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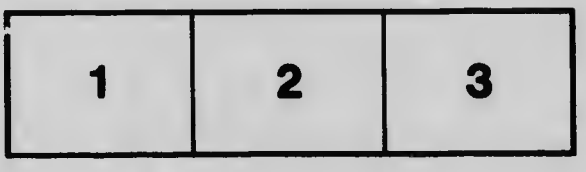


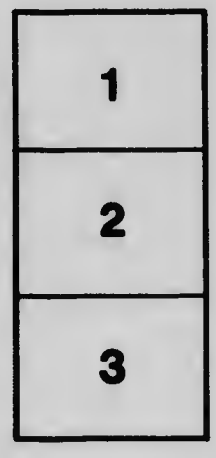


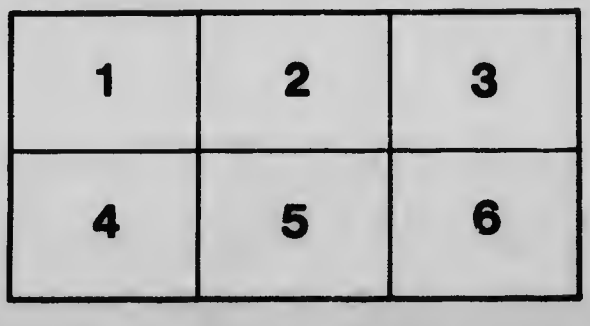

THE RECOLLETS CHURCH AND CONVENT

# THE LITTLE SERGEANT

OR

# LE SERVICE ET LES AMOURS

1905

# THE LITTLE SERGEANT

OR

# LE SERVICE ET LES AMOURS

BY

J. M. HARPER


QUEBEC
THE QUEBEC NEWS COMPANY
— III —

1905

TO

SIR GILBERT PARKER, M. P.

D. C. L., F. R. S. C.

IN TOKEN OF THE INTEREST
HE TAKES IN QUEBEC
AND HIS MANY FRIENDS THERE.

## *PREFATORY NOTE*

*Some time ago I prepared for publication a brochure on the Montgomery Siege of Quebec, and the incident on which the short story of the* LITTLE SERGEANT *is founded I have taken from the verse of that small volume. The story is intended to illustrate the loyalty of the French inhabitants of the city to the cause which Sir Guy Carleton stood so bravely by, when he was fighting to save the British from being driven from the continent of America during the War of Independence.*

*The second story in this volume has only a very slender historic connection, having had its origin at the time of a visit I once paid to the Valcartier country during the angling season. It is needless to say that all the characters in both stories are fictitious.*

THE AUTHOR.

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# THE LITTLE SERGEANT

OR

# LE SERVICE ET LES AMOURS

## *CHAPTER I*

### *The Church of the Recollets*

THE thin toned bell of the Recollets had just rung for vespers in a half-hearted way, as if its timid cadences were only repeating the forebodings of the citizens of the beleaguered town. There was more than the usual solemnity in the twilight that seemed to come from the peaks of Valcartier and the outer creep of the Laurentides, as the scanty groups of worshippers entered the humble edifice falteringly, with dubious destiny brooding like a ghastly shadow over the straggling processions. For months it had been an anxious time for everybody, until

the general had arrived. The Palais was fast becoming a heap of ruins. The invaders had threatened every gateway, parading their bravado in sight of all who cared to watch their manœuvres from the walls or the outer pallisades. On their arrival they had come into possession of the battle-field of the plains, and now there was no security for the besieged save in the strengthening and ceaseless guarding of the ramparts facing the river.

The presence of the general, after his remarkable escape from the watchfulness of the enemy, had rallied the courage of the forces. The citizens, who had stood loyally by the city's fortunes in face of every discouragement, had generously placed their resources of wealth and labour at his command. They had every faith in his good faith. But as the days grew colder and shorter towards the close of the year, and it came to be an open secret around the Place d'Armes and the street corners that the invading generals had made up their minds to wait for re-inforcements to the very last moment, in order to

muster for a desperate and decisive attack on the river side of the town, anxiety kept wavering between hope and despondency. Besides, rumors were rife that the residents of lower town were not all of one mind, some of them possibly being inclined to join the invaders, should the thoroughfares along the river's edge fall into their hands.

