

THE VOLTIGEURS OF CHATEAUGUAY.

22ND OCTOBER, 1813.

[We welcome to our columns with much pleasure the author of the following stanzas. Mr. Sangster ranks amongst the first of Canadian poets, and "The Voltigeurs of Chateauguay" is worthy of his reputation.]

Our country was as a stripling then,
Young in years, but of mottled hue;
Now, how proudly our bearded men
Look back and smile at what youth can do.
Hampton might threaten with odds thrice told,
The young blood leaped to attack the foe;
Winning the field as in days of old,
With a few stout hearts that braver grow
If ton to one the invaders be;
Like the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay.

The sun rose fair that October morn,
Kindling the blaze of the autumn hues;
Pride in each eye; every lip breathed scorn;
Stay! life—come death—not an inch they'll lose—
Not a square inch of the sacred soil;
Hopeful, and firm, and reliant all.
To souls like these there is no recoil;
If spared—they live; if they fall—they fall.
No braver battled on land or sea
Than the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay.

No threatening ramparts barred the way,
No bristling bastions' fiery glare;
Yet scarce three hundred scorned the fray,
Impatient in the *abattis* there.
"On!" Hampton cried, "for the day is ours;"
Three thousand men at his boastful heels;
"On!" as they press through the leaden showers
Many a scoffer to judgment reels.
True hearts—true shots, like their ancestry,
Were the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay.

From bush and swamp sped the rattling hail,
As the fusilade grew sharp and keen;
Tirailleur—Chasseur—loud the wail
Where their deadly missiles whizzed unseen.
Hero Schiller stands, like a wolf at bay;
De Salaberry—Macdonell, there;
And where Hampton's masses bat the way,
Press du Chesnay, Daly, and Bruyère:
And their bold commander—who but he
Led the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay!

No brief disaster can daunt the brave;
The soil is theirs—shall they own defeat?
Perish the wretch, without grace or grave
Who would not death ere dishonour greet!
In every breast of that Spartan band
Such was the purpose, engraven deep;
At every point—on either hand,
Thrice armed—on the jeering foe they leap;
Who, rolling back like the ebbing sea,
Met the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay.

"See to the ford! not a man shall pass!"
Gallantly done! how the foe disperse!
Routed, and broken like brittle glass,
Nothing is left them but flight and curse.
"They're five to one!" "baffled Hampton cried;
"Better retreat until fairer days,"
The three thousand fly, humbled in pride,
And the brave three hundred give God the
praise.
Honour and fame to the hundreds three!
To the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay!

Yes, God be praised!—we are still the same,
First to resist, and the last to yield;
Ready to pass through the fiery flame,
When duty calls to the battle field.
And if'er again the foe should set
A hostile foot on the soil we love,
Such dauntless souls as of old he met
His might and valour will amply prove:
True hearts—true shots, like our ancestry,
Like the Voltigeurs of Chateauguay.

CHARLES SANGSTER.

KINGSTON, C.W.

* Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just—
Shakespeare.

HALF A MILLION OF MONEY

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY,"
FOR "ALL THE YEAR ROUND," EDITED BY
CHARLES DICKENS.

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address that told nothing—suggested nothing. "Elton Villa" would have bespoken a neat, stuccoed anachronism in the Græco-Gothic style; "Elton Lodge," a prim modern residence, with gardens, gates, and a carriage-drive; "Elton Cottage," an unassuming little place, shinking back from the high road, in a screen of lilacs and laburnums; but "Elton House" represented none of these to the mind's eye. "Elton House" might be ancient or modern, large or small, a cockney palace, or a relic of the old court days. There was nothing in its name to assist conjecture in any way. Thus, again, the very suburb was perplexing. Of all districts round about London, there is none so diverse in its characteristics as Kensington—none so old in part, so new in part; so stately here, so squalid there; so of the country countryfied in one direction, so of the town towny in another. Elton House might partake of any of these conditions for aught that one could gather from its name.

In short, Mr. Abel Keckwitch turned the address over in his mind much as some people turn their letters over, stimulating their curiosity instead of gratifying it, and spelling out the motto on the seal, instead of breaking it.

At length he resolved to go over to Kensington and reconnoitre the ground. Having come to this determination one Saturday afternoon (on which day, when practicable, Mr. Trefalden dismissed his clerks at five o'clock), Abel Keckwitch pushed forward with his work; closed the office precisely as St. Dunstan's clock was striking; and, instead of trudging, as usual, direct to Pentonville, turned his face westward, and hailed the first Hammersmith omnibus that came by.

It was a lovely afternoon; warm, sunny, summerlike. Mr. Trefalden's head clerk knew that the Park trees were in all the beauty of their early leafage, and that the air beyond Charing-Cross would be delicious; and he was sorely tempted to take a seat on the roof. But prudence prevailed. To risk observation would be to imperil the very end for which he was working; so, with a sigh, he gave up the air and the sunshine, and took an inside place next the door.

