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{ JOHN CHARLES DENT,
Editor and Proprietor.

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE preliminary note is one of salutation.

When a new literary undertaking is launched upon the broad sea of public favour, some explanation of its aims is naturally looked for at the hands of its projectors.

The primary object of those who are responsible for the birth of ARCTURUS is to furnish the Canadian public with a weekly newspaper which, while preserving a high standard of literary excellence, shall address itself to a wide circle of readers, and shall deal with questions of general interest in a readable and popular manner.

ARCTURUS will be the organ of no individual, party or clique. In its columns political questions will be discussed from time to time as occasion may arise, but this will be done from a national and not from a partisan point of view. With respect to religious, social and literary questions, it will enrol in its service writers of various and diverse shades of opinion, who will be allowed the utmost freedom of expression consistent with recognized fitness and propriety. No meritorious contribution on any subject whatever will be excluded merely because it may not be in accord with the prevalent tone of public opinion, or because it does not reflect the personal views of the editor. In short, whoever has a message to deliver upon any subject of interest to Canadians or to humanity at large will have an opportunity of delivering it in these columns, provided the deliverance be

made to conform to well-understood ideas as to the usages and amenities of civilized life.

The contents of the paper will mainly consist of

1. Readable and brightly-written editorials on the noteworthy topics of the time, contributed by persons whose education and experience have specially fitted them to speak with authority upon such subjects. Among these latter are included some of the foremost writers in this country. There will also be occasional contributions from prominent writers in Great Britain and the United States.

2. Editorial notes on seasonable and interesting subjects which do not call for extended or elaborate treatment.

3. Literary notes, wherein the most recent intelligence relating to authors and books will be presented in a compact and succinct form, so as to embody in brief space all the most important literary news of the day.

4. Reviews of and readings from new books, more especially those of native production, or which have a special interest for Canadians.

5. A limited space will be devoted to poetical contributions, and to correspondence on subjects of general interest or importance.

6. A specialty will be made of short tales and sketches. So far as practicable, these will be original, and written expressly for the columns of ARCTURUS. When original stories of merit are not obtainable, selections will be made with care and judgment from extraneous sources.

The editor solicits, and will be glad to publish and pay for, well-written contributions to any or all of the departments, but he cannot undertake to be responsible for MSS. which may be accidentally lost, nor can he under any circumstances enter into correspondence with authors whose contributions it may for any reason be thought fit to reject. Stamps to pay return postage should always accompany a manuscript offered for acceptance, in case it may not be deemed suitable for publication.

ALTHOUGH the Provincial elections are over and done with, the voice of the party press is still for war. The reason is not far to seek. The general opinion among Reformers seems to be that a dissolution of the Dominion Parliament is imminent, and that we are on the verge of a general election for the House of Commons. They are therefore desirous of keeping Mr. Mowat's triumph well before the people, and of making the most of the weak points of the losing side. Conservatives, on the other hand, are smarting under the sense of a crushing defeat, and the asperities of the campaign are yet fresh in their memories. We need not look for much relief from the strain until the great agony is over.

At the time of this present writing there has been no dissolution, though rumours are rife to the effect that it will have taken place before the day closes. Those who harp the loudest on this string are not a whit better informed than their neighbours. It is difficult to see what purpose the Government can hope to serve in bringing on the turmoil of an election at the present time, unless it be a simple desire to be relieved from suspense. So far as a dispassionate mind can judge, the odds are very much against them just now, and the future offers small inducement for delay; but Sir John Macdonald has always had strong staying powers, and has shown himself trustful of his stars.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER is now on his way to Canada, ostensibly to confer with his leader as to the political situation. It seems to be generally understood that he is to stay here, and that he will accept an important office in the Government. Sir Charles's past has not been of a kind to inspire the highest confidence in his future, but he is unquestionably a strong man, more especially on the stump, and in his native province he is a formidable factor for his opponents to deal with. His health is said to have been completely restored by his residence abroad, and should he take the field in the ensuing campaign we may look out for some interesting exchanges of left-hand compliments between him and Sir Richard Cartwright. Both gentlemen have great gifts in the way of vituperation, and the atmosphere will be electric wherever they may happen to be brought into contact.

It seems to be generally understood that Europe is on the verge of a tremendous conflict—a conflict more widespread and momentous than any which has taken place there since the Crimean war. Russia and Austria have hitherto been regarded as the prime factors in the approaching struggle, but they now count merely for two pieces on the board. France and Germany must inevitably be involved, and that Turkey will have her say in the matter is a foregone conclusion. Italy is also pretty certain to be dragged in. Of deeper significance to us is the fact that Great Britain cannot hope to keep clear of the struggle. There seems but too good reason to fear that the whole European continent is likely to be divided into two formidable camps, and that hostilities cannot well be postponed beyond the approaching spring. The impending war-cloud may haply pass by, but

it would be hoping against hope to look for a successful solution of the many complicated difficulties which stare the nations in the face. Tennyson may as well leave Locksley Hall alone, and revert to "the long, long canker of peace" which soured his digestion more than thirty years ago.

THE sudden death of Lord Idlesleigh from heart disease removes from English politics a superlatively respectable, but by no means an overtowering figure. Such spurs as he had he won as Sir Stafford Northcote, the Commoner, and he had barely had time to become accustomed to the atmosphere of the House of Lords ere he succumbed to the malady which had long overshadowed him. Sir Stafford was an eminently useful, hard-working man, who had a high sense of the responsibilities of his position, and was held in high esteem, not only by those of his own political complexion, but also by his opponents. For nine months back he has been rendered exceedingly uncomfortable by the necessity of coming into frequent official contact with Lord Randolph Churchill, for whose character of political opinions he had not a very moderate degree of respect. Since Sir Randolph's resignation he has been practically crowded out of the ministry. His malady was one especially susceptible to mental influences, and it is extremely probable that his death has been hastened by the worry incidental to his position. His friends and relations will probably mentally hold Salisbury, as well as Lord Randolph Churchill responsible, to some extent, for the calamity which has come upon them.

No sojourner in Canada ever left behind him a greater number of personal friends on leaving our shores than did Lord Dufferin, and there are more than a few Canadians who will be sorry to hear that the climate of India has pretty nearly done its work upon his constitution, inasmuch that it is very doubtful whether he will be able to complete his term of office as Viceroy. It is no secret that he is far from being a wealthy man for one occupying so elevated a position, and that his official income is a matter of the greatest moment to him. He expresses his determination to either stay out his term or die in harness, but his physicians declare that should he become much worse than he has been for some months past he will at least be compelled to relinquish his official duties, and such a relinquishment would doubtless be followed by his immediate return to a less trying climate. Lord Dufferin has long been recognized by English statesmen of both parties as one of the ablest of Her Majesty's servants of the second rank. When he passes to his rest it may truly be said of him, as was said nearly a quarter of a century ago upon the death of Lord Elgin: "Happy are the country and the age in which such men are to be found in the second rank, and are content to be there."

OWING to the difficulties and drawbacks inseparable from the issue of a first number, it has been found necessary to cancel a good many editorial notes, as well as a quantity of other important matter. In future numbers increased space will be allotted to the more interesting features of the paper, and there will be greater variety in the general contents.

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Room U, Arcade (Victoria St. entrance), Toronto.

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AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER.

AN editorial announcement in last Saturday's issue of the *Toronto Mail* has given rise to a greater amount of comment and discussion than any recent product of Canadian journalism. In this city, more especially, the discussion in political and journalistic circles has been well-nigh incessant. When the nature of the announcement is borne in mind, it is not at all to be wondered at that a keen and widespread interest should have been aroused in the public mind. It would have been strange, indeed, had the case been otherwise, for, to the bulk of the community, the information conveyed must have been not only altogether unexpected but positively startling. It was announced, in the clearest and most explicit terms of which language is capable, that the *Mail* has freed itself from the fetters which have bound it in the past: that it has ceased to be the mouthpiece of any political party or faction, and that it will henceforward be in the fullest and widest sense an independent organ of public opinion, "serving neither party, and criticizing both with the freedom born of a complete deliverance from party ties."

