

## A SLEEPING TOWN.

FROM THE NOTE-BOOK OF A SAUNTERER IN CANADA.



READER, were you ever at Nodville, though that is not the real name of the place? It has an Indian name, but I will not betray it. It is a county town, too, I believe, though why it should be, I could never see. You say you never were there? Well, you did not lose a great deal by staying away. I had the misfortune to be detained in Nodville one summer for the space of

a week, and into that week appeared to be rolled ages and ages and ages, so sempiternally long did the time appear.

Not that Nodville is by any means devoid of natural beauty: "Furfrummit," as Betsy Bobbitt would say. Both Nodville and the surrounding country are rich in all the bounties that lavish-handed nature could endow them with; it is not on that head that I complain, but because Nodville, being a county town, should be—well, asleep. Occasionally of course, Nodville wakes up and, metaphorically speaking, looks at the clock and, finding she has only slumbered a few years, yawns lazily and, turning over on the other side, remarks quotingly, "You have waked me too soon, let me slumber again," and does so.

But all this is merely introductory, for I was going to attempt to describe briefly, as well as my feeble powers allow me, a few of the incidents that occurred during the hundreds of years that seemed to be compressed into one of the days that I spent in Nodville.

I arrived there on a beautiful summer morning at about half past nine. I did not immediately go to any hotel, for I felt more like taking a stroll through the place. Accordingly I did so. All the shops or stores were closed, and I wondered if I could by any possibility have mistaken the day, and that it was Sunday. But no: I knew it must be Tuesday because I was positive that yesterday was Monday. So I said to myself, "Probably yesterday has been some great gala day, and the Nodvillians have been up late and are resting after their revelry." Revelry! little did I know Nodville, or the idea had never crossed my brain.

This idea was in some measure dispelled, however, by the fact that the hotels were also closed, and no drouthy, over-night reveller was to be seen, prowling round for the maternal draught wherewith to slake his thirst, as would have been the case had my original surmise been correct; "Either the Nodvillians" I thought, "have not been indulging in excess overnight, or else everyone keeps an eye-opener in his own house." Eye-opener! well, well; I did not know any better then. So I wandered on, and presently, coming to the court-house, to the principal entrance of which a flight of stone steps led up, I selected the grassiest and softest spot in the rank herbage on them and sat down. I must have nodded off to sleep for it was past eleven when I next looked round. Shortly afterwards a man came past and him I addressed, "Kind sir," I said, "could you tell me what time the people, if there be any, in this town, get up?" He woke up (for he was walking in his sleep), and rubbing his eyes, said "Wha?" I repeated my question and he replied, "Those that are going to get up are all up already," and passed on, fast asleep again.

Suddenly a bell rang. Ding, ding, ding.

It was evidently a fire alarm, for I descried smoke and flames issuing from a house not far off, but what surprised me was that anyone should have been sufficiently on the alert to have capped them. I afterwards learnt that the county paid an official whose duty it was to give the alarm whenever a fire broke out, and that, as his salary wholly depended on his watchfulness, he was occasionally awake. The smoke and flames seemed to subside of themselves, however, so I rose from my mossy, velvety couch on the court-house steps and went in search of an hotel, or rather, of the best, for I had seen several. I found one open at last and went in. The landlord was asleep in the bar-room, with his head on the lever of a beer-pump. I woke him up and told him I wanted some food. He yawned and went and roused some female domestics in another part of the house, and presently, it seemed to be a week or so, but was really only an hour, I was summoned to the dining room.

A deathly stillness pervaded the apartment during my meal, broken only by the snoring of the attendant dining room girl, and the smacking of the lips of a bucolic gentleman, who was also satisfying the wants of his interior mechanism. After dinner I went and sat down in the verandah outside the hotel. It was a calm, so calm, bright summer day, and no sound could be heard save the humming of the bees as they hovered about the beds of mignonette and sweet William in the little garden of the hotel, and the far off notes of some bird in the bush away out there in the glowing sunshine. The hot, dusty road lay before me, and occasionally some lethargic, looking beetle would crawl across, but with no signs of hurry about its movements. Beyond the road bright green meadows and fields of yellow grain nodded in the sunshine. Some one, I thought, must have awoke to sow that grain, but who? Mystery. Beyond the fields, again, a broad, noble river flowed with a scarcely perceptible motion, and on the further side of the river cattle dreamed away the day in the shade of some ample trees. There were no signs of any business being done anywhere. I could not realize that I was in a county town said to contain several hundred inhabitants; the whole place seemed to be indulging in a long, placid, unbroken siesta. I have seen something like it in the middle of the day in provincial towns in Spain and Italy, but it was a novelty to meet with it in Canada.

