

"He has had hard usage," returned the other, tersely, ignoring the intended flattery.

"Come far?" The sly inquisitor's smile and insinuating tones jarred on the traveller's nerves, as he answered shortly, watching his interrogator's crafty face, "From Newark this morning."

"From York to there, I reckon," continued the man in a sort of half question.

The young man merely nodded, and remained silent.

"And where might you be bound for?" continued the other, with that freedom of the pioneer, and that amazing inquisitiveness which so irritates the soul of the European in the New World.

The traveller hesitated. He liked neither this man's appearance, nor his sly insinuation, and he resented his familiar manner of seeking knowledge about what was none of his business.

But he was asked a direct question, and he felt that to refuse to answer might be construed as a desire to hide his destination, and so might create suspicion, so he answered as before, shortly:

"To Castle Monmouth. Do you know of the place? Is it far from here?"

At his answer, a quick, shrewd glance of intelligence flashed between the two men. But the one who had asked the question paused to take a slow pull at his pipe, ere he drawled:

"That we do. Ain't the owner fair king of all the blamed country hereabouts?" and there was an under current of spite in the man's manner and words, as he