

But now, Marion, our descent is complete, we have fairly reached the surface of this breathing world, and we must forego all these enjoyments to quicken our pilgrim steps.

Why so? Because we shall otherwise be too late to witness the coronation of Durmstolant.

## THE CANADIAN FAMILY HERALD.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, DEC. 13, 1851.

TO OUR READERS.—Persons who received the first and this number, and do not return them, will be placed on the list of our Subscribers.

## PROSPECTUS

OF

## THE CANADIAN FAMILY HERALD.

Price One Dollar per annum.

At present there exists not amongst us any paper so exclusively divested of party politics, and at the same time so general in its bearing upon the individual interest of the body politic, as to make it really a family paper; acceptable alike to the merchant and the mechanic, the artist and the agriculturist.

To supply this desideratum it is proposed to establish a quarto weekly paper, to be published in Toronto, entitled THE CANADIAN FAMILY HERALD, in which Agriculture, Art, Science, and Literature, in their latest discoveries, their most recent inventions, their gradual development, and their present and prospective social benefits, will be concisely