

Messalla (who is apt to think he may say what he likes), said, half *sotto voce*: "How do you know, my dear madame, that he has no children?"

Gwendolen: "You must give me a copy, Mr. Glaucus. They are charming."

By this time the cloud had become broader and darker. A flash of lightning passed across the rose-bush near, and the thunder rolled and crashed. We made for the deep verandah. Down came the rain over that garden, the sun shining the whole time. Grass, trees, flowers, all seemed glad and happy, satisfied, by reason of that rain. On a branch of an acacia stood a robin, well sheltered from the storm. The deluge stopped, but the clouds were growing blacker, and a few robins stepped on to the green; eyed the turf; darted in their beaks; drew out each his worm, while the little star cried:—

"Mamma, look at de wobbins. Oh!" and she clapped her hands, "look! look! he 'ave a suppent, you bet your dove"—(her version of "By jove!"). One bird had got hold of an enormous worm. Another flash; nearer and more dreadful the thunder rolled; the trees swayed in the wind, and louder grew the sough of the restless lake on the shore; and again the rain came down, the sun still shining clear.

How restful it was to watch that rain falling over the rich-leaved trees, and the grass which grew greener every moment.

The rain ceased; some said the storm was gone; on the other hand one pointed to the lingering cloud; also to a bit of lurid angry sky; besides, the heat was still oppressive.

The robin now left his branch and gave himself a bath. This we all watched with as much interest as if we had never seen such a sight before. The sparrows chirped; a solitary robin hid in a pine tree sang, and now again the cloud began to spread and grow darker. A flash that seemed to burn our cheeks! thunder peal on peal right over our heads; the platform shook! some crouched; others rose up, glanced round as besieged men do when shells have burst near; the house must have been struck! What cry is that? Gwendolen was in hysterics, and Messalla himself ran for water, while Rectus put his left arm round his beautiful yellow-haired wife and held her hand with his right. The little child ran up to the sobbing woman and nestled near her, and mingled her tears of sympathy with her—of sympathy, for the thunder had startled, not frightened, the child, but a little pet lamb browsing on a small hedge-enclosed plot of green jumped and whirled and staggered an utterly bewildered young sheep, and cried piteously "ba! ba! ba!" The two spaniels ran under the seats and crouched there. As Gwendolen came to herself the beauty and intelligence of her face were heightened by the expression of sorrow. A tear-drop stood on either cheek; tears were on the long yellow lashes like dew on ripened ears of wheat, and the large blue eye dilated was wonderful in its beautiful despair—for despair was what it suggested. After a little she smiled—sunlight after rain!—and then apologized for being so foolish, but she was always afraid of thunder. One of the party said he never could understand the fear of thunder, that he loved to be in a storm, and when peal on peal went crashing through the air never failed to quote to himself the sublime words of the psalmist—"the Lord thundered, the Most High uttered his voice"; and then he told how his mother when there was a thunder-storm would close up the shutters and summon the family and read the litany; and from that they passed to talking of the amusing chapter of Mark Twain, in which he tells how a wife closed up all the shutters and hid herself and called out to her husband to know where he was. "Under the table." "The worst place you could be." "Where are you now?" "In the wardrobe." "Still worse." "Where are you now?" "Up the chimney," and so on.

At five o'clock tea we had strawberries, but madame, our hostess, could give us no cream. The thunder had frightened that past being brought sweet again. McKnom, who had with head uncovered watched the storm, said: "It is well; it thundered on the right." Can it be possible that he too is not without the superstition he imputes to his archic man?

"There is," he said, "a sense of power, a sublime inspiration in a thunder-storm. How Byron's spirit revelled in the thunder-storms of the Alps! David pursued by a mighty and envious king cried to Jehovah, and at the time of his deliverance a storm came up from the Midland Sea, and I doubt not contributed to it:—

In deep distress called I to Jehovah,
I cried unto my God;
My cry came into his ears;
He heard my voice in his temple in the heavens;
Then the earth shook, the world trembled,
The bases of the mountains moved,
The mountains were shaken, for he was wroth,
Smoke went out of his nostrils,
A devouring fire out of his mouth,
Which made stones red hot
In the bosom of the clouds;
He hurled them on the earth.
He bowed the heavens and came down,
Thick darkness was under his feet,
He rode on the storm as on a winged steed,
Yea he did fly,
He flew upon the wings of the wind.
Darkness was his fortress,
His pavilion of war,
Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies;
At the brightness of his victory his thick clouds passed.
Jehovah thundered in the heavens,
The Most High uttered his voice
Hailstones and coals of fire;
And he sent out his arrows and scattered them,
Yea lightnings manifold and discomfited them,

Then the channels of waters appeared,
The rivers were sucked up,
They were scared from their beds by his thunder,
The foundations of the world were laid bare,
At thy rebuke O Jehovah,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
Then came he from on high and took me;
He drew me out of many waters.

