

## MY WIFE.

She's as natty a body as ever you saw,  
(I believe I've expressed this opinion before),  
Yes, there seems to be something after all left in life—  
I'll confess and own up—I'm in love with my wife.  
In this age of fraud, pretence and of sham,  
It may be a weakness on the part of a man  
To admit, notwithstanding this world's cares and its  
strife,  
You're not so bad off if you're in love with your wife.

True, this mystical passion often implies  
A great deal of humbug and manifold lies,  
You can't always deceive observers astute,  
Who will sometimes mutter "how he treats her, the  
brute!"

It may seem very vain; have it so, if you will,  
I gain strength in the knowledge which clings to me  
still.

That this world, with its show and jealousies rife,  
Are dispell'd when I know I'm in love with my wife.

Now old Mrs. Grundy would think me absurd,  
And perchance doubt her senses if ever she heard  
Such a monstrous assertion as herein expressed;  
I fancy 't would be like a weight on her breast.  
But that lady and I do not often agree,  
(And I don't think much of her, between you and me)  
Her mind gets confused over fragrant Bohemian,  
Our acquaintance just now, I believe, is U. P.

To return to my subject—don't think me remiss  
If I bore you a moment; my reason is this:  
I don't like to obtrude family matters. You see  
I love my wife and I know she loves me.  
In every day converse how often you find  
That people who're married are oftentimes blind  
To each other's merits and pretty conceits;  
Their careless indifference all true love defeats.  
For the wants of that deep inner feeling express'd  
The spark dimly burns in each other's breast;  
While conventional folly does all it can  
To stamp it out on the modern "society" plan.

If he calls her "darling" or she calls him "dear,"  
There's a class in this world who term such things  
"queer;"

Who are blind to the love tint which flushes her cheek  
As she lives in the light of his eyes week by week.

Those critics who think they read others like books  
Can't interpret the language conveyed in their looks;  
But proceed to discuss with much animation  
And decide "that such nonsense is mere affectation."

If husband and wife lived as these folks desire,  
There wouldn't be much left in this world to admire,  
So we heed not their jargon; their verdict defy,  
And jog on together, my dear wife and I.  
She's as natty a body as ever you met.  
And 'tis through her financing we keep clear of debt.  
At noon 'tis "good-by, dear"—a smile and embrace,  
When I return home, love still beams in her face.

I'm not going to say we never fall out,  
That, of course, wouldn't be natural; her sweet little pout  
So comely piteous keeps me on the rack;  
We linger, and fatter, and then—take it back.  
In our joys and our sorrows we each have a share,  
And as far as we can, we bear and forbear,  
So I'll merely observe a man's duty in life  
Is more readily learn'd by the help of his wife.

Montreal. F. J. HAMILTON.

## RETIRING FROM BUSINESS.

Above the door of a rather snug but not over  
ostentatious little shop, centrally situated on the  
principal thoroughfare of one of the numerous  
little villages of Western Ontario, hung the  
following sign:

"ANTHONY HOPGOOD, GROCERIES, &C."

Mr. Hopgood was the proprietor of the establishment. Although he had been in business in the same premises for several years, still he could not be regarded as much more than a youth, for Mr. Hopgood, like many great men, had launched out into the battling world at an early age. The greater portion of his life-time had been spent in the village, and, as a consequence, everybody in the whole township could claim intimate acquaintanceship with him. He was a genial, good natured young fellow, very sociable and fond of fun, and was, moreover, something of a philosopher. He also had the happy knack of being able to express his ideas in an easy and entertaining sort of a way, and it can, therefore, be readily understood that Mr. Hopgood was a general favorite in the community. The people liked to deal with Mr. Hopgood for, no matter whether his customers were old or young, he always had a smile, and a pleasant word for each; besides, he had, long since, acquired a reputation for fair and honest dealing in business, and there was not a person in the whole neighbourhood (except, perhaps, his old rival, opposite) that could say a single word derogatory to his character.

In consequence of all these good qualities the older heads in the village looked upon Anthony (as they usually termed him) as a very promising young man. There were, however, just three things about Anthony, upon which the village people would like to have had a little more definite information. These questions were, first: where he originally hailed from; second, how much of the "needful" he had managed to lay by, and lastly, why he persisted in remaining single? These were, certainly, very important considerations, and several of his more inquisitive neighbours frequently endeavored to sound him on these points. But Anthony was cautious, and he evaded their bluntly put questions in the most innocent manner imaginable. Not that he was in any way afraid to have light shed upon any of the questions, but because, while he was willing that his kindly neighbours should gratify their curiosity and love of gossip to a certain degree, he was unwilling that they should know too much about him, perhaps more than he knew himself. Consequently, in spite of all of their well meant efforts to solve these conundrums, the people could arrive at no positive conclusions in regard to them. Even the oldest inhabitant

could reveal nothing in regard to Anthony's pedigree, and the old constable, who was considered tolerable good authority on most legal matters, could give no definite statement as to Anthony's financial standing.