As most readers of these columns are aware, the *Mail* took a halting and unassured step in the direction of independence several months ago, when it repudiated certain planks in the Liberal Conservative platform, and adopted one or two planks which were not supposed to be generally acceptable to the present Government at Ottawa. But this proceeding did not count for much, and certainly did not find many ardent sympathizers. There was a widespread suspicion that the *Mail* was not sincere, as, notwithstanding certain utterances savouring of independence, the prevailing tone of the paper continued to be that of a party organ. The latest pronouncement, however, is susceptible of no misunderstanding. The language employed is as direct and unmistakable as language very well can be. It is at once dignified and emphatic, and the journal responsible for it stands clearly committed to a judicial and independent course so long as it continues to be carried on under its present auspices. After such a declaration as it has given to the world, a return to party subservience would surely be the precursor to its extinction. Assuredly it could never again hope that its professions should be received with respect.

The *Mail* was established between fourteen and fifteen years since as the official organ of the Liberal Conservative party in Canada. The commonly-received belief has been that it was originally in large measure founded, and that it has all along been in some measure supported, by party funds.

Until within the last few months it has uniformly been the outspoken advocate of party, and the unswerving defender of the policy of Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues. Anything like independent action has never been looked for at its hands, and nothing in the shape of opposition to the Liberal Conservative policy has ever been regarded as either probable or possible. It is proverbially said that the unexpected always happens, and there can be no question that the old saw has in this instance received an unqualified confirmation.

Assuming the *Mail* to be in serious earnest—an assumption fully borne out by its course during the three or four days which have elapsed since its portentous announcement—its new departure is a most hopeful and encouraging sign. Rabid and unreasoning partisanship has long been the curse of Canadian journalism, and the greatest drawback to political and intellectual progress in this country. "Party government," to quote the *Mail's* own article, "has been simply a contest of factions, each side fighting for its own hand, and both agreeing to shirk those great moral and political questions which must be settled if the prosperity of the country is to endure. Our representatives are not free agents in the Legislature, but accept from the caucus an imperative mandate to support one side or the other; and the sacrifice of the public interests to the party's welfare is the frequent and inevitable consequence." These words have the right ring about them, and will find an echo in the heart of every Canadian to whom his country's interests are dearer than those of his party. The number of Canadians of this way of thinking is much larger than is commonly supposed. The number, moreover, is increasing day by day. That the *Mail's* departure will give an impetus to the open profession of such opinions is as certain as daylight. Several journals controlled by writers of zeal and intelligence have led the way in this direction; but most of them have been hampered by pecuniary and other considerations which have prevented them from obtaining that circulation and influence which under more favourable circumstances they would almost certainly have acquired. But the *Mail* is emphatically a moulder of opinion, and one of the very foremost of Canadian newspapers. Its change of base is most significant, and, unless we fail to read the signs of the times aright, it foreshadows other and even more momentous changes at no distant day.

It seems to us that never in the history of our country was there a more conspicuous opening for a daily newspaper which dares to speak forth the words of truth and soberness without fear or favour. The journal which will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth on various public questions has an assured future before it. The subjects calling aloud for honest consideration are many, and are moreover of such importance that their consideration cannot much longer be deferred. Our national finances are in a condition which may well give rise to grave solicitude. Reforms of a radical character are imperatively demanded in the Civil Service. Various phases of the religious question are forcing themselves upon public attention. The

North-Western problem is one which cannot safely be left unsolved. The voice of Prohibition is beginning to make itself heard with most miraculous organ. Our interprovincial relations are ever and anon strained to a point which threatens the rupture of Confederation. As regards our relations with the mother country, no man of any political prescience can suppose that they can much longer remain upon their present footing. The scheme of an Imperial Federation of Great Britain and her colonies, in the opinion of most persons who have given much consideration to the subject, is totally impracticable. At all events it presents difficulties which must be inseparable for many years to come. There remain the alternatives of independence and annexation to the United States.

With respect to the latter, our party journals have caused many persons to think and speak of the project under the breath, as if the discussion thereof involved something nearly approaching treason. The *Mail* itself has been wont to take this view of the annexation question. Its point of vision, however, has recently undergone a change. It now proclaims that it does not count it treason for Canadians to discuss their future, and it denies the right of "any European power, not excepting Great Britain, to place a check upon the will of the Canadian people respecting any matter in which their interests are at stake." It is very unlikely that Great Britain will feel herself impelled to impose any such check. Annexation has not yet come within the domain of practical politics, either in Canada or across the line. A few years since we used to see frequent allusions to the "manifest destiny" theory in certain United States newspapers, but for some time past republican editors have found more pressing and practical subjects to write about, and have been much more chary of offering advice to their northerly neighbours. That a good many intelligent Canadians, more especially in the Maritime Provinces, have a bias in favor of annexation it would be idle to deny; but there is no present agitation on the subject, nor is any such agitation likely to arise in the near future, unless in the event of some unlooked-for crisis in our affairs. Such a crisis may at any time arise. Should the consensus of opinion in Canada declare itself clearly in favor of a union with the States, there can hardly be much doubt of the final result. The time for the coercion of American colonies by European States is past. In the case of our own country it is by no means probable that any British ministry would take upon itself the responsibility of making the attempt, and if it did it would soon cease to exist as a ministry. Our territory is too large to be held in forced subjection, even by the mighty power of Great Britain. Moreover, in the unhappy event of a conflict between us and the mother country the United States could hardly remain neutral, and there can of course be no doubt as to the side she would take. But such a struggle is of all unlikely things the most unlikely. When the parting comes between us and our parent it will come quietly, by mutual arrangement, and this whether the inducement to separation should be annexation or independence.

Independence has found a good many advocates in our midst, more especially among the young men who have been trained to think. The project was first heard of soon after the accomplishment of Confederation, and there has been a slow but steady growth ever since until within the last year or two, during which little has been heard of it. Few of its advocates are in any haste to bring about the cherished result, and no really prominent public man has ventured to identify himself with the movement, if movement it can be called. True, there is a Canadian Independence Society in Toronto at the present time, but we understand that the membership is under a score, and that there has been no meeting for several months. There is also an annexation society, composed of some capable and scholarly young men, but they have set on foot no active agitation, and do not seem to be growing very rapidly in numbers. They do not even openly call themselves annexationists, but constitutionalists, and their society is called a Constitutional Society. They do not seem to be in deadly earnest, nor to cherish any desperate or treasonable designs. It is certainly no harm for a few thinking young men to meet together for the purpose of making themselves familiar with the constitution of the United States, and the study of De Tocqueville will hurt no one who is mentally fitted to take part in political discussions.

To return for a moment to our muttuns: With such momentous questions as these confronting it at every turn, no independent Canadian journal needs to be at a loss for timely topics for discussion. We hope to see the *Mail* taking up these subjects, and dealing with them in the trenchant fashion which it has at its command when it really buckles itself down to serious work. We, in our own feeble way, intend to consider them from time to time, and in doing so we shall not hesitate to express our deliberate convictions with regard to every one of them. Meanwhile, we congratulate the independent press of Canada upon the accession to its ranks of so powerful an ally as the late organ of Liberal Conservatism in the Dominion.—J. C. D.

THE LABOUR QUESTION IN POLITICS.

ONE of the most notable developments of the year just closed is the appearance of a new political party. The labour question is now fairly in politics. The remarkably large vote polled for three labour candidates for Montreal in the Quebec provincial elections, followed by the nomination in several of the larger cities of Western Ontario of Labour Reformers for the local legislature—one of the number being successful in the contest—shows that the movement has taken deep root among the working class. Henceforth the demand for Labour Reform, backed by a powerful organization which looks to independent political action as the means for accomplishing its objects, is a factor with which the politicians will have to reckon. It is no mere temporary or spasmodic agitation, but one of steady growth, and the result of the spread of principles here which have obtained widespread acceptance in other communities.