The supreme god of the Greeks was *terpikeraunos*—the one who 'delighted in thunder,' and he too was the deliverer"—and McKnom stretched forth his right hand and repeated a few Greek lines, probably from Homer.

Madame Lalage and Glaucus applauded, but those of us who did not understand them still felt the music of the long O's and Ois; the rapid movement and grand roll of the dactylic hexameter. It pleased too the classic ear of Messalla, though he said he had forgotten his Greek. Yet he could recall how those very lines had not only been impressed on his mind but on an interesting part of a little tweed suit he wore.

But the way McKnom delivered this paraphrase of a portion of the eighteenth Psalm had most impressed us; filled us with awe—a kind of noble terror; and all who listened to him will for ever more hear God's voice in the thunder.

He recalled how a storm saved England from the Spanish Armada, when God fought for that little island which in the last five hundred years has done more for mankind than all the nations of the world put together—and he added that every true archic man is a fellow-worker with God and realizes this, and when in difficulty and danger feels the everlasting arms around him and all the eternal forces behind him. "And only thus," said McKnom, "can he be truly strong, but thus and feeling himself thus reinforced he is strong against the world."

The way he spoke these words touched us with a certain strange pathos. Gwendolen, who was now quite recovered and is a great favourite with the old man, said: "Now, Mr. McKnom, I will ask you why you should speak in a sorrowful tone when uttering words so full of hope and power."

"Because, my child," he replied, "I know the pathos of the situation, I know how lonely the men of whom we speak are. With all their strength and power they have the same need of and the same longing for sympathy as you and I. You see it in David, but some of them have not the faith of David and cannot go as he ever did to God as to a friend. The heights are cold and lonely, and there the storm strikes first, and heaven only knows the misery, the disappointments, the difficulties encountered in climbing there; the danger from open enemies, the more dreadful danger from false friends; the fear to trust; the necessity for self-suppression; the still greater necessity for everlasting watchfulness and untiring effort—and sometimes not one in whom the man can utterly confide, before whom he can appear in his weakness—for hours of weakness will come to all. The greatest cross I have not mentioned. If he be a true man he will be pretty sure to die before he is understood. All his life he will be misconceived. Motives he would scorn will be attributed to him."

Messalla: "Do you mean to say you are talking about any men in Canada? Any statesman?"

McKnom: "I would fain hope so."

Messalla laughed, and said:—

"I fear, sir, you are up in a balloon. This country is a sink of corruption. Politicians are all corrupt. As a born Canadian, I am sorry to see it. Every Government is a wigwag of villainess. We are on the down grade to utter destruction. *Facilis descensus*."

"Why, sir," replied McKnom, "you have illustrated my remarks. Here you are one of the first men in Canada out of politics; one of the ablest; one of the best instructed; and yet you utter these opinions, which I know to be unjust."

"But," I said, "they are opinions very generally held, nor can I see how it could be otherwise with the manner in which our politicians and our press conduct their party warfare."

McKnom: "That is what I say. We want criticism, judgments on men and things—just, enlightened, sincere."

Madame Lalage: "I wish you may get it! But we must go."

The air was now cool, and walking home we paused frequently to admire the gardens all so full of green, so profuse of flowers. As little Ella drove off with her friends, she threw a tiny kiss to our party, and kept looking back until she was hid by distance. We watched her as in the early dawn one gazes on the last lingering star that glitters "with lessening ray" until it is lost to sight.

In the evening and night the storm was unspeakably sublime. Sheet-lightning now illuminating for a moment, then Egyptian darkness; sheet lightning again; again darkness; forked lightning—quivering diamond bars darting down the black thunder cloud; the ever-recurring roll of the thunder; nervous women and animals crouching; while the rain fell and the wind rose and shook houses and the trees broke and the earth reeled. The springs in the watches snapped, as most found when they came to wind them.

"Mammy," said the little star, "are you afraid of of fwunder?"

"No, my child; your Father in Heaven makes the thunder, and he protects little children and all." And so, while the other stars were wrapped in gloom and hid by storm and cloud, this little star went to rest and slept "in spite of thunder."

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

THE THOUSAND ISLANDS.

[FRÈCHETTE.]

