

A YEAR IN ENGLAND: WHAT I SAW, WHAT I HEARD, AND
WHAT I THOUGHT.

BY A CANADIAN.

I.—THE VOYAGE.

DEAR SAMMY,—

WHILE abroad, and since my return, you have ceased not, periodically, to urge me to write you a series of letters in reference to my thoughts and experiences of that grand old country, England, with whose historic greatness we so proudly associate ourselves as Canadians. So pressed was I amid the whirl of my engagements, business and other, that I could never find time to do more than write you a friendly line while away; but now at home once more beneath my native skies, and surrounded by influences purely Canadian, I have at last determined to let you know what manner of place and what sort of people I personally found England and the English to be. But first of all let me take you across—across that mighty ocean which has been, I am right sure, with you as it was with me before I saw it, one of those fields in which your imagination always found room enough to roam—a sort of boundless something, very ill-defined, in which and about which you thought wonderful nothings and somethings. Indeed, I do well remember one day on our return from school, as we two wandered quietly along, one of those talks, so sweet even in recollection, that grew out of that matchless description of Byron's which had fortunately found its way into our School Readers. Not bad books, Sammy, those last Canadian Readers! You don't fail to compare them with the

dry old "Sequel," with its frigid and forced moral lessons. But hold! I am away back instead of taking you across the Atlantic with me; but in passing, Sammy, let me say that our conversation on that masterpiece of Byron's so convinced me of your capability to enjoy the poetical that I have never since hesitated, without any fear of boring you, to insert in our correspondence some of my own poor sentiments on the divine essence of beauty those we call poets have extracted from nature's world, with all its perfections and imperfections.

Well, to get on board ship: I determined to patronize a Canadian line, being Canadian born, Canadian educated—indeed, a Canadian to the very core. I was going to say a Canadian in my peculiar conceits or conceitedness. Accordingly, I purchased a ticket in my own City of— from an agent of the Allan Line, and taking rail to Quebec, remained overnight in that quaint old place, and next morning, after an unnecessary amount of fussing about my baggage, was duly deposited by the "tender," baggage and all, on board the steamer. I had never been on board of a ship of this kind *when about to sail*, but I had heard times without number of the "noble ship, grandly indifferent to all dangers, making its smooth way through the ocean"—an ocean which aforetime had indeed frightened the old Greeks and Romans, but of which we moderns were complete masters. I had also contemplated, as doubtless you have done, the magnificent pictures