The aim and scope of the political Labour Reform movement is little understood even by those who take an active interest in

politics. Party newspapers continually speak of it as though its principal aim were the election of workingmen to representative positions. Politicians try to head it off, as was done in Toronto and Hamilton, by giving the party nomination to trade unionists—and express themselves amazed at the folly and ingratitude of the Labour Reformers when they refuse to be satisfied with such working-class representatives. If to put "workingmen" into Parliament were the only motive of the new departure, its adherents might very reasonably have supported the candidature of Edward F. Clarke in this city, John Burns in Hamilton, and A. B. Ingram in West Elgin—all genuine members of the working class, and trades unionists. But the Labour Reform movement is far broader and more comprehensive in its scope. Not simply to elect workingmen, either in the enlarged or the restricted sense of the term; but to effect an entire and organic change in the relations between labour and capital is the real object in view. The platform itself, radical as it is, embracing many reforms so sweeping that their accomplishment can hardly be looked for in this generation, conveys an imperfect idea of the spirit of the new departure. Every platform is necessarily a compromise, embodying concessions not only to weak brethren but to public opinion. It is freely admitted that the present demands of the Labour Reformers are merely tentative, including only such reforms as it is now expedient to agitate for. Present organizations, measures of plans of action, are merely the germs. The precise form of their fuller development none can foresee.

Obviously, the mere election of workingmen who are also partisans and the nominees of the old parties would not in the least avail towards creating such a revolution in present habits of thought as must be accomplished even before the ameliorative measures now demanded could be carried into effect. So long as members of Parliament are the slaves of the caucus, bound to answer the summons of the party whip, it matters not whether they are wage-earners or members of the professional and capitalist classes. The old parties, Liberal and Conservative, alike are dominated by capitalism—pervaded root and branch with the ideas of the old political economy; believers in the theory that industrial matters are and ought to be regulated by competition under the law of supply and demand. The single exception of the N.P. proves nothing. The Conservatives have never carried the principle of tariff protection to its logical conclusion by undertaking to protect labour against capital. Should a limitation of the hours of factory labour to eight per day, or a system of compulsory arbitration for regulating wages according to profits be proposed, both parties would array themselves against such measures. Liberals and Conservatives alike would denounce them as an interference with the "right of private contract," and invoke the law of supply and demand as being the necessary and sufficient principle determining the length of the working day, and the distribution of the value created by labour. While such opinions prevail—while men are content to quote the platitudes of a system of political economy, formulated under entirely different conditions than those which now exist, and persistently ignore the changes wrought by the progress of mechanical invention and the wonderful expansion of the industrial system, the work to be done by the Labour Reform party is mainly and essentially educational. The securing of a few palliative measures such as the Factory Act, the Employers' Liability Act and the like, and the election of a wage-earner to the legislature, are infinitesimal gains in themselves, important only as vantage-ground won in a battle which must be fought inch by inch.

The Canadian Labour Reform movement, like nearly every important political or social agitation which obtains a foothold here, derives its impulse from the United States. Let those who would condemn it on that account remember that the Confederation of the provinces, the protective policy, the Scott Act, and many other Canadian institutions and measures, owe their origin to the same source. This is not wholly due to imitation. It is rather a case in which like causes produce like effects. The conditions of Canadian life and industry are similar to those on the other side of the border, but as the Americans are in a more advanced stage of national development, having a larger and denser population, the conditions demanding and producing social and political changes show themselves sooner in the United States. Canada nearly always follows in the same direction, after an interval during which we have been growing up to the condition, and developing the same phases of public opinion through which our neighbours have previously passed. It is so with the labour question. Owing to the exhaustion of the public domain; to cutting off the wage-workers' opportunities for self-employment; to the building up of large cities with populations absolutely dependent on the labour of their hands; to the mobilization of the forces of labour by the wonderful expansion of steam transportation, the conditions of life for the masses in the large centres have been approximating very rapidly to the European standard. Comparisons of the rate of wages paid now with the scale of a generation ago are misleading and fallacious. With the growth of large cities the landless labourer loses many advantages for which no advance in wages can compensate him. The squalor and filth of the tenement house, with its enforced associations with the vicious and criminal, the impossibility of procuring wholesome and comfortable house accommodation with fresh air and elbow room, the expenses entailed by modern city life in many directions formerly unknown—all these tend to make the lot of the urban wage-earner increasingly irksome. Popular education—defective though it is—democratic institutions, with their teaching of the doctrine of human equality and brotherhood, and the extent and universality of industrial organizations, have combined to force the question to the front. Since the establishment of the order of the Knights of Labour, designed to supplement the trade unions by welding together all branches of labour for common action and the securing of radical and permanent reforms, the question has taken on an entirely new phase. It is slowly beginning to be understood that the Labour question is not a mere matter of the increase of wages or the shortening of hours, to be fought out between workingmen and their respective employers, but a far deeper and more difficult problem, involving the overthrow of those conditions which no concessions, however extensive, by individual employers, or even by the whole class of employers, could effect. It is realized that behind the employer stands the power of monopoly in all its forms, by which the land, the railroads and the financial system are controlled by the few, and used to exploit industry. The pressure of these influences is such that the employer of labour, even if willing, is powerless to do much to remedy existing abuses. Labour Reform, as understood where the question is of older standing than in Canada, is a demand for social re-adjustment; for new standards of public opinion; for a re-written political economy; for the establishment, in short, of labour value as the only test of any man's right to draw from the community the products of the labour of others.

That the full import of the contest upon which they have entered

may not yet be understood by some Canadian wage-earners in no wise detracts from these conclusions. The question with us is only in its initial stages, because the conditions which have culminated in the American labour problem are not yet felt to their full intensity. Our cities are small as compared with New York and Chicago. Our unoccupied arable land is cheaper and more accessible than that remaining in the American West. Our population and industries are mainly rural. But in proportion as the country grows, and large centres are built up—in proportion as the self-employed farmer and the small tradesman of the villages become relatively smaller factors as compared with the capitalist and the wage-earner, the Labour question will become of continually increasing urgency, and what is at present little more than the skirmish line of the army of toil will swell to a formidable host.

P. T.

THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS.

THE people of this Province are now in a position to consider judiciously all that has been said by ecclesiastically-minded, as well as by political partisans during the recent election campaign, on the use of the bible as a whole, or otherwise, in the schools of Ontario.

I take direct issue with most of the combatants in the many-sided squabble, and boldly avow my conviction that the bible as a mere book, whether in its complete form or as "Scripture Readings," has no right to a place in the schools of this country, on any plea that may not be urged with just as much propriety for the best thoughts of other sacred books, barring the one plea that the majority of our people are professing Christians.

Confessedly, the high and public schools are not Protestant. The Minister of Education himself has frequently affirmed this of late in his speeches. At Strathroy he informed his audience that the schools were open alike to Christian, Jew and Mahometan. Inferentially, they are equally free to Buddhist, Gueber, Agnostic and Atheist. In matters of conscience the *majority* argument is absolutely worthless, so that we have here the very best authority for the statement that our schools are not even distinctively Christian. But many clergymen and other people profess to hold a very different view, in the advocacy of which some of them have gained for themselves a little cheap notoriety, at the expense of more than one Christian virtue, and to the serious detriment of common sense.

With the law as it stood formerly, I and those like-minded with me were not disposed to find very serious fault. Then the reading of scripture was permissive or recommendatory. Now it is a matter of compulsion. If, as is stated, only 55 per cent. of the teachers made use of the bible last year, whereas 98 per cent. do so to-day, what is the gain? Is it 43 per cent. increase of that "righteousness which exalteth a nation," or, is it not merely 43 per cent. of compulsion, hypocrisy, and time-serving?