HARMONIOUS groups, sweet Edens on calm streams,
Countless oases robed in golden flowers,
Which waves caress and the fair reed embowers
With rich confusion of its tall green gleams;
Wave-cradled groves, that song-birds lull to dreams,
Where zephyrs sway the nests in leafy towers;
Mysterious maze fresh from perpetual showers,
Green chaplet strewn 'mid the blue water's beams:

When first I saw, 'neath your o'erhanging shade,
Your mirrored forms in the calm water's face,
A warm June sun gilded each green retreat,
Soft, thrilling perfumes rose from every glade,
And I believed myself in that dream place
Where sylph and humming-birds hold revels sweet!
Stratford, Ont. T. G. MARQUIS.

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TWO KNAPSACKS:

A NOVEL OF CANADIAN SUMMER LIFE.

BY J. CAWDOR BELL.

CHAPTER XVI—(Continued).

RUFUS had remained at Bridesdale, at the urgent entreaty of his sisters and the Pilgrims; but the sight of the people going to prayer meeting smote his conscience. He knew his father and mother would be at meetin' in their own church, and that there would be a good deal of work to do. Besides he hadn't brought home the team from Mr. Hislop's since the bee. Nothing would stop him, therefore; he shouldered his gun, and, bidding all good-bye, started for home. Nobody was left in the kitchen but the two maids and the two Pilgrims. Yes, there was one more, namely Mr. Pawkins, who was afeard his duds warn't dry. The nettrelized citizen of Kennedy was telling stories, that kept the company in peals and roars of laughter, about an applicant for a place in a paper mill, who was set to chewing a blue blanket into pulp, who was given a bottle of vinegar to sharpen his teeth with, and who was ignominiously expelled from the premises because he didn't "chaw it dry"; about a bunting billy goat; and a powerful team of oxen, that got beyond the control of their barn-moving driver, and planted the barn on the top of an almost inaccessible hill. Mr. Pawkins complimented the young women, and drew wonderful depths of knowledge out of Sylvanus and Timotheus. But, when a vehicle rolled into the stable yard that brought the constable and Maguffin to join the party, the quondam American citizen waxed jubilant, and beheld endless possibilities of amusement. "Good evenin', consterble," said Mr. Pawkins, blandly.

"Good evening, sir, at your service," replied the pensioner.

"Pawkins is my naum, consterble, kyind er Scotch, I reckon. They say pawky means sorter cute an' cunnin', like in Scotch. Never was thar myself, to speak on, but hev seed 'em."

"The Scotch make good soldiers," said Mr. Rigby.

"Yaas; I reckon the oatmeal sorter stiffens 'em up."

"There are military authorities who assert that the Scotch are the only troops that can reform under fire; but that is a mistake. In that respect, sir, the Guards are equal to any other Household Troops."

"Fer haousehold troopees and reformin' under fire, you had orter ha seen aour fellers at Bull Run. When the shooten' begun, all the Bowery plug uglies, bred to cussin' and drinkin' and wuss, dropped ther guns and fell on ther knees a reformin'; then, when they faound they couldn't reform so sudden, they up on ther two feet and started fer the haousehold. Eurrup ain't got nuthin' ter ekal aour haousehold troopees."

"You mistake me, Mr. Pawkins; the Household Troops in infantry are the Guards and Highlanders, whose special duty it is to guard the royal household."

"Is it big?"

"Is what big, sir?"

"Why, the household! How many storeys is ther to it besides the attic and basement? Hev it got a mansard?"

"The Household, sir, dwells in royal palaces of great dimensions. It is the royal family and their attendants over whom the Guards watch."

"That's the Black Guards, ain't it?"

"No, sir; you are thinking of the Black Watch, a name of the Forty-second Highlanders."

"D'ye hear that, you Sambo? You orter go and git draafted inter that corpse, and go araound breakin' the wimmin's hiearts in a cullud flannel petticoat."

"There are no negroes, sir, in the Black Watch," interposed the corporal.

"See heah, yoh Yankee Canajun," answered Mr. Maguffin with feeling, "fo' de law ob this yeah kinty I'se jess es good a man as yoh is. So yoh jess keep yoh Sambou in yoh mouf atter this. Specks yoh'se got a mighty low down name yohsef if t'was ony knowed by respecttable pussons."

"My name, Mr. Julius Sneezer Disgustus Quackenboss, my name is Pawkins, great grandson of Hercules Leonidas Pawkins, as was briggidier ginral and aijicamp to George Washington, when he drummed the haousehold