Notwithstanding these few drawbacks, Anthony continued to dwell in the hearts of the people, and the people continued to take an active interest in him and his affairs. Indeed, his welfare was almost made a thing of their own concern.

But Anthony grew ambitious. The grocery business, in a small place, is a pleasant enough avocation, it is true, but he began to feel that his heart was not in his work; that he had a soul worthy of a higher destiny than that of measuring out soap, sugar and other trifles. So he had his head examined by the phrenologist, who happened to come round that way, and the result was that, soon after, he went over to Mr. Dorson's, the druggist—who also did the job-printing for the village—and ordered fifty large-sized posters which were to read as follows:

## "RETIRING FROM BUSINESS."

"Anthony Hopgood desires to announce to the residents of this village and surrounding neighbourhood that he has resolved to

## GIVE UP BUSINESS,

and will sell out at a great sacrifice in order to make a speedy clearance.

"All parties, &c., &c."

When old Mr. Dorson had looked through his spectacles long enough to get at the gist of the matter, a visible change came over his whole person. He was simply amazed. He was just as much astonished as he would have been had the paper which he held in his hand been a call to allow himself to be nominated for the Local Legislature. As soon as he had recovered himself a little he broke out as follows:

"Why, Anthony, what does this mean?"

To which Anthony calmly replied: "It means, Mr. Dorson, that I am about to abandon the grocery trade forever. I have, at last, awoke to a true conception of the grand object of my existence, and I must hie me hence without delay, to enter upon my new destiny."

Now, Mr. Dorson was a kind old soul and his habits were very simple. He was not accustomed to being startled in this manner, so, after a while, he said:

"Anthony, I am afraid you are acting rashly; this is a very serious step; you must take time to consider it. You have a nice little business here and you are very comfortable among us, and, for my part, I can see no reason in the world why you should give up. I am older than you are, my boy, and I advise you to drop this idea, and don't trifle with Providence by throwing away your chances. Yes, Anthony, the more I think of it, the more I am convinced that it is my duty to refuse to print any such wild nonsense for you."

At this, Mr. Hopgood seemed to grow a little impatient and did not appear to value the old gentleman's advice as much as a good young man should do. He mildly threatened to go elsewhere for his printing, whereupon Mr. Dorson reconsidered the matter, and after doubly impressing on Anthony's mind the fact that he had warned him, concluded to do the work, and, after saying good-day to Anthony, immediately stepped into the little back room to tell his wife about it.

In due time the fifty posters were sent over to the grocery. Mr. Hopgood procured the services of the "Tom Sawyer" of the village, and shortly after, all suitable places around about were ornamented with M. Hopgood's intention.

In the course of a day or two the news had spread all over the township, and it may be safe to say that nothing, since the news of the Fenian invasion, had ever so "taken a hold of the people," as it were. Everybody immediately began to wonder, and to surmise, and to guess, and to talk. The air was full of it.

The first person that came in to see Anthony about it, officially, was old Dr. Brown. He had been having a talk with Mr. Dorson, that morning, and they had come to the unanimous conclusion that this idea of his giving up business was the greatest piece of folly that had ever come under their observation. The good old Doctor stormed, and argued, and advised, until he was almost exhausted and, finally, demanded to know "where he was going and what he was going to do." To which questions Anthony was mum.

Shortly after the Doctor's departure, in came the Rev. Mr. Perkins who, in a very calm and mild manner, remarked that he was very much surprised, indeed, when he had learned of Anthony's intention to retire from business. He had always considered the grocery business to be quite profitable, &c., &c. Not succeeding in his gentle efforts to obtain an insight into Anthony's future intentions, he somehow jumped at the conclusion that Mr. Hopgood contemplated removing to some large city and, straightway, felt that it was his duty, as a minister, to warn him of the wickedness and of the temptations which beset young men in all large places. His line of argument was, that as peace and contentment ought to be the *summum bonum* of human ambition, Anthony's intention to remove was entirely wrong, because it was directly opposed to both right and reason.

Anthony listened attentively for some time because he was not very busy just then, and, also, because he always had a good deal of respect for the Rev. Mr. Perkins.