The shortest day of the year had been reached.

The nearer the crisis approached, the more courageously did the clergy stand by their duty towards God and the people. The church of the Recollets stood at the centre of military operations, and was kept open night and day, wherein soldier and civilian might pray for the success of British arms and the ultimate saving of the city.

The timid little church bell at length sounded its dying note for the day.

Among the last of the worshippers to enter the chapel, came a maiden, unaccompanied and all wrapped up to the point of disguisement in hood and mantle, who

trippingly passed up the central aisle, and after graceful genuflexion before the faded shrine, took her place in one of the pews within the shadows of the pulpit.

The surroundings were funereal from entrance to chancel. Yet the presence of Marie Hebert seemed to come to the eyes of one near by, like a blink of sunshine, lighting up his face and telling his beating heart that the hope for better days for him, and possibly for others, had not died yet. The evil to come from the dragging events of the siege had, after all, a possible turning point, if one only knew how to reach it with the limited means at his disposal.

And the service had not proceeded to any great length, when, from the outer shadows near the eastern wall of the building, a movement, as of some one changing his place, made some of the worshippers turn to see what was going to happen. The blink of sunshine was producing effects more visible than a palpitating heart. For what the worshippers saw was a young officer, also half disguished in his winter's cloak, moving hastily though quietly,

towards the pew in which Marie Hebert was kneeling in prayer. Without interruption to the maiden's devotions, nay, without visible recognition of any kind, he of the winter's cloak knelt down near the maiden, and, with head bowed on his clasped hands, endeavoured to leave the impression that he had come for no other purposes than to join in the prayers of the congregation.

At length sundry movements expected of the people in the service brought soldier and maiden nearer to each other, without notice being taken of them by their neighbours.

Then a moment came for recognition. The soldier whispered a word or two that was not in the church ritual. And the maiden held out her hand as if by way of cautioning him against repeating the sacrilege. The warning hand, however, he took in his own, before he whispered these words:

"Marie, I have seen the governor."

The reply vouchsafed was known only to him who had spoken,—a scarcely per-

ceptible pressure of the hand that held hers and the gentlest of sighs.

"There is danger, but there is also hope; I must leave you or all will be los[illegible] were the clearly articulated words that again came from the soldier's lips, though only as if he were muttering a part of the service.

"To-morrow night I will see you, if all be well."

Shortly afterwards the soldier left the church as he had come, hurriedly and quietly, though a close observer might have seen an expression round his eyes which said, as truly as words could have said, that all hope was not dead yet and would not be allowed to die if one man could prevent it.

## *CHAPTER II*

### *The Sergeant and the Governor*

THE governor had been busy all day within the precincts of the Recollet Convent, where he had improvised a council chamber with ante-room attachments shortly after his arrival. Well he knew from the first that the fate of the town trembled in the balance. It was a last retreat in Canada from the invader. But his brave heart withstood every worry as his active forethought found a solution for every problem. The court of the Convent and the adjoining Place d'Armes had assumed, since his return, all the activity of bivouac and barrack life. Groups of soldiers were to be seen everywhere from the enclosures of the Chateau as far as the old market-place. From early morning till darkness set in, messengers were ever hurrying from bastion, outpost, and for-

tified gateway to the governor's quarters and back again, spreading dread and consternation among the populace as to what was going to happen next. Altogether, it was a period of contradictory rumors and alarms.

