



#### DELICACY AND TACT.

HE sat on a bench in the Park, meditating no doubt, with his dirty, battered stiff hat drawn over his beery face. He was smoking a cigar so rank that he was almost surprised himself, when a still worse-looking and more dilapidated tramp sidled up, and sat on the bench at his side. He did not look up, however.

"My friend," asked the new-comer, gazing out straight before him, "do you swear?"

"I do gen'ruly," returned the other, without changing his attitude.

"Drink?"

"—M—yes. I git dry once in a while."

"Gamble?"

"Can't say but I wouldn't."

"Chew tobacco?"

"Look here, pardner, ain't you gittin' kind'r curious?"

"Answer me that; do you chew tobacco?"

"Well, what 'f I do?"

"That's what I wanted to get at, in a soothing, polished, gentlemanly way, as it were. Gimme a chew, will you?"

#### THE UNFORTUNATE ENGLISHMAN AND THE OWL.

A TALE OF MUSKOKA.

##### I.

(You are probably thinking that in all natural history it would be impossible to find two more dissimilar and utterly unrelated objects than an unfortunate Englishman and an owl. The owl is a solitary bird of great gravity and haughtiness; it is lacking in tact, in the happy faculty of making itself entertaining in mutual intercourse.

It does not give evidence of that consideration for others, that suppression of self, that well-bred deference, and that sprightliness of manner which make some persons such charming companions. Owls, indeed, are possessed of so few engaging traits of character that you would hardly expect an Englishman, however unfortunate, to associate with one—ostentatiously, let us say. Perhaps you are right. You will allow me, however, to remind you that the unexpected is an element of the artistic; and that in the world of facts, too,—

But to my story.)

##### II.

In a state of self-satisfied laziness I reclined within the tent one evening in July, smoking and watching complacently, with head raised on one hand, Smith's progress in preparing the evening meal. The waters of Lake Joseph, shimmering and glistening in the moonlight, lisped on the beach below us. I was one of a party of four, camping on Preacher's Point, Muskoka.

Mingled sounds reached the ear. The humming of mosquitoes and the croaking of a hundred frogs filled in the short intervals between the screechings of an aged tenor owl from an opposite peninsula. If a large saw mill in B flat had added its volume of sound, one given to musing might fancy himself listening to a selection from a new opera by Wagner. As it was, however, the vociferations of that zealous but mistaken owl dominated the landscape, making the evening air painfully resonant.

In one of the few periods of momentary quiet, the regular repetition of an unusual sound,—the splash of a paddle,—drew my attention from the vocal efforts of the owl for a time. I soon observed a dark shadow out on the lake, which gradually resolved itself into a bark canoe, in which were seated a man and a dog.