Questionable as are both of the departmental percentages quoted, but allowing them for argument's sake, it is a fact that a large and increasing number of Ontario (male) teachers are either supremely indifferent to the use of the bible, or are so far gone in agnosticism as to "care for none of those things." This may be deplorable, but it is true, and I humbly and reverentially submit it for the grave consideration of that ecclesiastical Bumbledom which has figured so flatulently in the press of late. And when it is borne in mind that the members composing that self-same Bumbledom are gentlemen who profess to lament another

change in the School Act, which is calculated, as they say, to place Roman Catholic laymen more completely under the thumb of the priest, we are driven to the amusing but withal serious conclusion that sauce for the Protestant goose is something very different for the Catholic gander. Bumbledom groans in spirit as it laments the possible and probable earthly fate of the poor benighted Papist who may dare to fly in the face of his "reverend father" by insisting to be assessed as a public school supporter. It declares that the amended law deprives our Catholic fellow-citizens of their liberty. But what of the many teachers and trustees whose consciences have been coerced at its instigation in connection with the Scripture Readings? How many boards of trustees, how many teachers now using the bible or the readings on compulsion, dare avow to their respective parsons that they do so only in obedience to law, their preferences being all the other way? Whatever the result might be in such a case concerning the well-to-do trustee, we have a shrewd inkling of the fate in store for the "poor but honest" teacher who would dare so to express his convictions.

A stock argument is that the demand was set up by the teachers themselves to have bible-reading in the schools made compulsory. If this were true, it would be stupid, for why should teachers ask for a law to make them do what they always had it in their power to do? But it is not true. The fact is that a few pietists brought the subject before the Provincial Teachers' Association, and worded their resolution in such a manner as almost to make any one who opposed it set the seal to his own professional death-warrant. It is on record that of all the representatives present at the Association, only one spoke out against the motion, although several voted to have it quashed. Similar resolutions were passed in a number of counties, and mainly, I venture to believe, for the same reason that Roman Catholics (as is said) will henceforth support their sectarian schools; viz., that the teachers did not care to place themselves in opposition to the clergy.

As a scheme to make the teacher do the work of the minister, the attempt has been successful, but only in so far as legal recognition and enactment are concerned; for, after all, the reading of scripture in the greater number of schools in this country will continue to be of the most perfunctory character. In the future, as in the past, the really good teacher will embrace every opportunity to enforce upon his pupils both the precept and the practice of all those maxims of Christianity and religion which experience has tested, and, having tested, has proved to embody the essentials of good citizenship. Beyond this, I claim that no state-paid teacher has any right to go; and no state-supported school has any right to demand or permit more.

But if, as is contended by Bumbledom, the reading of God's word in our schools is so imperatively necessary for the well-being of society, how is it that this country has managed to worry along so contentedly all these years, on only 50 per cent. of scripture in these institutions? And how is that in but a fraction of one per cent. of the schools have the ministers of God's word availed themselves of the law permitting them to indoctrinate the youth of their own sects and denominations? It is matter for regret that the Minister of Education betrayed so much consanguinity with the mollusk when he was bulldozed by Bumbledom on this subject, and it is a little too bad that when the pietists and their satellites got all they desired and more than they deserved, they should behave in so unchristianlike a manner as we know they have done.

But it was ever thus, and the Minister of Education may rest assured that he has not heard the last of this matter. In a short time the agitation will assume the form of a demand for Protestant sectarian schools, and the clamorous ones will prove to a demonstration that all the trouble has been brought about by the machinations of crafty prelates belonging to a proverbially crafty hierarchy. About this time it is not improbable that the common sense of the majority will advocate the abolition of even the Roman Catholic separate school system, and will plead for a purely secular national arrangement.

As a matter of simple choice between the whole bible and the book of selections we much prefer the latter, for the trivial reason that our children are not specially interested in knowing that "Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel," and so on; neither are they likely to be edified by the perusal of stories compared with which the details of the Campbell divorce suit indicate a moderately high standard of social and moral ethics.

A.

LITERARY NOTES.

MANY Torontonians will remember the name and personality of Mr. Arthur W. Gundry, a gentleman who was formerly a law student in this city, and who left six or seven years ago. During his residence here he was known as a clever and brilliant young man, and a pleasant, facile writer, with a decided taste for literature. A translation from his pen of *Manon Lescaut* is announced as about to be issued by a New York publishing house. A good many of his Toronto friends will doubtless be interested by this announcement.

Scribner's Magazine is almost an old story by this time, but ARCTURUS has not previously had an opportunity of referring to it. The first number has been received with peans of praise from the American press—praise which is hardly warranted by the facts. Nobody doubts the Scribners' ability to produce a first-class magazine, but the truth is that the January number is not what might reasonably have been looked for at their hands. The literary matter is not of a high order, and some of it is decidedly poor. The engravings seem cheap and common as compared with the exquisite work in *Harper's* and *The Century*, and they have not even been carefully printed. The headlines do not appear to be well suited to the pages, and the mechanical work generally is decidedly inferior to that of its great rivals. These defects will probably be remedied in subsequent numbers. If not, *Harper's* and *The Century* have nothing to fear from the rivalry of the new venture, notwithstanding its low price.

WE have before us the prospectus of an *édition de luxe* of the complete works of George Eliot, now in course of publication by Messrs. Estes & Lauriat, of Boston. The edition is to be completed in twelve octavo volumes published at intervals of a month apart, and it is expected that the last volume will be issued towards the close of the current year. There are to be fifty or more original etchings printed on India paper, and the topography is to be faultless. The edition is sold to subscribers only, and is limited to five hundred copies. The etchings to the first volume, containing *Adam Bede*, are now lying before us. They are of exquisite workmanship and design. The portrait of poor Hetty, as she stands in the dairy of the Hall Farm, with a roll of butter in her "cool hand," exhibits an artist's fine insight. Another picture represents Adam in his workshop, measuring the lumber for his father's coffin. The surroundings here are well executed, but the human figure strikes us as having been drawn from an American model. Certainly there is nothing to indicate the Saxon character and "large presence" of the straight-backed carpenter of Hayslope. The etching of the Hall Farm is evidently a close adaptation of the vignette known to the readers of Blackwood's crown octavo series. We understand that the edition is almost entirely taken up, and that the publishers have reserved the right to raise the price. Messrs. Williamson & Co, of Toronto, are the local agents.

MR. BENJAMIN SULTE, one of the leading historical writers of the Province of Quebec, has long been a proscribed quantity among the hierarchy of the Lower Province. The tone of his writings is Liberal, not to say Radical, and when he comes across a spade he is accustomed to label it by its correct name. Several years ago he published a valuable work recounting the history of the seigniories of Lower Canada, in which he told a few plain truths about the operations of the Jesuit Fathers in the early days of New France. The Ultramontane press came down upon him without mercy, and did its utmost to prevent the circulation of his book. There seems to be a determination to carry the war into Africa against Mr. Sulte. He recently contributed his hundredth article to the *Revue Canadienne*, and the conductors of that magazine deemed the occasion a suitable one for giving a banquet in his honour. No sooner did this fact become known than the hostile press set up an organized howl, alleging that Mr. Sulte had earned the everlasting contempt of his fellow-countrymen by defiling the glorious annals of his native land. At the head of the howlers is *La Vérité*—a paper which seems to be singularly mis-named, la vérité being apparently the last thing it desires to see. It is not long since a book written by the editor of this paper was placed under an interdict in Quebec, because the condition of the French Canadian *habitant* of half a century ago was portrayed in perfectly truthful but unflattering colours. Mr. Parkman's writings have met with similar treatment. It is evidently something very far removed from la vérité that the Ultramontanes of Lower Canada want to hear.

MRS. LANGTRY, the actress, is an aspirant for literary fame, and is now writing a novel dealing with social life in England and the United States. It is whispered by quidnuncs who profess to have seen a portion of the MS. that the tone of the book is decidedly fast, and more than a little tart. Unless rumour does the authoress injustice, she is well qualified, by personal experience, to write a novel descriptive of fast life on two continents.