There was no refuge from haphazard anxiety, either within or beyond the walls, while espionage was having its too easy interchange of messages. The invaders, it was pretty well known, were in communication, week by week, with the disaffected in and around the Sault au Matelot. Spies had a freedom in the enemy's camp not often vouchsafed to such gentry. When caught outside the walls they were treated well and sent back with lies in their throat to suffocation. There was a game to be played with every report sent back. These reports were for the ears of the waverers impatient of delay, and the governor would have been foolish not to put an embargo upon all returning citizens who seemed bent on giving a holiday to their patriotism, by acting as spies in the enemy's camp, whenever the weather

THE BASILICA

was fine or when the inclination came upon them. As the days went by, the siege eventually became the closest of sieges. All espionage ceased from the British side. The invading generals might make their concerted attack by way of the river's edge at any moment, and hence it became necessary to treat all trifling with duty as an act of high treason punishable by death. The disaffected were finally given to understand that their ways were being watched and that they might look for no quarter in case of any overt act of rebellion; the city had to be saved from being strangled between treason within and the force of arms without.

Alas, what a Christmastide was that, which was approaching for town and country! With the expectation of calamity at its fullest tension in Chateau, street, and tenement, it was an anomaly to speak of peace and good will among men. The celebration of the birth-day of Christianity would have to be for once hurriedly and solely religious. The clergy would see to it that the day was not wholly given

up to thoughts of war and such wordly cares. But, beyond ceremonial in church or chapel, what friendly interchange of Christian brotherly kindness could there be, save one of doubts and fears?

The crisis and its possible issues thus affected all elements of the population, young and old; and the nearer Christmas Day approached, the fever of no one's expectancy, as things began to shape themselves, surpassed that of Sergeant Louis Froissart. The crisis for him became a double one—an inner and an outer—from which, before or after Christmas, he was either to have a happy release or be plunged into further tribulation, if not possible disgrace.

Next to the Master of the Works, no officer was better known in the town than the "Little Sergeant," as he was familiarly called. He was always a faithful adherent to those in command when his services were required, always a first in popularity. His superior officers petted him to the spoiling, and there was neither man nor woman who had any serious word

of disparagement to urge against him, as far as tradition tells us.

"It never took more than five minutes at any time" as the Master of the Works has borne witness, "for any one to become acquainted with little Louis Froissart. With an *à la française* in all his ways, he would run a muck with his drollery in barrack-room or *camaraderie* of any kind, and make a conquest of everybody present. Five feet five in his stocking feet, nervous in his every movement of body and mind, speaking fluent *français* one minute and *anglais entrecoupé* the next,—eloquent or laconic as the turn took him, always witty and often presuming, there was no escape from the sunny influence of his peculiarly endowed *bonhomie,* little chance of even a confirmed snarler thinking continuing evil of him. That eye of his," as the same quaintly old gossip says, "with its twinkling and all but grimacing light, had evidently been fashioned in the factory of loving-kindness, to force people to look pleasant whenever it was turned upon them, no matter what distress they hap-

pened to be in at the moment. Indeed these mobile features of his were of a flexibility that marked the Little Sergeant as a born comedian, waiting for his opportunity and always taking it."

An hour or so before the Recollet Fathers had called the faithful to worship, Sergeant Froissart had received a summons to wait upon the governor. Froissart, in common with many of the French of the town, had joined as a regular the garrison troops. His loyalty as a citizen had never been impugned nor his diligence as a soldier ever found fault with. Indeed his record for loyalty to the cause was as true as the steel of the governor's own, and the governor had come to know it in more ways than one.

While the Sergeant was still waiting in the anteroom, the door of the general's office was suddenly opened by a young officer, whose manner indicated that matters had not had the ending for him he wished them to have had.

"Ah, you here, Louis!" he said somewhat sadly as he saw the Sergeant, and as

he flung his winter's coat over his shoulders with some impatience.

"*Oui, oui, Monsieur le Capitaine.*"

"For instructions like the rest of us, I suppose?"

"*Ah oui, peut-être;* the general has called me."

The iresponsibility of the Sergeant's words and manner, not to say how they did it, at once dispersed the cloud from the brow of Monsieur le Capitaine.

"More sudden service for you and for me, Mademoiselle Marie and *la petite Monette* being out of count now for a time."

"*Toujours le service et les amours,*—love and duty always: never no other thing for us. Never say die."

