

ROSALBA;

OR,

FAITHFUL TO TWO LOVES.

INTRODUCTION.

AT GIANELLI'S.

THE coldest spot in Montreal is Place d'Armes. In summer, when all the other streets are steaming like furnaces, that pretty square is as fresh and breezy as a country lane. Its little garden is a bower, made sweet by the shadows of small trees and the spray of a central fountain, while its southern outlet, St. Sulpice street, reminds one of a Colorado canon, through which the high winds rush from the mountain to the river, with the force of a torrent. In winter, the garden becomes transformed into a species of Arctic cairn. The trees are not only stripped of their leaves, but their branches are broken short, and even the bark seems to crackle. The snow, piled high above the iron railings, gleams with peculiar ghastliness against the cold, blank surfaces of the stone edifices by which it is surrounded. Montreal Bank looks like a stately charnel-house where the stark niveids are entombed. The turrets of the French Church, glittering like glaciers in the crystal atmosphere, cast their white shadows across the square, freezing the ineffectual sun rays. All that area seems desolate and uninhabitable.

Late one afternoon, in January, 1867, two gentlemen turned from Notre Dame street into Place d'Armes. One was a stout-built, athletic man, who seemed to bound along the pavement as if buoyed up by the keen air, and he held his head erect, in defiance of the storm. The other was a tall, spare figure, but almost double in his efforts to make headway against the blinding snow.

"Where are we?" gasped the latter, "I am almost blown off my feet."

"In Place d'Armes," answered his companion, with a ringing voice. "Here, of all places, you can have a test of a Canadian winter."

"It is frightful. I cannot cross the square."

"The *Hotel* is only a few yards off."

"No matter. My breath is nearly gone. Is there no shelter nearer?"

"Oh yes," answered the stout man, with a laugh. "Here is the *Cosmopolitan*."

"Then, let us go in."

A few steps more, and the green-flannel doors swung upon their hinges. A draught of warm air flowed down from the lighted interior which expanded the feeble chest of the exhausted pedestrian.

"Ah!" said he, drawing a long breath, "heat is life, cold is death. How do you Canadians manage to live in such a climate?"

"We thrive in it, my friend. Look at me."

"I should die here."

"Not a bit of it. If you have weak lungs, our sharp air is the very thing to strengthen them. Damp is what kills delicate people. A dry atmosphere exhilarates and invigorates them, and ours is the driest atmosphere in the world. Canada is a far healthier climate for consumptives than Florida, and doctors are beginning to recognize that fact."

"A new argument in favour of annexation," said the first speaker, who had now fully recovered his spirits.

The two companions walked up to the bar, evidently quite amused at this last remark. Why they were amused will be understood when the reader is informed that the Canadian was a rabid anti-annexationist, and his companion an American who had come to Montreal purposely to study the history and condition of the country.

"What shall we have?" asked the American.

"Why, *Tonico Reale*, of course."

"*Tonico Reale*? What is that?"

"Did you never hear of Gianelli's Bitters?"

"Never."

"Well, what Tortoni was to Paris, what Delmonico is to New York, that Gianelli's is to Montreal."

"Oh! I see. One of those Italian caterers whose names are conspicuous in every capital of Europe, from London to Constantinople."

"And he has imported a bitter called the *Royal Tonic* which is all the rage here just now. With a drop of brandy it is superb."

"Well, let us try it. The brandy, especially, will be just the thing after the chill I have had."

An intelligent bar-tender is the life of a restaurant. Gianelli had one of these, a ruddy-