Book Review.

SHE: A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE. By H. Rider Haggard, author of "King Solomon's Mines" etc. New York, Harper & Brothers. Toronto, R. W. Douglas & Co.

The many thousands of persons who read *King Solomon's Mines* upon its first appearance last year will eagerly welcome a new story from the same ingenious hand. It is safe to say that few romances written during the present generation have been read with a more feverish interest than was the marvellous record of African adventure which held us all spell-bound a few months ago. We might indeed go still further, and say that not since Edgar Poe, through the *alter ego* of Arthur Gordon Pym, conveyed us away through lightning and tempest to the southern seas, and brought us face to face with the Pallid Figure "of the perfect whiteness of snow"—not since those antediluvian times had any story of mere adventure stirred our pulses as they were stirred by the reading of *King Solomon's Mines*. With what breathless interest we followed the fortunes of those intrepid travellers who explored the mysteries of the strange region lying beyond and to the north of Sheba's breasts! How eagerly we traversed that vast piece of ancient engineering yecept "Solomon's Road"; and with what unspeakable wonderment did we explore the illimitable recesses of the dark cavern behind the figures of the three Silent Ones! How our nerves thrilled with horror at the truly diabolical conception of Gagool! Not a very wholesome interest, perhaps; is that aroused by such narratives. To tell the simple truth, they contain a strong infusion of the morbid; but the intensity of interest is supreme, and the reader, having once

made a fair beginning, finds it impossible to lay the volume down until he reaches the colophon.

The present story, take it for all in all, is even more enthralling than *King Solomon's Mines*. It deals with the marvellous, not to say the absolutely impossible, to an extent far beyond the legitimate limits of realistic fiction. In its pages, indeed, even more than in those of its predecessor, probability is pretty well cast to the winds. Yet the feverish interest never abates. The reader is carried along at such a pace that he ceases to look, or even to ask, for probability; and there could be no more incontestable evidence of the writer's genuine literary power than is furnished by this fact alone. Mr. Haggard once more transports us to an unexplored region of the Dark Continent, where we are introduced to a mysterious Veiled Woman, who has been alive for more than two thousand years, and who yet preserves the first fresh loveliness of early womanhood. Her beauty is so transcendent that it shines with a supernal radiance, and to see her is to worship at her shrine for the rest of the beholder's existence. Whoever once catches a glimpse of her unveiled features can never again put away from him the glorious vision of her charms. Her intellect is represented as commensurate with her physical beauty, and she is acquainted with many esoteric secrets of nature which enable her to work what seem to be miracles, though she disdains all acquaintance with magic. She has the baneful power of blasting the life and utterly destroying the vital forces of any one against whom she merely stretches forth her hand. One marvel succeeds another in interminable sequence. We are taken down into a weird subterrene cavern, where blazes a fire embodying the great principle of life. Yet we seldom or never feel disposed to smile at these extravagances. Some of Hiya's soliloquies, perhaps, are a trifle suggestive of the Moonbeam and Starbeam of the late Lord Lytton, and the remarks of Job, the English servant, are sometimes more like burlesque than reality; but before we have time to analyze their essential absurdity we are confronted by situations so tremendous that we are literally compelled to hold the breath. It is inconceivable that anyone should read the description of the walking of the plank from the spur of the rock to the gigantic rocking-stone, as related in the twenty-fourth chapter, without involuntarily shifting his position in his chair. If any situation could be more awe-inspiring than this, it is the terrific leap backward over the yawning gulf, as given a little later on. The intensity of such scenes as these is positively painful, and at times the reader feels like one struggling with a hideous nightmare, insomuch that when he reaches the end he experiences a sense as of relief from a long ordeal of mental strain.

It cannot, of course, be pretended that writing of this sort is of the highest order. The realism, for instance, vivid as it is, is of a very different order from the realism of Charlotte Brontë. The imagination displayed is of a totally different species from that of Nathaniel Hawthorne. But all things have their limitations, and Mr. Haggard makes no attempt to depict character with a master's hand. His strong point is an inventive imagination, and in this particular the only contemporary writer who can lay claim to surpass him, or indeed to come anywhere near him, is Robert Louis Stevenson. The author of *She* is a man of unquestionable genius, who in this, his latest story, has surpassed all his previous efforts. It is tolerably safe to predict that he will never write a book which, so far as mere absorbing, overpowering interest is concerned, will more effectually hold the reader's attention. A new story from his pen has already begun to appear in the pages of *Longman's Magazine*.

Poetry.

THE DWINA.—A ROUGH RUSSIAN BALLAD.

BY MRS. D. OGILVY.

STONY-BROWED DWINA, thy face is as flint,
Horsemen and waggons cross, scoring no dint,
Cossacks patrol thee and leave thee as hard,
Camp-fires but blacken and spot thee like pard,
For the dead and silent river lies rigid and still.

Down on thy sedgy banks picquet the troops,
Scaring the night-wolves with carols and whoops,
Crackle their faggots of drift-wood and hay,
And the steam of their pots fills the nostril of day,
But the dead silent river lies rigid and still.

Sledges pass sliding from hamlet to town,
Lovers and comrades, and none doth he drown,
Harness-bells tinkling in musical glee,
For to none comes the sorrow that came unto me,
And the dead silent river lies rigid and still.

I go to the Dwina, I stand on his wave,
Where Ivan, my dead, has no grass on his grave,
Stronger than granite that coffins a Czar,
Solid as pavement, and polished as spar,
Where the dead silent river lies rigid and still.

Stronger than granite? nay, falser than sand!
Fatal the clasp of thy slippery hand,
Cruel as vulture's the clutch of thy claws,
Who shall redeem from the merciless jaws
Of the dead silent river so rigid and still?

Crisp lay the new-fallen snow on thy breast,
Trembled the white moon through haze in the west,
Far in the thicket the wolf-cub was howling,
Down by the sheep-cotes the wolf-dam was prowling,
And the dead silent river lay rigid and still.

When Ivan my lover, my husband, my lord,
Lightly and cheerily stepped on the sward,
Light with his hopes of the morrow and me,
That the reeds on the margin leaned after to see,
But the dead silent river lay rigid and still.

O'er the fresh snow-fall, the winter-long frost,
O'er the broad Dwina the forester crost,
Snares at his girdle, and gun at his side,
Gamebag weighed heavy with gifts for his bride,
And the dead silent river lay rigid and still.

Rigid and silent, and crouching for prey,
Crouching for him who went singing his way,
Oxen were stabled, and sheep were in fold,
But Ivan was struggling in torrents ice-cold,
'Neath the dead silent river so rigid and still.

Home he came never, we searched by the ford,
Small was the fissure that swallowed my lord,
Glassy ice-sheetings had frozen above,
A crystalline cover to seal up my love,
In the dead silent river so rigid and still.

Still by the Dwina my home torches burn,
Faithful I watch for my bridegroom's return,
When the moon sparkles on hoarfrost and tree,
I see my love crossing the Dwina to me
O'er the dead silent river so rigid and still.

Always approaching, he never arrives,
Howls the north-east wind, the dusty snow drives,
Snapping like touchwood I hear the ice crack,
And my lover is drowned in the water-hole black,
'Neath the dead silent river so rigid and still.

[The following story was written by the editor of this paper nearly ten years ago, for the pages of *Belford's Monthly Magazine*. It was published in the number of that periodical for May, 1877, and is now reproduced with the consent of the owners of the copyright. The conclusion of it will appear next week, and it will be followed by a succession of original tales, written specially for the columns of ARCTURUS.]

THE GERRARD STREET MYSTERY.

I.

