

THE MAN IN THE BLACK COAT.

He was not a mysterious personage at all. About him was none of the awe that shrouds black dominoes, black masks, black gondolas, black art. No delicious thrill is felt in his name as in that of gliding moon-lighted Women in White. He was not at all like that other man in black whose pungent remarks and cross-grained benevolence so charmed the citizen of the world. He had not even the slight disguise of an incognito. He was only an Irish carter that I had often to do business with in the office. In person he was stumpy, red-faced, and red-haired, but remarkable for a certain apologetic politeness that never failed. Civility was not common in the office, but Dennis was different from all the other men. And—I saw him last Sunday on his way to church, with a book in his hand, and the black coat whereof I speak on his back.

At first the shock of surprise at seeing him clothed otherwise than in the ragged, worn vesture of every day made me think myself mistaken. But the red, rugged face, the fiery hair, the short, toil-stiffened frame could belong to none but my friend. As to the coat itself, though new and of good material, it was the most marvellously ill-fitting covering it was ever my fortune to behold. It would have given Poole a nightmare, but it was worn with such an air of decent becoming pride. Why should one's eyes fill up and an involuntary "Poor fellow!" escape my lips? What can there be in the sight of an Irish carter in hideous broad-cloth to cry over?

Perhaps it was because the wearer was so utterly, so sublimely unconscious of incongruity or ugliness. Or was that coat the proof of a long pathetic struggle towards respectability, towards betterment, towards a position in life? It was the owner's protest against stagnation. The token of a laudable ambition to rise in the world. We honor the manfulness of it, but, Dennis! did you ever think of the utter futility of the struggle after all? Will it ever satisfy you? Or was it futile? Perhaps the end of Dennis' existence was reached when he achieved that black coat, that outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Poor fellow! poor fellow!

BOHEMIEN.

FROM LAKE TO SEA.

(Concluded.)

The unexpected drain on the expeditionary purse occasioned by the delay at Trois Rivières rendered it impossible for the party to indulge in the luxury of berths on the steamer, and so repose was sought on the sofas in the cabin. A persevering waiter spent the remainder of the night in removing our feet from these articles of furniture, and as this misdirected zeal seriously interfered with sleep, we were glad to arrive at Quebec at an early hour, and make for the St. Louis Hotel and breakfast. The marvellous faith in human nature here exhibited by us deserves to be noticed, for in the depleted condition of the exchequer there was no hope of paying for our entertainment. However, the meal was none the less enjoyed, and if the waiters gauged our means from the confident way in which supplies were disposed of, they must surely have taken us for (very much) disguised millionaires. The unfortunate man who was to pay for our entertainment had now to be sought out, and he filled the exhausted treasury in a way which does credit to the citizens of Quebec.

About ten o'clock we launched the canoes again. The wind was now blowing in squalls from the north-west, but the weather seemed to be clearing. The water was calm enough along the wharves and in the shelter of Cape Diamond, but across the mouth of the River St. Charles, which comes in below the city, it looked very angry. The tide bore us down rapidly, and when it was too late to turn back we found that a very nasty stretch had to be passed. The squalls were so violent at times that they blew the waves into the canoes and rendered progress exceedingly difficult. By heading the canoes to the waves and making a dash when a lull came, we were able to advance slowly, but the three miles across the river must have taken us an hour and a half to make, and when Beauport flats were reached the canoes were pretty full of water, and four pairs of arms were aching soundly. An hour or so walking knee-deep in water, dragging the canoes, and a short paddle brought us to the Falls of Montmorenci, and the Chaplain and Cabin-boy, who had never seen them before, were glad of this opportunity of paying them a visit. They returned completely delighted with the magnificent sight, though the former officer was overheard muttering something about the cascades on the Ballyswilly river in the county Kildare.

Towards evening a few miles were paddled under shelter of the land, and camp was made only fifteen miles from Quebec. A soggy meadow, under a sky promising rain, with no recommendation but the nearness of a woodpile, was perforce selected. But a sorry night would have been passed but for a most brilliant idea which occurred simultaneously to the Cook and Chaplain. The canoes were propped close together on their sides and inclined slightly inwards; over them was thrown the tent, held up in the centre by an impenetrable ridge-pole. A few stones and logs around the sides fixed everything securely, and during this and the two following nights, though it blew a gale and poured a steady deluge of rain, the canoeists kept as dry as a cots at home. It was naturally the Cook's sad lot to stay out in the rain and get tea ready, and gladly would he at length pass in the sizzling frying-pan and crawl out of the wind and storm into that quiet shelter twelve feet long

four feet wide and eighteen inches high, redeemed from the turmoil without. No tent could have held for five minutes in such heavy wind, and we recommend to all canoeists a similar arrangement in bad weather. A small square of oil-cloth will of course answer the purpose of a tent.