During the afternoon, Johnson, the blacksmith, went up to see Anthony about the matter. He had heard something about his going to leave the village, but he declined to believe any such stuff until he heard it from Anthony's own lips. So the first thing he said, when he got into the store, was—

"Is it true?"

"Is what true?" asked Anthony.

"Is it true that you are going to leave us, Mr. Hopgood?"

Anthony informed him that he believed fate had so ordained it. Upon which, Johnson broke out as follows:

"Now see here, Anthony, I've always been a friend o' yours, and have done all I could to help you along, and we're all been a dealing with you for a long time, and I don't think its the square thing for you to 'pick up' and 'dig out' in this way."

Anthony did not say much because he felt that his honest old friend, Johnson, meant well.

Towards evening, in dropped the dashing little Mrs. Fisher, the widow, whose merry brown eyes were said to be sharp enough to see through half a dozen mill stones.

During the conversation, the little darling laughingly intimated that Mr. Hopgood could not fool her; that she believed he had no intention of giving up business at all, and that he only said so for an advertising dodge. Her late husband had been in business, somewhere.

In a few days it became pretty generally known that Anthony really did intend to retire. It became the chief topic of conversation in all the houses, in the other stores, over at the tavern, everywhere. But nobody could find out, by hook or by crook, what Anthony's intentions were in regard to the future. This was very perplexing. He nearly lost several intimate friends in consequence of his stubborn silence in that respect. However, in the absence of authentic information, the following rumors were freely handed about, viz.:

That he had rich and powerful relatives in Europe and that they had sent for him to come and fill some big position. That his grandfather was in the Russian army, and that he was going over to fight with the Servians. That he was going away to the States to marry an heiress; that he was going to edit a newspaper and, lastly, that he had joined the Church and would become a preacher.

In the meantime, the old constable busied himself every day, hunting round, trying to fish up something that would give him a clue. He went over to see if Doctor Brown had noticed anything strange or remarkable about Anthony's actions, of late, but the Doctor shook his head; then he held a confidential interview with the proprietor of the tavern to see if Anthony had been much of a frequenter, or if he had taken to drink, but the jolly old landlord regretted that he had seen Anthony so seldom. Then, as a last resort, he called upon the postmaster to ascertain if that functionary had noticed anything peculiar or suspicious about Anthony's correspondence, but the postmaster had noticed nothing worth speaking of. The old constable began to grow wrathful. Things continued in this unsettled state for several days and the people could get no satisfaction out of Anthony. As might be expected, the rumours kept constantly increasing in number, and they had to be varied so as to be in accord with the indignation which was spreading. The following are a few specimens of what was being whispered around. That he had become a gambler and had lost every cent he was worth at cards; that he was going to join a gang of robbers, then supposed to be prowling about the country; that he was a counterfeiter, a horse thief, and, finally, that he had concocted a plan of robbing the post-office. Still, Anthony kept silent, and, strange to say, looked more and more happy each day, which was very annoying to the people.

It is a long lane that has no turning, however, and that was what the old constable thought as he walked in, one evening, after having almost abandoned all hopes of ever finding out anything. Although there was an air of profound melancholy about him, still he could not conceal the triumph which glittered in his little gray eyes as he thus addressed Anthony:

"Mr. Hopgood, I have a very unpleasant duty to perform. I had always regarded you as an upright young man. You have nobody to blame but yourself. I have to inform you that I am sent here to seize all your goods and chattels. Here is the distress warrant which was got out against you by Mr. Skinner, your landlord. He has become dissatisfied and uneasy at the way you are carrying on."

It somehow occurred to Anthony, just then, that there was a possibility of carrying a joke too far, so, after a much fruitless argument, he politely pointed to the door, but the old constable was big, and declined to move.

Mr. Hopgood had to go up and interview old Skinner, the landlord, as follows:

Anthony.—"What did you put the bailiff in my place for?"

Old Skinner.—"The waywardness of youth, Mr. Hopgood, has always been a source of much uneasiness to me. In all my experience, I have found that young men, as a rule, cannot be depended upon, and your own case proves the rule. You are now established in a business which is growing from year to year, and you have a bright prospect before you. But no, some tom foolery or other catches you, and you must give up your business and throw away your chances. You are already on the road to the poor house!"

Anthony.—"I have always paid you the rent when it was due. I do not owe you one cent of rent. Upon what ground, then, do you seize?"

Old Skinner.—"Fool, your lease has some months to run yet, I seize for the rent that will become due."

