

"My simple sir," he smiling said, "you do not understand,
 You're in the Eastern Townships now—not in your native land;
 All things are here quite different—with fruitless words dispense:
 A pound is sixteen shillings here, a shilling fifteen pence;
 In some, indeed in many ways, black almost rules for white;
 It takes, I know, a year or two to see things in that light:
 Be seated, Giles, time presses—still—a few mere moments wait,
 I'll—r—look into the little thing—and—r—set the matter straight."
 A bigly book, from leaf to leaf, with studious face he turned,
 When clear I saw at every leaf how less and less I'd earned;
 There was int'rest in the first place, there was int'rest in the second,
 And int'rest on the interest, Lord knows how often reckoned;
 A something hard in every way—a famine price for flour—
 To settle up *all* the somethings took nearly up an hour;
 For I was sorely tasked t' unfold his figurifies,
 One might as well at once keep counts in hieroglyphics.
 Not that unschooled, he scribbled thus, more art than ignorance there,
 Many a baffled brain, he judged, would back out in despair.
 It saddened me to note the names, with mine, in such sharp quarters,
 It made me think, and more than once, of Fox's Book of Martyrs,
 How any man, it staggered me, could trust himself to slumber
 With such a shaming record of dealings—without number.
 Dishonesty and meanness disfigured every leaf;
 "If this," said I, "be lawful trade, let trader stand for thief."
 Nothing that I had done throughout was entered at the rate
 Agreed upon between us, or rightly as to date;
 And every thing delivered was posted at a price
 That pointed to a memory anything but overnice.
 In vain did I remonstrate, my temper scarce retained:
 The *book* alone knew anything—the *book* alone explained.
 A hint at its authority seemed tantamount to libel: