

A DARK CONSPIRACY.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEAVER AND ITS COUNCILLORS.

The Beaver, an animal noted for its rich fur and industrious habits, had been chosen by the various Queens whose domain it frequented, as the Great Father and Totem of their Tribe. To it they paid tribute, and by it they vowed eternal union and constancy to each other. They all paid homage to the Lion; but heretofore they were split asunder, each doing what seemed right in his own eyes, totally disregarding what the others did or were about to do. Thinking that the advance of civilization, and the growing power of the Eagle rendered it necessary, they united for common defence. 'Tis a union which many now regret, for a nation's greatness is no longer calculated by its extent of territory. Right is fast taking the place of might; the arts of peace, instead of war, now sway the minds of men; and the brute force of thousands is fast giving way to the subtle diplomacy of a few.

For a time with the Beaver all went well. Under cover of Coalition Sir Nero had seized the helm of state. All seemed nice to the Union devotees. Sir Nero to them was a hero and wise politician. But a crash came at last. Sir Nero, casting aside the flimsy veil that heretofore had kept his true character in the background, made bold to appropriate a portion of the public funds for his own use, and was accordingly kicked from office by an outraged people.

Le Rouge, who had been instrumental in discovering Sir Nero's system of corruption and fraud, was now chosen head Counsellor of the Beaver. In this LeRouge was ably assisted