

Weekly

THE

Visitor.



Devoted to the interests of the several Temperance organizations.

Vol. X.

{ PUBLISHED AND PROPRIETOR,
F. H. STEWART. }

Entertainment, Improvement, Progress, &c.

{ OFFICE—51 YONGE ST., TORONTO.
BOX 500 P. O. }

No. 3.

One Dollar a Year.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 1866.

Four Cents per copy.

THE STORY OF A CITY ARAB.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BOUGHTON GRANGE."

CHAPTER LV.—Continued

For more than an hour, however, I was doomed to disappointment. Brilliant and almost incessant lightning enabled me to see the faint track, which otherwise would have been hidden in the darkness of night; but I looked around in vain for any signs of shelter. Meanwhile I had descended into what appeared a deep and dreary valley, surrounded on every side by masses of mountain; but how far I had wandered from the right road, or in what direction, I could not even guess.

"The longest lane has a turning," says the proverb; and a poet informs us, with manifest accuracy, that

"The darkest day—

Live till to-morrow—will have passed away."

The proverb and the moral were both exemplified in my experience, when, almost despairing of help, and ready to sink to the ground again from the joint effects of bodily fatigue and exposure to the terrible storm which continued to rage overhead and around, I saw a bright light in the midst of the dense darkness, shining as though from a window on the opposite side of the valley.

To gather myself up, brace my resolution, and hasten with all the little strength that was left me to this blessed haven of hope, was the work of a moment. In ten minutes more I neared the light. It was no "will-o'-the-wisp,"

but a steady flame, like that of a candle, and a friendly flash of lightning revealed to me a cluster of cabins, nestled in this desolate valley, from the little windows of one of which had shone out, and was still shining, the precious beacon which had guided me to the spot.

I dragged myself to the door and knocked.

No answer, and no wonder, for the uproar of the elements, and the rattling of the crazy tenement, must have drowned the feeble summons. I knocked again, and listened. There were confused noises, as of many voices within; but no reply to my impatient and incessant applications of fists to the door. It was not the time, nor was I in a condition, for ceremony. I felt for a latch, and placed my hand upon a string. Like little Red Riding Hood of the nursery story, I "pulled the bobbin, and the latch flew up," pushed open the door, and— But the remainder of my adventure demands a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE CONTINUATION OF MY ADVENTURE—AN
IRISH WAKE.

I pushed open the door, and found myself in a large apartment, mud-floored, mud-walled, and turf-roofed, from the latter of which the rain was dripping, and forming broad puddles below. The light which had shone so brightly across the dark valley now resolved itself into the comparatively feeble emittments of two large candles, with unsnuffed wicks, placed on a long board or table which occupied the middle of the room; a turf fire smouldered on the hearth, and filled the room with its close, suffocating fumes, while gathered around the hearth and table, some standing, others seated, either on the bare

ground or on rough planks, was a large and motley assemblage of both sexes and of every age, from sixteen to three score and ten. How they were employed was manifest from the strong perfume of tobacco and mountain dew, (illicit whisky,) which, striking upon me as I entered, almost overpowered my senses, and would have caused me to retreat as suddenly as I had intruded, but for the emergency of my condition; and from the cups, cans, handleless mugs, and footless glasses, which clicked and clinked, and jingled, being pushed about by the unsteady hands of the strange party.

It needed only a glance to perceive that many of these—not wedding guests—were already verging upon intoxication. Yet there was nothing convivial in their excess. The females sat with dishevelled hair, and otherwise in picturesque attire; and while they sipped their fiery beverage, and inhaled the rank smoke of the rankest tobacco through their short black pipes—for nearly all were smoking, women as well as men—tears were flowing plentifully down their cheeks, and they rocked themselves to and fro, uttering low crooning moans and cries, indicative of sore mental disquietude and distress. The men, also, glared fiercely and sullenly at each other and at an object on the table; and they conversed in low and guarded tones, but with threatening gestures, knitted brows, and clenched fists, as though under the influence of some overpowering passion—it might be of grief wrought to desperation, or remorse, or revenge.

I have spoken of "an object on the table." That object was a corpse, wrapped in a sheet, the head and countenance only being uncovered.