Next morning the outlook was as hopeless as ever, and it was only by exercising the greatest care that we succeeded in making any progress at all. We stopped for a short time at the little village of St. Anne de Beaupre, and saw a great number of pilgrims arrive per steamer to visit the famous shrine at which it is reported many wonderful cures have been effected. Notwithstanding the positive declaration of the captain of one of the steamers that our canoes could not live in such a sea as we were sure to meet on this side of Cap Tourmente, we decided to start, and out in the river found all the muscle and skill we possessed called into requisition. We camped close beside the giant bulk of Cap Tourmente, and made the same canoe tent on a little stretch of sand scarcely above tide mark. Though still some fifty miles above green salt water, the element here was decidedly brackish and quite undrinkable.

The foragers were sent off as usual for provisions, and brought back such charming accounts of the hospitable family who supplied them, that the Commissary and Cook were fain to pay an evening call. They were kindly received, and spent a pleasant time chatting with the master of the establishment. The family was an extraordinary mixture of nationalities—the father Scotch, the mother Irish, and the children unable to speak a word of any language but French. Though father and mother had not emigrated until the age of twenty-five they had forgotten their native tongue to such an extent that they were unable to maintain a conversation in it. It is hardly credible that a full-grown intelligent man should thus entirely forget his mother tongue, but it is certainly the fact. The good man had many stories to tell us of the dangers of the river near the Cape, and went through a long and painful catalogue of drownings which had occurred on this dangerous coast within a few miles of his own house. From him we gathered the unsatisfactory information that for fifteen miles there were only three places where it was possible to land, and that the lightest breeze against the tide would speedily raise a sea perilous to canoes. Finally he adjured us on no account to start unless the morning proved perfectly calm, and we left him, not much comforted certainly, and filled with a proper dread for the mighty Cape towering beside us and its iron-bound coast.

The Cook was awake at the first faint promise of day, and saw the river stretching away peacefully enough, but under a threatening and windy sky. In five minutes the canoes were loaded and in the water, and breakfastless and sleepy, the *voyageurs* were plying paddles with determination. The tide ran strongly against us at first, but soon changed, and the last stern forbidding-looking granite point was rounded by six a.m. A short halt for breakfast, and we were away again on the strong ebb, which with the calm water tempted us to strike right across the deep indentation of Baie St. Paul. All went well until we were in the middle of the Bay, and two miles from land; then a black streak topped with white appeared down the river, and before there Driven rather than paddling on shore, we were heartily glad to find ourselves was time to make shelter, the wind came up again with a heavy squall. there at all, albeit we had only reached a sand-bank knee-deep in water. Two miles of very damp walking brought us to the east side of the Bay. It seemed now that we must rest satisfied with having made thirty miles by midday, for the river plainly did not mean to give us another chance. As the afternoon wore on, however, the awful realities of starvation began to stare us in the face, and it being generally conceded that drowning is a pleasanter and easier death than dying from lack of food, the crews again embark. The wind blows as fresh as ever, a veritable Gulf Nord-Est, but we were favored by the circumstance that towards the close of the ebb, for some reason or another, the sea does not run heavily near the shore. A few miles are made somewhat perilously, but no habitation on shore gives us hope of supper. Just as it is decided that it is not safe to round the next point and that the square inch of bacon and the half-bottle of coffee essence (the contents of the larder) must stand as a sort of algebraic symbol for our evening meal, a small knot of *habitants* is discerned on shore. The canoes are beached on the swell, luckily without capsize, and we address the Frenchmen. It appears that they are having a species of picnic on the beach. A stray cow has floated ashore, and the finder is now engaged in boiling down his *jetsam*. His prey is so exceedingly high that we at once pass to windward of it, and the spokesman now tells us with charming *naïveté* that a moment before they were looking out expecting to see us drowned, whether with the ultimate intention of boiling us down also does not appear. It turns out that they had brought their provisions for the day from their dwellings some miles distant, but they cheerfully give us what is left, the heel of a loaf of black bread and a small piece of pork. This the Cook speedily serves up in *entrees* skilfully contrived to abate the sourness of the bread and conceal the strength of the pork.

Another night of storm and rain is passed most comfortably in our snug shelter, and again at the earliest dawn we find the river looking comparatively calm, though sullen and overclouded. However, the next five or six miles once made, winds may blow and storms may rage, for we then shall be only a morning's walk from the end of our journey. We did not embark five minutes too soon, for just as we reached the wharf at Les Eboulements the storm falls on us with such force that even the few remaining strokes are made with difficulty. From the wharf we can see that outside of the shelter of Baie St. Paul and Isle aux Coudres the whole surface of the St. Lawrence is whitened by the furious North-East gale, and unwilling to await better weather we are forced to abandon all hope of continuing our journey by water; so tying everything in the canoes, we leave them to be picked up by the steamer which calls here occasionally, and then look about to see what some hospitable *habitant* can do for us in the way of breakfast. Milk, eggs, pork, and black bread are soon forthcoming in profusion, and, if the bread was too sour and the pork too strong for Upper