

Now let me say Farewell, and then,
Once and for all, I'll wipe my pen,
Subscribing (though full well you know it)
Myself your-self-devoted Poet.

HUGH DI BRAS.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF A MONTREAL MERCHANT.*

ACCOUNTS of the marvellous have been so often thrust upon the credulity of the public, that I give with the greatest reluctance this simple narrative of an adventure which befell me about twenty years ago, in the City of Montreal; and which has, in a great measure, influenced my whole after life. A desire, however, to employ with pleasure and advantage the brief space of life now left to my enjoyment, prompts me to commit to writing the substance of this remarkable incident, which may not hereafter be devoid of interest to lovers of the curious.

Several months before the time of its occurrence I had immigrated from a large inland town in England, in company with a considerable number of respectable men of the middle class, with the intention of bettering my condition, in a country where competition in trade had not yet assumed the proportions and aspects which it exhibited in my native land, much to the injury of many honourable and meritorious tradesmen. The vessel in which I sailed had made a speedy and pleasant voyage; my success in procuring, more immediately than I had expected, sufficient credit to enable me to commence a respectable business as a general dealer, had inspired me with new life and new hopes; and I already began to be thankful that, in a fortunate moment, I had determined to seek happier circumstances in a foreign land.

During the winter, prospects of an unanticipated success rapidly matured; and early in the succeeding spring I sent for my family, consisting of a wife and two small children, to proceed without delay to share in my unexpected prosperity. The time fixed for their arrival had already elapsed, and my anxiety for their safety daily increased. It soon, indeed, attained to so great a pitch, that I was utterly unable to attend to the requirements of my business, and spent a large portion of my time in seeking information respecting the arrival at Quebec of the vessel in which my wife and children had embarked.

* Selected from a miscellaneous collection of Tales and Sketches found amongst the papers of a Canadian gentleman, lately deceased.