My name is William Francis Furlong. My occupation is that of a commission merchant, and my place of business is on St. Paul Street, in the City of Montreal. I have resided in Montreal ever since shortly after my marriage, in 1862, to my cousin, Alice Playter, of Toronto. My name may not be familiar to the present generation of Torontonians, though I was born in Toronto, and passed the early years of my life there. Since the days of my youth my visits to the Upper Province have been few, and—with one exception—very brief; so that I have doubtless passed out of the remembrance of many persons with whom I was once on terms of intimacy. Still, there are several residents of Toronto whom I am happy to number among my warmest personal friends at the present day. There are also a good many persons of middle age, not in Toronto only, but scattered here and there throughout various parts of Ontario, who will have no difficulty in recalling my name as that of one of their fellow-students at Upper Canada College. The name of my late uncle, Richard Yardington, is of course well known to all old residents of Toronto, where he spent the last thirty-two years of his life. He settled there in the year 1829, when the place was still known as Little York. He opened a small store on Yonge Street, and his commercial career was a reasonably prosperous one. By steady degrees the small store developed into what, in those times, was regarded as a considerable establishment. In the course of years the owner acquired a competency, and in 1854 retired from business altogether. From that time up to the day of his death he lived in his own house on Gerrard Street.

After mature deliberation, I have resolved to give to the Canadian public an account of some rather singular circumstances connected with my residence in Toronto. Though repeatedly urged to do so, I have hitherto refrained from giving any extended publicity to those circumstances, in consequence of my inability to see any good purpose to be served thereby. The only person, however, whose reputation can be injuriously affected by the details has been dead for some years. He has left behind him no one whose feelings can be shocked by the disclosure, and the story is in itself sufficiently remarkable to be worth the telling. Told, accordingly, it shall be; and the only fictitious element introduced into the narrative shall be the name of one of the persons most immediately concerned in it.

At the time of taking up his abode in Toronto—or rather in Little York—my uncle Richard was a widower, and childless; his wife having died several months previously. His only relatives on this side of the Atlantic were two maiden sisters, a few years younger than himself. He never contracted a second matrimonial alliance, and for some time after his arrival here his sisters lived in his house, and were dependent upon him for support. After the lapse of a few years, both of them married and settled down in homes of their own. The elder of them subsequently became my mother. She was left a widow when I was a mere boy, and survived my father only a few months. I was an only child, and as my parents had been in humble circumstances, the charge of my maintenance developed upon my uncle, to whose kindness I am indebted for such educational training as I have received. After sending me to school and college for several years, he took me into his store, and gave me my first insight into commercial life. I lived with him, and both then and always received at his hands the kindness of a father, in which light I eventually almost came to regard him. His younger sister, who was married to a watch-maker called Elias Playter, lived at Quebec from the time of her

marriage until her death, which took place in 1846. Her husband had been unsuccessful in business, and was moreover of dissipated habits. He was left with one child—a daughter—on his hands; and as my uncle was averse to the idea of his sister's child remaining under the control of one so unfit to provide for her welfare, he proposed to adopt the little girl as his own. To this proposition Mr. Elias Playter readily assented, and little Alice was soon domiciled with her uncle and myself in Toronto.

Brought up, as we were, under the same roof, and seeing each other every day of our lives, a childish attachment sprang up between my cousin Alice and myself. As the years rolled by, this attachment ripened into a tender affection, which eventually resulted in an engagement between us. Our engagement was made with the full and cordial approval of my uncle, who did not share the prejudice entertained by many persons against marriages between cousins. He stipulated, however, that our marriage should be deferred until I had seen somewhat more of the world, and until we had both reached an age when we might reasonably be presumed to know our own minds. He was also, not unnaturally, desirous that before taking upon myself the responsibility of marriage I should give some evidence of my ability to provide for a wife, and for other contingencies usually consequent upon matrimony. He made no secret of his intention to divide his property between Alice and myself at his death; and the fact that no actual division would be necessary in the event of our marriage with each other was doubtless one reason for his ready acquiescence in our engagement. He was, however, of a vigorous constitution, strictly regular and methodical in all his habits, and likely to live to an advanced age. He could hardly be called parsimonious, but, like most men who have successfully fought their own way through life, he was rather fond of authority, and little disposed to divest himself of his wealth until he should have no further occasion for it. He expressed his willingness to establish me in business, either in Toronto or elsewhere, and to give me the benefit of his experience in all mercantile transactions.

When matters had reached this pass I had just completed my twenty-first year, my cousin being three years younger. Since my uncle's retirement I had engaged in one or two little speculations on my own account, which had turned out fairly successful, but I had not devoted myself to any regular or fixed pursuit. Before any definite arrangements had been concluded as to the course of my future life, a circumstance occurred which seemed to open a way for me to turn to good account such mercantile talent as I possessed. An old friend of my uncle's opportunely arrived in Toronto from Melbourne, Australia, where, in the course of a few years, he had risen from the position of a junior clerk to that of senior partner in a prominent commercial house. He painted the land of his adoption in glowing colours, and assured my uncle and myself that it presented an inviting field for a young man of energy and business capacity, more especially if he had a small capital at his command. The matter was carefully debated in our domestic circle. I was naturally averse to a separation from Alice, but my imagination took fire at Mr. Redpath's glowing account of his own splendid success. I pictured myself returning to Canada after an absence of four or five years with a mountain of gold at my command, as the result of my own energy and acuteness. In imagination, I saw myself settled down with Alice in a palatial mansion on Jarvis Street, and living in affluence all the rest of my days. My uncle bade me consult my own judgment in the matter, but rather encouraged the idea than otherwise. He offered to advance me £500, and I had about half that sum as the result of my own speculations. Mr. Redpath, who was just about returning to Melbourne, promised to aid me to the extent of his power with his local knowledge and advice. In less than a fortnight from that time he and I were on our way to the other side of the globe.

We reached our destination early in the month of September, 1857. My life in Australia has no direct bearing upon the course of events to be related, and may be passed over in very few words. I engaged in various enterprises, and achieved a certain measure of success. If none of my ventures proved eminently prosperous, I at least met with no serious disasters. At the end of four years—that is to say, in September, 1861—I made up my account with

the world, and found I was worth ten thousand dollars. I had, however, become terribly homesick, and longed for the termination of my voluntary exile. I had, of course, kept up a regular correspondence with Alice and Uncle Richard, and of late they had both pressed me to return home. "You have enough," wrote my uncle, "to give you a good start in Toronto, and I see no reason why Alice and you should keep apart any longer. You will have no housekeeping expenses, for I intend you to live with me. I am getting old, and shall be glad of your companionship in my declining years. You will have a comfortable home while I live, and when I die you will get all I have between you. Write as soon as you receive this, and let us know how soon you can be here,—the sooner the better."

The letter containing this pressing invitation found me in a mood very much disposed to accept it. The only enterprise I had on hand which would be likely to delay me was a transaction in wool, which, as I then believed, would be closed by the end of January or the beginning of February. By the first of March I should certainly be in a condition to start on my homeward voyage, and I determined that my departure should take place about that time. I wrote both to Alice and my uncle, apprising them of my intention, and announcing my expectation to reach Toronto not later than the middle of May.

The letters so written were posted on the 19th of September, in time for the mail which left on the following day. On the 27th, to my huge surprise and gratification, the wool transaction referred to was unexpectedly concluded, and I was at liberty, if so disposed, to start for home by the next fast mail steamer, the *Southern Cross*, leaving Melbourne on the 11th of October. I was so disposed, and made my preparations accordingly. It was useless, I reflected, to write to my uncle or to Alice, acquainting them with the change in my plans, for I should take the shortest route home, and should probably be in Toronto as soon as a letter could get there. I resolved to telegraph from New York, upon my arrival there, so as not to take them altogether by surprise.