An hour or two afterwards as I woke up from a doze, for I, too, had succumbed to the drowsy influence of the place, a fire engine drawn by two horses passed by the hotel at a slow walk: there were three firemen sitting on the machine—asleep. The landlord was standing by my side. The noise of the passing engine had roused him and he was awake. "Who are these?" I asked, "where are they going?"

"That's the fire brigade" he replied, with a prodigious yawn, "and they are turning out in response to the alarm that rang this morning; they have made good time, too." He was quite serious, so I merely said "But the fire went out of its own accord." "That's nothing," he murmured, "the brigade don't know that, for no one would bother to go and tell 'em. Smart fellows, smart fellows," he added admiringly, as one of the horses that drew the engine lay down by the roadside, whilst the other fell asleep where it stood. Mine host took a seat by my side and was soon in the land of dreams: I woke him every half hour or so to answer my questions; he was very obliging, and spoke on these occasions without a shade of annoyance, and then nodded off again. He was excellent company—for Nodville. And so the shades of night came creeping, creeping on, more slowly than ever they creep elsewhere, and still I sat on

the verandah with the landlord still slumbering by my side; and the moon slowly rose, and threw her pale, fair rays down on the sleeping town, and there were no signs of life to be heard or seen, but the buzz of many insects and the mournful notes of the whip-poor-will from the woods beyond the river, and the flash of the firefly's lamp as the insect danced and glanced in the calm, still air, and the sound of the landlord's snore. And this was only one day out of six that I spent in Nodville, and they were all alike; but the name of the place is not Nodville, nor is this a purely imaginary sketch, for that town still sleeps for aught I know, away there by the flowing river, but I shall never visit it again—if I can avoid it.

And its name, as I said, is not Nodville, but Cayu—no, I will not say it, for people might think I lied.

## GRIP'S CLIPS.

All paragraphs under this head are clipped from our exchanges; and where credit is not given, it is omitted because the parentage of the item is not known.

Light Repast.—Lamp-reys.

Odd Number.—Five-for shame!

"Yes," said the Chicago man, "he's a dude, but he counts in the census; don't let him be killed."

"Did you dust the furniture this morning, Mary?" asked the mistress. "No, ma'am," replied Mary; "it didn't need it; it had all the dust on it that it could easily hold."

"Go away!" yelled the sport; nam-to-his-boy; "go away! For once in my life I've caught a string of fish, and if anybody sees me talking to you they'll swear I bought 'em off you."

Tit for tat: A.—"Is the baron at home?" B.—"No, he sends word to you that he has just gone out." A.—"Good! Give the baron my compliments, and say I didn't call."—*Fliegende Blätter*.

Genius is not encouraged in Russia. A man of that country who invented a contrivance to make a snorer consume his own snores was arrested, charged with concocting an infernal machine to blow up the Czar.

## STARTLING WEAKNESS.

General and Nervous Debility, Impaired Memory, Lack of Self-confidence, Premature Loss of Manly Vigor and Powers, are common results of excessive indulgence or youthful indiscretions and pernicious solitary practices. Victims whose manhood has thus been wrecked by self-abuse should thus address, with three letter stamps, for large illustrated treatise giving means of perfect cure, WORLD'S DISPENSARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, Buffalo, N. Y.

THE LAST STRAW.—Steward:—You mustn't be sick on the stairs, sir. *Suffering Frenchman*:—Ventrebien! And thank you I am sick on your sacre stairs to make myself pleasure!—*N. Y. Life*.

## "DRAGGING PAINS."

Dr. R. V. PIERCE, Buffalo, N. Y.: *Dear Sir*—My wife had suffered with "female weaknesses" for nearly three years. At times she could hardly move, she had such dragging pains. We often saw your "Favorite Prescription" advertised, but supposed like most patent medicines it did not amount to anything, but at last concluded to try a bottle, which she did. It made her sick at first, but it began to show its effect in a marked improvement and two bottles cured her. Yours, etc., A. J. HUYCK, Deposit, N. Y.