

strung, and every faculty of his brain clear and sound. Would he let the golden years of his youth slip by, without laying any foundation for independence? Was this Civil Service appointment worth the weary waiting? Emigration had often before presented itself as a course offering certain advantages. Mr. Holt's conversation had brightened the idea. For his family, as well as for himself, it would be beneficial. The poor proud father, who had frequently been unable to leave his house for weeks together, through fear of arrest for debt, would be happier with an ocean between him and the ancestral estates, thronged with memories of fallen affluence: the young brothers, Arthur and George, who were nearing man's years without ostensible object or employment, would find both abundantly in the labour of a new country and a settler's life. Robert had a whole picture sketched and filled in during half an hour's sit in the dingy coffee room; from the shanty to the settlement was portrayed by his fertile fancy, till he was awakened from his reverie by the hearty voice of Hiram Holt.

"I thought for a minute you were asleep, with your hat over your eyes. I hope you're thinking of Canada, young man?"

Robert could not forbear smiling.

"Now," said Mr. Holt, apparently speaking aloud a previous train of thought, "of all things in this magnificent city of yours, which I'm free to confess beats Quebec and Montreal by a long chalk, nothing seems queerer to me than the thousands of young men in your big shops, who are satisfied to struggle all their lives in a poor unmanly way, while our millions of acres are calling out for hands to fell the forests and own the estates, and create happy homes along our unrivalled rivers and lakes. The young fellow that sold me these gloves"—showing a new pair on his hands—"would make as fine a backwoodsman as I ever saw—six feet high, and strong in proportion. It's the sheerest waste of material to have that fellow selling stockings."