The morning of the 11th of October found me on board the *Southern Cross*, where I shook hands with Mr Redpath and several other friends who accompanied me on board for a last farewell. The particulars of the voyage to England are not pertinent to the story, and may be given very briefly. I took the Red Sea route, and arrived at Marseilles about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 29th of November. From Marseilles I travelled by rail to Calais, and so impatient was I to reach my journey's end without loss of time, that I did not even stay over to behold the glories of Paris. I had a commission to execute in London, which, however, delayed me there only a few hours, and I hurried down to Liverpool, in the hope of catching the Cunard Steamer for New York. I missed it by about two hours, but the *Persia* was detailed to start on a special trip to Boston on the following day. I secured a berth, and at eight o'clock next morning steamed out of the Mersey on my way homeward.

The voyage from Liverpool to Boston consumed fourteen days. All I need say about it is, that before arriving at the latter port I formed an intimate acquaintance with one of the passengers—Mr. Janius H. Gridley, a Boston merchant, who was returning from a hurried business trip to Europe. He was—and is—a most agreeable companion. We were thrown together a good deal during the voyage, and we then laid the foundation of a friendship which has ever since subsisted between us. Before the dome of the State House loomed in sight he had extracted a promise from me to spend a night with him before pursuing my journey. We landed at the wharf in East Boston on the evening of the 17th of December, and I accompanied him to his house on West Newton Street, where I remained until the following morning. Upon consulting the time-table, we found that the Albany express would leave at 11.30 a.m. This left several hours at my disposal, and we sallied forth immediately after breakfast to visit some of the lions of the American Athens.

In the course of our peregrinations through the streets, we dropped into the post office, which had recently been established in the Merchants' Exchange Building, on State Street. Seeing the countless piles of mail-matter, I jestingly remarked to my friend that there seemed to be letters enough there to go round

the whole human family. He replied in the same mood, where-upon I banteringly suggested the probability that among so many letters, surely there ought to be one for me.

"Nothing more reasonable," he replied. "We Bostonians are always bountiful to strangers. Here is the General Delivery, and here is the department where letters addressed to the Furlong family are kept in stock. Pray inquire for yourself."

The joke I confess was not a very brilliant one; but with a grave countenance I stepped up to the wicket and asked the young lady in attendance:

"Anything for W. F. Furlong?"

She took from a pigeon-hole a handful of correspondence, and proceeded to run her eye over the addresses. When about half the pile had been exhausted, she stopped, and propounded the usual inquiry in case of strangers:

"Where do you expect letters from?"

"From Toronto," I replied.

To my no small astonishment she immediately handed me a letter, bearing the Toronto post-mark. The address was in the peculiar and well-known handwriting of my uncle Richard.

Scarcely crediting the evidence of my senses I tore open the envelope, and read as follows:—

"TORONTO, 9th December, 1861."

"MY DEAR WILLIAM—I am so glad to know that you are coming home so much sooner than you expected when you wrote last, and that you will eat your Christmas dinner with us. For reasons which you will learn when you arrive, it will not be a very merry Christmas at our house, but your presence will make it much more bearable than it would be without you. I have not told Alice that you are coming. Let it be a joyful surprise for her, as some compensation for the sorrows she has had to endure lately. You needn't telegraph. I will meet you at the G. W. R. station.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"RICHARD YARDINGTON."

"Why, what's the matter?" asked my friend, seeing the blank look of surprise on my face. "Of course the letter is not for you; why on earth did you open it?"

"It is for me," I answered. "See here, Gridley, old man; have you been playing me a trick? If you haven't, this is the strangest thing I ever knew in my life."

Of course he hadn't been playing me a trick. A moment's reflection showed me that such a thing was impossible. Here was the envelope, with the Toronto post-mark of the 9th of December, at which time he been with me on board the *Persia*, on the Banks of Newfoundland. Besides, he was a gentleman, and would not have played so poor and stupid a joke upon his guest. And, to put the matter beyond all possibility of doubt, I remembered that I had never mentioned my cousin's name in his hearing.

I handed him the letter. He read it carefully through twice over, and was as much mystified at its contents as myself; for during our passage across the Atlantic I had explained to him the circumstances under which I was returning home.

By what conceivable means had my uncle been made aware of my departure from Melbourne? Had Mr. Redpath written to him, as soon as I acquainted that gentleman with my intentions? But even if such were the case, the latter could not have left before I did, and could not possibly have reached Toronto by the 9th of December. Had I been seen in England by some one who knew me, and had that some one written from there? Most unlikely; and even if such a thing had happened, it was impossible that the letter could have reached Toronto by the 9th. I need hardly inform the reader that there was no telegraphic communication at that time. And how could my uncle know that I would take the Boston route? And if he had known, how could he foresee that I would do anything so absurd as to call at the Boston post office and inquire for letters? "I will meet you at the G. W. R. station." How was he to know by what train I would reach Toronto, unless I notified him by telegraph? And that he expressly stated to be unnecessary.

We did no more sight-seeing. I obeyed the hint contained in the letter, and sent no telegram. My friend accompanied me down to the Boston and Albany station, where I waited in feverish impatience for the departure of the train. We talked over the matter until 11.30, in the vain hope of finding some clue to the mystery. Then I started on my journey. Mr. Gridley's curiosity

was roused, and I promised to send him an explanation immediately upon my arrival at home.

No sooner had the train glided out of the station than I settled myself in my seat, drew the tantalizing letter from my pocket, and proceeded to read and re-read it again and again. A very few perusals sufficed to fix its contents in my memory, so that I could repeat every word with my eyes shut. Still, I continued to scrutinize the paper, the penmanship, and even the tint of the ink. For what purpose, do you ask? For no purpose, except that I hoped, in some mysterious manner, to obtain more light on the subject. No light came, however. The more I scrutinized and pondered, the greater was my mystification. The paper was a simple sheet of white letter-paper, of the kind ordinarily used by my uncle in his correspondence. So far as I could see, there was nothing peculiar about the ink. Anyone familiar with my uncle's writing could have sworn that no hand but his had penned the lines. His well-known signature, a masterpiece of involved hieroglyphics, was there in all its indistinctness, written as no one but himself could ever have written it. And yet, for some unaccountable reason, I was half-disposed to suspect forgery. Forgery! What nonsense. Any one clever enough to imitate Richard Yardington's handwriting would have employed his talents more profitably than by indulging in a mischievous and purposeless jest. Not a bank in Toronto but would have discounted a note with that signature affixed to it.

Desisting from all attempts to solve these problems, I then tried to fathom the meaning of other points in the letter. What misfortune had happened to mar the Christmas festivities at my uncle's house? And what could the reference to my cousin Alice's sorrows mean? She was not ill. *That*, I thought, might be taken for granted. My uncle would hardly have referred to her illness as "one of the sorrows she has had to endure lately." Certainly, illness may be regarded in the light of a sorrow; but "sorrow" was not precisely the word which a straightforward man like Uncle Richard would have applied to it. I could conceive of no other cause of affliction in her case. My uncle was well, as was evidenced by his having written the letter, and by his avowed intention to meet me at the station. Her father had died long before I started for Australia. She had no other near relation except myself, and she had no cause for anxiety, much less for "sorrow," on my account. I thought it singular, too, that my uncle, having in some strange manner become acquainted with my movements, had withheld the knowledge from Alice. It did not square with my preconceived ideas of him that he would derive any satisfaction from taking his niece by surprise.

All was a muddle together, and as my temples throbbed with the intensity of my thoughts, I was half-disposed to believe myself in a troubled dream from which I should presently awake. Meanwhile, on glided the train.

