

in a few muttered ejaculations; and then, suddenly, bethought him of his business.

He resolved to go down to the wharf where he had expected to ship his cargo, and to ascertain what the situation was there.

As he came near to the place, he saw that it had changed since he last saw it, but a handsome ship lay in the dock, and men were carrying bags of grain aboard of her.

"That must be my cargo," he said; "but what on earth do they mean by loading it in that manner, and upon a sailing vessel?"

He approached the man who seemed to be superintending the work, and said,—

"Is this Ephraim Batterby's wheat?"

The man looked at him in surprise for a moment, and then, smiling, said,—

"No, sir; it is Brown and Martin's."

"When did it arrive?"

"Yesterday."

"By rail?"

"By rail! What do you mean by that?"

"I say, did it come by rail?"

"Well, old man, I haven't the least idea what you mean by 'rail,' but if you want to know, I'll tell you the grain came by canal-boat."

"From Chicago?"

"Never heard of Chicago. The wheat came from Pittsburg. What are you asking for, any way?"

"Why, I'm expecting some myself, by rail from Chicago, and I intend to ship it to Liverpool in a steamer—that is," added Ephraim, hesitatingly, "if I can find one."

"Chicago! rail! steamer! Old chap, I'm afraid you're a little weak in the top story. What do you mean by Chicago?"

"Chicago! Why, it's a city three or four hundred miles west of Pittsburg; a great centre for the western grain traffic. Certainly you must have heard of it."

"Oh, come now, old man, you're trying to guy me! I know well enough that the country is a howling wilderness, three hundred miles beyond Pittsburg. Grain market! That's good!"

"I don't know," said Ephraim, somewhat feebly. "It used to be there. And I expected a cargo of wheat from Chicago to be here this morning, by railroad."