

WESBLOCK

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN AUTOMATON

CHAPTER I

IN a little mean street, which ends at a steep hill running down to the river through the Quebec suburbs of Montreal, stood about fifty years ago a tiny old-fashioned church built entirely of wood after the dog-house style of architecture. So lacking in imagination were the builders of this place of prayer that they went no further than the name of the street for the name of the church. The church was gloomy and cheerless within and looked as if it were partitioned off for cattle. The pews were all very high, plain and closed with doors. A narrow little winding stair led to the pulpit, a high and massive affair overhung by a huge sounding board. A large cushion of faded red rep trimmed with coarse woollen fringe and tassels decorated the reading-desk, which was flanked by two pretentious lamps of hideous design in wrought iron. The place had the odour of a damp cellar, and the air of a religion, stern and unforgiving to the sinner, and not very promising to the saved.

The little street is not to be found now, while the little church is a wreck, and its remains are smothered by