



"Yes; but though your speech may seem but a jest to you, I assure you that our friend feels it keenly; am I right, Crinkle?" said Bramley, turning to that gentleman.

"Partially, Bramley, but you forget that Yubbit's volatile temperament leads him into saying things that he does not mean, so say no more about it," returned Crinkle, "all I was about to remark was that I feel a want of something, a void as I before remarked, a—"

"I thought you went into tea with us," again interrupted the irrepressible Yubbits, "wholly unabashed by his former rebuke.

"Yubbits, I, as chosen leader of this party, must insist on silence on your part, and let us hear what Crinkle *does* feel," said Bramley, whilst Coddleby looked very sympathizingly towards his poetic friend. "What is it, Crinkle?"

"No matter," replied the bard, but I think the hour is at hand when our hearts will be gladdened by hearing a true Canadian Boat song, and if you are ready, we might as well be off: what do you say?"

"By all means" replied Coddleby, "I am ready: let's see," consulting his watch, "seven o'clock; that'll give us plenty of time to stroll down easily; come along," and leading the way, he passed through the hall and into the street followed by his friends, and all four bent their steps in the direction of the river. A glow of satisfaction overspread the features of Mr. Crinkle, as he felt how near his anticipations were to being realized.

It was a beautiful June evening, and as the banks of the winding Ottawa were reached the sun was preparing to say good-night 'ere he drew the rosy bed-curtains round his blushing face. A robin was pouring forth a volume of song from a branch of a neighboring maple,



not a breath of air stirred; and there was not the faintest ripple on the surface of the noble river. Neither was there, at the moment of our friends' arrival, anything in the shape of a boat to be seen.

"And so," began Crinkle, as the four seated themselves on the grassy banks, and looked up and down the stream. "And so this is the Ottawa river; at last I behold the scene of Moore's exquisite melody. It is indeed a beautiful spot, it is—whoo! what's that?" and he sprang up with an expression of pain on his face—"Heavens! Bramley, Yubbits, your gun, quick, I'm snake-bitten; I felt it distinctly! Gracious! Yubbits," he continued, dancing about with horrible contortions of countenance. "Why *don't* you do something? Would you see me die thus?"

The consternation of the other three was something terrible to witness, as they beheld their friend wildly capering up and down and rubbing the afflicted part; they themselves being unable to perceive the cause of his woe or to offer him any aid, and Yubbits assuring him that he had not any of his guns with him, but that the implement he carried was nothing more lethal than a walking-stick.

"What is it?" shouted Coddleby, "where has it bitten you?"

"Here, here, I tell you," replied Crinkle, with his hand on his coat-tail. "It must be one of those deadly cobra di capellos which are indigenous to this climate."

"Bosh!" exclaimed Yubbits, who was by far the most unconcerned of the party, "bosh! there aren't any cobra's out here; it may be a rattle-snake, however."



So far from producing any alleviation either of Mr. Crinkle's pain of body or agony of mind, this opinion rather seemed to add to the latter at least. The sufferer still continued to hop about, his three friends gyrating at a cautious distance around him.

"Demmit! he's bitten me too," yelled Yubbits, suddenly clapping his hand to his face, and joining in the frantic terpsichorean exercise.

"Whew! they've got me," shouted the usually imperturbable Bramley, pulling out an immense red silk handkerchief and springing in the air with it to his nose. "It's wasps!" he cried ungrammatically, "Run!"—and away went the four at a pace that would have been accounted good, even at a first rate professional pedestrian exhibition, but which was speedily brought to a conclusion on Mr. Bramley's part from a giving out of the breath. Mr. Yubbits' long legs carried him far in advance of the rest, and he ceased not running till he felt sure he had far out-distanced his winged pursuers. As for Coddleby, who alone had escaped unscathed, and Crinkle, who had been the unfortunate cause of stirring up the wrath of those vicious little insects by sitting upon their nest, they presently came up with Yubbits some quarter of a mile further up the river bank, and were in turn joined by Bramley, panting, and with a nose swollen to most abnormal proportions.