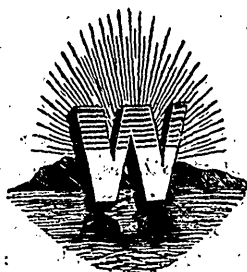


[FOR THE "MAPLE LEAF."]

## EARLY CLOSING ASSOCIATION;

OR  
LIFE BEHIND THE COUNTER.

BY PHILIP MUGRAVE.



"HY don't you put your boots on?" asked a thin, wiry visaged, red haired young man, and then added in a tone of authority, "you cannot come into the shop in that slip shod slovenly fashion to tend upon decent customers. Away, sir, not a word!" he continued giving additional sternness to the harsh severity of his tone and manner, by a stamp of his foot upon the floor, as he saw some symptoms of a reply or explanation.

A pale, sickly looking boy, some fourteen or fifteen years old, to whom the question, or rather mandate, was addressed, limped slowly out of the shop, and went up stairs. As he did so, he turned his heavy and swollen eyes, upon Louis Graham, an older clerk in the store, who had been very kind to him. And Louis Graham's heart ached for him, as he saw those eyes brimful of tears, and welling over. Perhaps the poor boy was thinking at the time, of his mother, and his happy home in a far off settlement, in the back woods.

He was very small for his age, and although never sickly, was rather delicate. Perhaps from the slender and feminine texture of his frame, rather than from any constitutional defect, he looked more like a girl than a boy. He had been reared, it must be confessed, far too tenderly for one who had to begin thus early to fight the great battle of life; and no wonder if he felt crushed and vanquished in the conflict; but we must not anticipate.

Henry Herbert, the little hero of our tale, was the only son, but not the only child of, an officer in the army, who fell, no matter how nor where, in one of the bloody fights during the late rebellion in Canada.

Mrs. Herbert was a sensible and strong minded woman, and after the first paroxysm of grief for her sad and sudden bereavement had partially subsided, saw and felt, all the difficulties and responsibilities of her lone and unprotected position—she had not a