The omnibus soon filled, and, once closely packed, rattled merrily on, till it drew up for the customary five minutes' rest at the White Horse Cellar. Then, of course, came the well-known news-vendor with the evening papers; and the traditionally old lady who has always been waiting for the last three-quarters of an hour; and the conductor's vain appeal to the gallantry of gentlemen who will not go outside to oblige a lady—would prefer, in fact, to see a dozen ladies boiled first.

This interlude played out, the omnibus rattled on again to the corner of Sloane-street, where several passengers alighted; and thence proceeded at a sober, leisurely rate along the Kensington-road, with the green, broad Park lying all along to the right, and row after row of stately terraces to the left.

"Put me down, conductor," said Mr. Keckwitch, "at the first turning beyond Elton House."

He had weighed every word of this apparently simple sentence, and purposely waited till the omnibus was less crowded, before delivering it. He knew that the Kensington-road, taken from the point where Knightsbridge is supposed to end, up to that other point where Hammersmith is supposed to begin, covers a fair three miles of ground; and he wanted to be set down as near as possible to the spot of which he was in search. But then it was essential that he should not seem to be looking for Elton House, or going to Elton House, or enquiring about Elton House in any way; so he worded his little speech with an ingenuity that was quite masterly as far as it went.

"Elton House, sir?" said the conductor. "Don't know it. What's the name of the street?"

Mr. Keckwitch took a letter from his pocket, and affected to look for the address.

"Ah!" he replied, refolding it with a disappointed air, "that I cannot tell you. My directions only say, 'the first turning beyond Elton House.' I am a stranger to this part of London, myself."

The conductor scratched his ear, looked puzzled, and applied to the driver.

"'Arry," said he. "Know Elton House?" "Elton House?" repeated the driver. "Can't say I do."

"I think I have heard the name," observed a young man on the box.

"I'm sure I've seen it somewhere," said another on the roof.

And this was all the information to be had on the subject.

Mr. Keckwitch's ingenious artifice had failed. Elton House was evidently not to be found without inquiry—therefore inquiry must be made. It was annoying, but there was no help for it. Just as he had made up his mind to this alternative, the omnibus reached Kensington-gate, and the conductor put the same question to the toll-taker that he had put to the driver.

"Davy—know Elton House?"

The toll-taker—a shaggy fellow, with a fur cap on his head and a straw in his mouth—pointed with his thumb over his shoulder, and replied,

"Somewhere down by Slade's-lane, beyond the westry."

On hearing which, Mr. Keckwitch's countenance brightened, and he requested to be set down at Slade's-lane, wherever that might be.

Slade's-lane proved to be a narrow, winding, irregular by-street, leading out from the high road, and opening at the further end upon fields and market-gardens. There were houses on only one side; and on the other, high walls, with tree-tops peeping over, and here and there a side-door.

The dwellings in Slade's-lane were of different degrees of smallness; scarcely two of the same height; and all approached by little slips of front garden, more or less cultivated. There were lodgings to let, evidences of humble trades, and children playing about the gardens and door-steps of most of them. Altogether, a more unlikely spot for William Trefalden to reside in could scarcely have been selected.

Having alighted from the omnibus at the top of the street, Mr. Keckwitch, after a hurried glance to left and right, chose the wall side, and walked very composedly along, taking rapid note of each door that he passed, but looking as stolid and unobservant as possible.

The side-doors were mostly painted of a dull green, with white numerals, and were evidently mere garden entrances to houses facing in an opposite direction.

All at once, just at that point where the lane made a sudden bend to the right and turned off towards the market gardens, Mr. Keckwitch found himself under the shadow of a wall considerably higher than the rest, and close against a gateway flanked by a couple of stone pillars. This gate occupied exactly the corner where the road turned, so that it blunted the angle, as it were, and commanded the lane in both directions. It was a wooden gate—old, ponderous, and studded with iron bosses, just wide enough, apparently, for a carriage to drive through, and many feet higher than it was wide. In it was a small wicket door. The stone pillars were time-stained and battered, and looked as if they might have stood there since the days when William of Orange brought his Dutch court to Kensington. In one of them was a plain brass bell-handle. On both were painted, in faded and half illegible letters, the words, "Elton House."

CHAPTER XXXVII. MR. KECKWITCH PROVES HIMSELF TO BE A MAN OF ORIGINAL GENIUS.

A thrill of virtuous-satisfaction pervaded Mr. Keckwitch's respectable bosom at the discovery of Elton Lodge, Slade's-lane, Kensington. He had gained the first great step, and gained it easily. The rest would be more difficult; but it