

and the time has now arrived when I feel a step ought to be taken which will do more to advance us, as a body, on the road to fame than any that could be taken by us. (Loud applause.) Gentlemen, it has ever been our rule to be guided by the methods of procedure adopted by that august body from which we, as another body, take our name." ("Nothing washy about this speech," whispered a mischievous looking little fellow in a pea-jacket, seated at the further end of the table, to his neighbor, "plenty of body in it.") (Cries of "silence, order.") "It will be remembered by all present that the original Pickwick Club, urged by a sense of duty, deputed four of their number to travel throughout the length and breadth of this country in the pursuit of knowledge and information. Now, though I acknowledge that much is to be learned from books, I am of opinion that a far greater amount of useful information is to be gleaned from personally visiting the countries treated of in the books we read, and I modestly submit that it is a matter of vital importance, not only to us as a bod—as a club, but to the world at large, to gain as much practical knowledge as is possible of all matters of interest, and as it is impossible for all of us to make the extended tour which I have in my mind" ("and it's got mighty little room to turn around," from the pea-jacket, *sotto voce*), "I propose that we appoint a certain number of our members to visit distant countries, taking faithful notes of all they see, to be reported to us on their return." ("Hear, hear.") "Gentlemen, at this time we know little of Canada and North America generally. What little we do read, we are unable to implicitly believe, for those who have written upon the subject, or some of them at least, appear to be entirely ignorant of what they are writing about. I am credibly informed that in Wilkie Collins' latest work he exhibits an unfamiliarity with the country in which some of the scenes of his work are laid that is actually appalling. What we require are facts, gentlemen, facts, and how can we better obtain those facts than by sending some of our number to collect them? When a gentleman of Mr. Wilkie Collins' general information and intelligence tells us that—that—I forget exactly what he *does* tell us, but it is something, I am informed, so terrific in its inaccuracy that it must cause us to doubt the statements of all writers except those whom we can trust and rely upon, I say that when such a man deceives us it behooves us to bestir ourselves and obtain some information that we can place confidence in respecting those countries which lie toward the setting sun." (Vociferous cheers.) "What we desire is to know something about the habits and customs of the Canadians and Americans, something of the fauna and flora of America; in fact, we wish for enlightenment regarding a country about which we are now in a state of darkness and uncertainty, and my proposition is to select four of our number and despatch them as the representatives of the Junior Pickwick Club to the other side of the Atlantic, and I have no doubt that we shall experience no difficulty in selecting that number."



Here a thin-legged, intellectual looking youth rose to his feet and begged to be informed who would pay the expenses of the trip.

This question, at first, somewhat staggered Mr. Simmers, who did not seem to be prepared for it, but who, at length, acknowledged that it was a very proper one.

He, therefore, asked the gentlemen to discuss the matter amongst themselves and state any conclusion they might arrive at. It was at last decided that the four representatives should pay their own expenses, but on their return, having kept an accurate account of their expenditure, the sum should be reimbursed to them from the general funds of the Club. This appearing eminently satisfactory several gentlemen rose and stated their perfect willingness to start on the intended expedition at once. As, however, it was unanimously voted that four would be amply sufficient, it was at length agreed that the President should nominate that number, selecting those who from their scientific attainments or otherwise he deemed most fitting to have that honor.



A young man named Sploggs, who was believed to be a profound student of the art of chemistry, from the fact that his lodgings were crammed with crucibles, retorts, and all manner of villainous smelling compounds, but who was never able to utter a score of words consecutively on one subject without branching off into another, here started to his feet and said, "Mr. President, and gentlemen, the science of chemistry, which that eminent chemist Faraday, who always wore his hat——"

"That says more for his knowledge of chemistry than manners," interrupted the little man in the pea-jacket, whose name was Speckleby.

"I say that chemistry," continued Sploggs, "and a knowledge of it, show that the air of other countries is not at all the same as that of England. We had a cat at home who died in ten minutes after she was dropped into a well, which demonstrates that the air she had been accustomed to breathe had become essential to her existence, for the air in the well was saturated with noxious vapors—which are very prevalent in low, flat countries, such as Canada. Now that cat——"

"Would you tell us, Mr. Sploggs," asked Speckleby, "whether there was any water in the well into which your lamented cat was dropped? Because, if so, perhaps her decease was not so much attributable to the noxious gases as to the fact that she was unaccustomed to breathing under water?"

"Well, yes," replied Sploggs, as though a new light was dawning upon him, "the well was half full of water—but at any rate I beg to suggest that in the sudden transition from the bracing atmosphere of England to that of a country where the natives I am told lie dormant through the long winter, as attested by the fact that so many arctic explorers have been found buried under immense snowdrifts in a dormant condition——"

"From which they never woke up," suggested Speckleby.

"And Canada, which I believe is a low, flat country, and consequently abounding in miasma and poisonous exhalations——"

"What is it that you wish to suggest, Mr. Sploggs," enquired the President, seeing that the speaker was apparently drifting further and further away from what he wished to say.

"Why, Mr. President," replied Sploggs, "I merely wished to say that the gentlemen should be provided with respirators—my father was an extraordinarily powerful man, but he could never go from one room to another without first placing a respirator over his mouth