

The Liverpool and Manchester Railway had just been opened for traffic, and by one of the early morning trains Dan and Ben were carried to Liverpool. There they found one of the emigrant liners just preparing to leave for Quebec; entering the passenger office, they at once engaged a double berth and purchased such provisions and cooking utensils as they were advised and thought necessary for their journey. Early next morning the vessel went out with the tide, and their voyage to Canada was begun.

So far as English law was concerned they were now safe, and it was for them to decide what should be their future conduct, so far as human resolution and self government could determine.

On the morning of their flight, Wyatt, soon after breakfast, went up to the "Quarry" to consult with Mr. Purdee, as to when he might go to the Squire with his information, for he felt it was necessary that the information should be laid in a formal manner, however useless it might be in fact. Mr. Purdee did not regard the matter in this light;

"Why" he asked, "cannot we keep the affair to ourselves, what good can it do us, or any one else, to mention it now? It might injure Saul Crooks and his family still at home. Let us try to forget it altogether."

"But," said Wyatt, "if it should get known, what should I be thought of? I am a constable and must keep up an appearance of doing my duty, and waiting, as I now have done to keep my promise to you, will require a little glossing to smooth the matter up with the Squire. But there is another reason, why the Squire ought to know the actual facts."

"And what is that?" enquired Mr. Purdee."

"Because he firmly believes that Tom Snarr is the person who set fire to his barn; and that he did so in revenge for sending his brother Jim to gaol. Now whatever Tom may be in some respects, I'm satisfied, and have been all along, that he would not do a thing of that kind. Tom is different from most folks, *he carries his worst side outermost*; and it would be a shame to let him be blamed and

suffer, as I know he has done, and is doing now, for what Crooks did."

"That is another view of the matter," said Mr. Purdee, "I know nothing of Tom beyond the fact that he is generally regarded as a very rough character; but certainly I was not aware that he had been suspected all the time, and moreover, made to suffer in consequence."

"No," said Wyatt, "because the Squire did not want it to be known that he did suspect him: but I had orders to watch Tom particularly on this account."

"The sooner the Squire is informed, the better, if that is the case," said Mr. Purdee.

So it was decided that Wyatt should go to the "Hall" at once and explain the affair. As he was a sort of privileged character, he entered the servants apartments by a private door through the yard.

He found the Squire, sitting in front of a great fire, built of canal-coal, the very personification of comfort, good health, and good nature. The large table in front of him was strewn with books and papers, for the Squire was fond of literary pursuits, very rarely refusing to subscribe for any new book, which he considered worthy of his patronage.

At the foot of the table sat an original specimen of eccentric humanity. In appearance, manner, speech and modes of thought, he was an anomaly. For a number of years he was master of the Grammar School, but a quarrel with the Vicar, in which he was supported by the Squire, occasioned his removal. His name was John Stone, but the Squire, in his familiar moments, called him "Quill." He had never been married, and lived, after leaving the school, at the "Hall;" where he was clerk, steward, secretary, architect, and the Squire's personal factotum. His worst failing was an excessive fondness for *ale*, or *beer*, which he drank in large quantities; and in this he was rather encouraged than restrained by the Squire.

Both men were about sixty years of age, and in person tall and commanding.

The old butler had just carried in a tankard of the "home brewed" when the footman announced "Wyatt."