Again the words and manner of the Little Sergeant won the day. On leaving the room the young officer was a happier looking man than when he entered it, and just as the door was being closed he beut towards the Sergeant and said:

"I would have a further word with you, Louis, after you have received your orders

as I have received mine: I hope there will be no clashing between them of any kind."

When Sergeant Froissart had been ushered into the presence of the general, any trepidation there might have been on him was not visible for long. A minute after the first greeting had been given by the superior officer, the interview became a meeting between man and man, though the conversation at first remained for the most part in the governor's hands.

"I am glad to continue to hear the best of reports concerning you, Sergeant," said his excellency. "Your fearless diligence and loyalty are in everybody's mouth, and there seems to be no word of flattery in the praise either."

"*Merci*, your excellency: *toujours le service et les amours*: love only when duty don't call. Nothing do, nothing gain," and the Sergeant made one of his inimitable obeissances which would take a whole page of print to describe and even then be indescribable.

"I have not failed to be informed of your faithfulness to both love and duty.

Venus and Mars have always been good friends. But, since the commission I have been induced to entrust to you will demand your whole time for a little while, I would advise you to give Cupid's mother a holiday until the colony has passed the crisis that has come upon it. What think you?"

In reply, the Sergeant would possibly have followed his usual habit of shrugging his shoulders, but interrupting himself as if to remember something or other, he proceeded, with his hand at his forehead and his cap thrown back, to make another of his inimitable acknowledgements. The governor in his uncertainty how to receive the comedy was forced to draw his hand over his face to smooth out the smile that would come, despite the solemn urgency of the message he had to place in the trusty soldier's keeping.

When the manner of the governor and this loyal subject of King George had settled into the serious again, the former continued:

"I suppose, Sergeant Froissart, you are no stranger to the suspicions that have

come to be spoken of somewhat freely about certain citizens of lower town. We have closed all means of exit for those who have for some time been bringing to us doubtful tidings from the enemy's quarters. This should have been done sooner to prevent the fostering of disaffection within the city gates. The visitings to the camps without have ceased, but the disaffection continues. We have therefore decided to take active measures against all suspects within the gates, without respect of persons. You have heard no doubt, for I would say that a soldier of your popularity cannot miss hearing more than I do, that sundry meetings have been held of late for the purpose of considering certain proposals from the enemy. We cannot suffer even the suspicions of treason to be noised abroad, far less to let the actually guilty go unpunished. You met Captain Robarts as you came in, I suppose?"

The Sergeant's face and attitude suddenly became a mark of interrogation, with the pupils of his eyes turned down towards his cheek-bones.

THE WAY TO LOWER TOWN BY THE CHIEN D'OR

"It isn't time to tell on one's friends yet," was what the Little Sergeant would have said had he spoken as he felt.

"Captain Robarts has received a commission from us which will require his full time and attention until the moment the besiegers make that concerted attack of theirs, which the whole town is speaking about. By the way, you know that the Captain is reported to have some kind of a personal interest in the Sault au Matelot?"

The little non-commissioned officer again stood sentry as an interrogation point, with his eye-brows raised even higher than before.

"And they further say that a certain Sergeant Louis Froissart is often seen in that quarter of the town, though no one ever doubts his loyalty or devotion to duty."

"*Ah oui, votre excellence.* Have I not already told you: *le service et les amours, toujours le même?*

"You know a certain Mademoiselle Marie Hebert then?"

"*Certainement,* who does not know *l'ange tutelaire* of lower town?"

"She is the niece of him whom the people call Monsieur Adam?"

Sergeant Froissart again assumed the interrogatory attitude.

"She is, is she not?" repeated the governor, this time demanding an articulate answer.

"*Oui, mon général. Chacun sais cela.*"

"And do you know that Monsieur Adam, as they call him, is a rebel at heart?"