A heavy snow-storm delayed us for several hours, and we reached Hamilton too late for the mid-day express for Toronto. We got there, however, in time for the accommodation leaving Hamilton at 3.15 p.m., and we would reach Toronto at 5.05. I walked from one end of the train to the other in hopes of finding some one I knew, from whom I could make enquiries about home. Not a soul. I saw several persons whom I knew to be residents of Toronto, but none with whom I had ever been personally acquainted, and none of them would be likely to know anything about my uncle's domestic arrangements. All that remained to be done under these circumstances was to restrain my curiosity as well as I could until reaching Toronto. By the by, would my uncle really meet me at the station, according to his promise? Surely not. By what means could he possibly know that I would arrive by this train? Still, he seemed to have such accurate information respecting my proceedings that there was no saying where his knowledge began or ended. I tried not to think about the matter, but as the train approached Toronto my impatience became positively feverish in its intensity. We were not more than three minutes behind time, and as we glided in front of the Union Station, I passed out on to the platform of the car, and peered intently through the darkness. Suddenly my heart gave a great bound. There, sure enough, standing in front of the door of the waiting room, was my uncle, plainly discernible by the

fitful glare of the overhanging lamps. Before the train came to a stand-still, I sprang from the car and advanced towards him. He was looking out for me, but his eyes not being as young as mine, he did not recognize me until I grasped him by the hand. He greeted me warmly, seizing me by the waist, and almost raising me from the ground. I at once noticed several changes in his appearance; changes for which I was wholly unprepared. He had aged very much since I had last seen him, and the lines about his mouth had deepened considerably. The iron-grey hair which I remembered so well had disappeared; its place being supplied with a new and rather dandified-looking wig. The old-fashioned great-coat which he had worn ever since I could remember, had been supplanted by a modern frock of spruce cut, with seal-skin collar and cuffs. All this I noticed in the first hurried greetings that passed between us.

"Never mind your luggage, my boy," he remarked. "Leave it till to-morrow, when we will send down for it. If you are not tired we'll walk home instead of taking a cab. I have a good deal to say to you before we get there."

I had not slept since leaving Boston, but was too much excited to be conscious of fatigue, and as will readily be believed, I was anxious enough to hear what he had to say. We passed from the station, and proceeded up York Street, arm in arm.

"And now, Uncle Richard," I said, as soon as we were well clear of the crowd,—"keep me no longer in suspense. First and foremost, is Alice well?"

"Quite well, but for reasons you will soon understand, she is in deep grief. You must know that—"

"But," I interrupted, "tell me, in the name of all that's wonderful how you knew I was coming by this train; and how did you come to write to me at Boston?"

Just then we came to the corner of Front Street, where was a lamp-post. As we reached the spot where the light of the lamp was most brilliant, he turned half round, looked me full in the face, and smiled a sort of wintry smile. The expression of his countenance was almost ghastly.

"Uncle," I quickly said, "what's the matter? Are you not well?"

"I am not as strong as I used to be, and have had a good deal to try me of late. Have patience, and I will tell you all. Let us walk more slowly, or I shall not have time to finish before we get home. In order that you may clearly understand how matters are, I had better begin at the beginning, and I hope you will not interrupt me with any questions till I have done. How I knew you would call at the Boston post-office, and that you would arrive in Toronto by this train, will come last in order. By the by, have you my letter with you?"

"The one you wrote to me at Boston? Yes, here it is," I replied, taking it from my pocket-book.

"Let me have it."

I handed it to him, and he put it into the breast pocket of his inside coat. I wondered at this proceeding on his part, but made no remark upon it.

We moderated our pace, and he began his narration. Of course I don't pretend to remember his exact words, but they were to this effect. During the winter following my departure for Melbourne, he had formed the acquaintance of a gentleman who had then recently settled in Toronto. The name of this gentleman was Marcus Weatherley, who had commenced business as a wholesale provision merchant immediately upon his arrival, and had been engaged in it ever since. For more than three years the acquaintance between him and my uncle had been very slight, but during the last summer they had had some real estate transactions together, and had become intimate. Weatherley, who was a comparatively young man, and unmarried, had been invited to the house on Gerrard Street, where he had more recently become a pretty frequent visitor. More recently still, his visits had become so frequent that my uncle had suspected him of a desire to be attentive to my cousin, and had thought proper to enlighten him as to her engagement with me. From that day his visits had been voluntarily discontinued. My uncle had not given much consideration to the subject until a fortnight afterwards, when he

had accidentally become aware of the fact that Weatherley was in embarrassed circumstances.

Here my uncle paused in his narrative to take breath. He then added, in a low tone, and putting his mouth almost close to my ear:

"And, Willie, my boy, I have at last found out something else. He has forty-two thousand dollars falling due here and in Montreal within the next ten days, and he has forged my signature to acceptances for thirty-nine thousand seven hundred and sixteen dollars and twenty-four cents."

Those, to the best of my belief, were his exact words. We had walked up York Street to Queen, and had then gone down Queen to Yonge, when we turned up the east side on our way homeward. At the moment when the last words were uttered we had got to a few yards north of Crookshank Street, immediately in front of a chemist's shop which was, I think, the third house from the corner. The window of this shop was well lighted, and its brightness was reflected on the sidewalk in front. Just then, two gentlemen walking rapidly in the opposite direction to that we were taking, brushed by us; but I was too deeply absorbed in my uncle's communication to pay much attention to passers-by. Scarcely had they passed, however, ere one of them stopped, and exclaimed:

"Surely that is Willie Furlong!"

I turned, and recognized Johnny Gray, one of my oldest friends. I relinquished my uncle's arm for a moment, and shook hands with Gray, who said:

"I am surprised to see you. I heard, only a few days ago, that you were not to be here till next spring."

"I am here," I remarked, "somewhat in advance of my own expectations." I then hurriedly inquired after several of our common friends, to which inquiries he briefly replied.

"All well," he said; "but you are in a hurry, and so am I. Don't let me detain you. Be sure and look in on me to-morrow. You will find me at the old place, in the Romain Buildings."

We again shook hands, and he passed on down the street with the gentleman who accompanied him. I then turned to re-possess myself of my uncle's arm. The old gentleman had evidently walked on, for he was not in sight. I hurried along, making sure of overtaking him before reaching Gould Street, for my interview with Gray had occupied barely a minute. In another minute I was at the corner of Gould Street. No signs of Uncle Richard. I quickened my pace to a run, which soon brought me to Gerrard Street. Still no signs of my uncle. I had certainly not passed him on the way, and he could not have got farther on his homeward route than here. He must have called in at one of the stores; a strange thing for him to do under the circumstances. I retraced my steps all the way to the front of the chemist's shop, peering into every window and doorway as I passed along. No one in the least resembling him was to be seen.

I stood still for a moment, and reflected. Even if he had run at full speed—a thing most unseemly for him to do—he could not have reached the corner of Gerrard Street before I had done so. And what should he run for? He certainly did not wish to avoid me, for he had more to tell me before reaching home. Perhaps he had turned down Gould Street. At any rate, there was no use waiting for him. I might as well go home at once. And I did.

Upon reaching the old familiar spot, I opened the gate, passed on up the steps to the front door, and rang the bell. The door was opened by a domestic who had not formed part of the establishment in my time, and who did not know me; but Alice happened to be passing through the hall, and heard my voice as I inquired for Uncle Richard. Another moment and she was in my arms. With a strange foreboding at my heart I noticed that she was in deep mourning. We passed into the dining-room, where the table was laid for dinner.

"Has Uncle Richard come in?" I asked, as soon as we were alone. "Why did he run away from me?"

"Who?" exclaimed Alice, with a start; "what do you mean, Willie? Is it possible you have not heard?"

"Heard what?"

"I see you have *not* heard," she replied. "Sit down, Willie, and prepare yourself for painful news. But first tell me what you

meant by saying what you did just now,—who was it that ran away from you?"

"Well, I should perhaps hardly call it running away, but he certainly disappeared most mysteriously, down here near the corner of Yonge and Crookshank Streets."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Uncle Richard, of course."

"Uncle Richard! The corner of Yonge and Crookshank Streets! When did you see him there?"

"When? A quarter of an hour ago. He met me at the station, and we walked up together till I met Johnny Gray. I turned to speak to Johnny for a moment, when—"

"Willie, what on earth are you talking about? You are labouring under some strange delusion. *Uncle Richard died of apoplexy more than six weeks ago, and lies buried in St. James's Cemetery.*"

(Concluded next week.)

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