Anthony.—"But your rent will be paid as it becomes due just as it always has been."

Old Skinner.—"When you have arrived at my years you will have learned the worthlessness of promises."

Anthony.—"When I am as old as you are I hope I will have better sense. The seizure which you have made is entirely illegal and uncalled for. You have allowed your avariciousness to get the better of your judgment. Believe me, sir, you shall be made to pay dearly for the gross injustice done me. Some of the wealth which you have wrung from the helpless and inexperienced shall, in turn, be wrung from you as a fit compensation for the injury which you have done me this day."

Then Anthony went over to the county town and placed the matter in the hands of able lawyers, and the result was, that, in a few days, old Skinner hopped around like a whipped cur. He came down and invited the old constable to come away as he had dropped the seizure and desired to withdraw all further proceedings. Old Skinner was very wealthy, but nobody in the whole village liked him; so when the old constable went round and told how he had been made a fool of, everybody actually congratulated Anthony on his victory.

During all this time, Anthony's stock was being reduced to a fine point, so to speak, and things began to look as though the place would not know him much longer. Then the people began to hunt up claims against him, and, as the majority presented were purely imaginary, he was kept quite busy in hunting up old receipts for bills which had been settled months, and even years, before. Then, much to the satisfaction of everybody, he was threatened to be sued for breach of promise, by the father of the girl he once took to singing school. But, terrified at the fate which befell old Skinner, this would-be plaintiff concluded not to press the case at present. And, as a grand finale, a crowning climax to his persecution, old Figgins, the tailor, had Anthony actually arrested on a *capias*. Anthony had always been in the habit of buying his clothes there, and old Figgins had often boasted that Mr. Hopgood was one of his best paying customers. But the new suit, which he had got a few days before, was still unsettled for, and, as the people could now believe Anthony capable of doing anything, somebody had advised old Figgins to look sharp, or he would be the loser. The bill was easily settled, however, and Anthony was again free to stand in the door of his shop and smile and look happy.

This so vexed the man who kept the other grocery, that he was obliged to come over and mention how that the people had intended to present Anthony with a testimonial on the eve of his departure, but as he persisted in being so stubborn, and disagreeable, he now doubted if enough money could be collected to purchase as much as a tin whistle.

In due time Anthony got his estate wound up, and, as he actually appeared to have some money, and was not likely to ask any favors of anybody, many of his old friends gathered about him and wished him God-speed as the stage bore him away.

HAMILTON, ONT.

W. F. McM.

## LITERARY.

MR. HALLAM TENNYSON, a son of the Laureate, is a writer of some promise.

MURRAY is going to publish Captain Nares's official report to the Admiralty, and illustrate it with maps.

WILLIAM BLACK says the alleged discovery of the original "Princess of Thule" is all in the imagination of the discoverers.

A NEW weekly periodical, especially devoted to the exposure of the shams and fictions of commercial and fashionable life, is to appear in London in the beginning of 1877. The freshcomer is to be produced under the auspices of Mr. Labouchere, and will be called *Truth*.

"FULL many a swarthy face and stern was there," was given to an aspirant for a University scholarship in England in his task of turning English into Latin verse. He reversed the aspect of things in this amusing fashion:—"Nigra illis facies, nigra iis terga."

ROBERT BROWNING is now in his sixty-fifth year, and is full of vitality and vivacity. He is of medium height, erect and broad-shouldered. His hair and beard are white, his large gray eyes have youth in them still. He is a bright companion, a teller of comical stories, and as a talker not at all given to the incomprehensible.

A NEW description of Swinburne makes his face resemble a cat's, a fact of which he is said to be proud. He is small and slight, but has a large head and bushy auburn hair. Although by birth an aristocrat, he is in theory democratic.

AN important sale of books, prints, and drawings of great value, being the collections of Mr. Didot, the famous connoisseur, will take place in Paris in the spring of next year, and comprise many rare treasures. Among the drawings are the originals by Holbein, for the "Dance of Death;" and among the prints is a choice copy of the woodcuts of Hans Lützelberger from these drawings.

AN amusing incident occurred lately at the establishment of a well-known London publisher. The manuscript of a novel was sent to him so hermetically sealed in a tin box that it could not be extracted without a hammer. The clerks who received the box conjured up in their minds an idea that it contained dynamite, and consequently, after much perturbation, the box was deposited unopened in a dark cellar, where it remained for several months, and where probably it would have continued to remain had not the author, who lives in a remote part of the world, unexpectedly made his appearance in the British metropolis.