"*Il n'est pas Français, mon général.*"

"No, but you are and we trust you, though I have never had any reason to mistrust any one on account of the language he speaks. Now, here is a list of the miscreants who would betray you and me and this old city into the hands of our enemies, and I would have you help us to get rid of these good-for-nothings *en masse.* This is the purpose of my sending for you. I would have you verify this list and then take action after due consideration of a plan I have drawn up for your guidance. You are popular with the

people and they will not hinder you in driving the rebels out of the town, for out they must go. Sergeant Froissart, will you undertake the command in this affair?"

The Sergeant's attitude was something to see and wonder at. Bending his body first backward and then forward, he finally paused at the perpendicular and said:

"But this Monsieur Adam, *mon général?*"

"There is no escape for him, whatever may happen to the others. He must be arrested and that immediately."

"And the others, your excellency?"

"They will have to eat their Christmas dinner, as best they may, with the braggart-rebels they have been supporting in their hearts."

"And me, *mon général*: what for me? *Espion, menteur,—le trompeur de tous?*"

"I want to hear what you have to say about it."

"*Ah oui.* Then this is what I say about it. I say damn to the whole thing. I say damn to all *traitres.*—for you, for me, for the king. *Maudit* the man who knows

better. *Vive le service et les amours,* say I. But I will do it, *mon général.* I will be no *menteur* neither. I will do it for you, for me, and for the king. *Pourquoi?* I know these people, and I know myself and I know you, *mon général. Oui, oui,* I will do it, because for why? *J'ai une pensée* up here in my head. *Ma foi,* I will do it. *Donnez-moi la carte blanche* and you see if I don't,—*avec satisfaction* besides,—*pour vous, pour moi, pour le roi.*"

Brave Little Sergeant, will he be able to make good his word? Will he be able to be true to *le service et les amours* at one and the same time?

TOWARDS PRES-DE-VILLE.

## *CHAPTER III*

### *Ma chère Monette and Monsieur Adam*

A blinding darkness, with some premonition of an approaching snowstorm, had fallen upon the streets, before Sergeant Louis Froissart was allowed to leave the governor's presence. The Sergeant's acceptance of his new commission did not end the interview, there being sundry details to go over, accompanied with suggestions and counter-suggestions on the part of both.

Indeed the Little Sergeant's head was so full of the contradictions of conduct embodied in the principle of *le service et les amours,* as comically enunciated and reiterated by him, that he had forgotten all about the appointment Captain Robarts had made with him; and, when he stumbled up against that gentleman in one of the crossing pathways of the Place d'Armes,

he tried to hide his confusion by striking one of these farcical attitudes of his, which so often raised a laugh among his friends.

Then, as if it were part of the performance, he instantly turned his back on Monsieur le Capitaine.

"Get out of my way, please," he cried "before I have seen you. I do not know who you are, mind you. I do not know where you are at the present moment, and I haven't time just now to find out where I may be able to find you, Monsieur Somebody or Monsieur Nobody."

"But you might take time to be civil, Louis, and tell me your latest news. You have just left the governor's presence, have you not?"

"*Et vous?*"

"Oh, I have been prowling round here waiting for you."

"*Ah oui, Monsieur le Capitaine,*" exclaimed the funny Louis, still keeping his back turned. "You would have been more safe to wait for me at Pres-de-Ville, where the governor said you were to be, without fail for all the time. The governor has

told me many things, and, if I happen to see you in the dark, I will have to arrest you."

"Arrest me here, you stupid, right here in this place and now?"

"*Oui monsieur,* here or everywhere: anywhere when you are not at Près-de-Ville. Are you at Près-de-Ville yet? Then I must arrest you, sure, when I meet you elsewhere, and you will be shot like one big fool. *Le service et les amours,* no more for you, no more for me, now! Where is lower town my good friend? *Ah oui,* down there; of course it is. Then I am going. *Bon soir!* No, I have not seen you. *Au revoir!* I do not know where you are, unless you be at Près-de-Ville. There, that will do. Run and keep yourself warm, Louis Froissart! Death is much colder than winter. See, I am running from death. *Vite, vite, bon soir Monsieur la Mort!*"

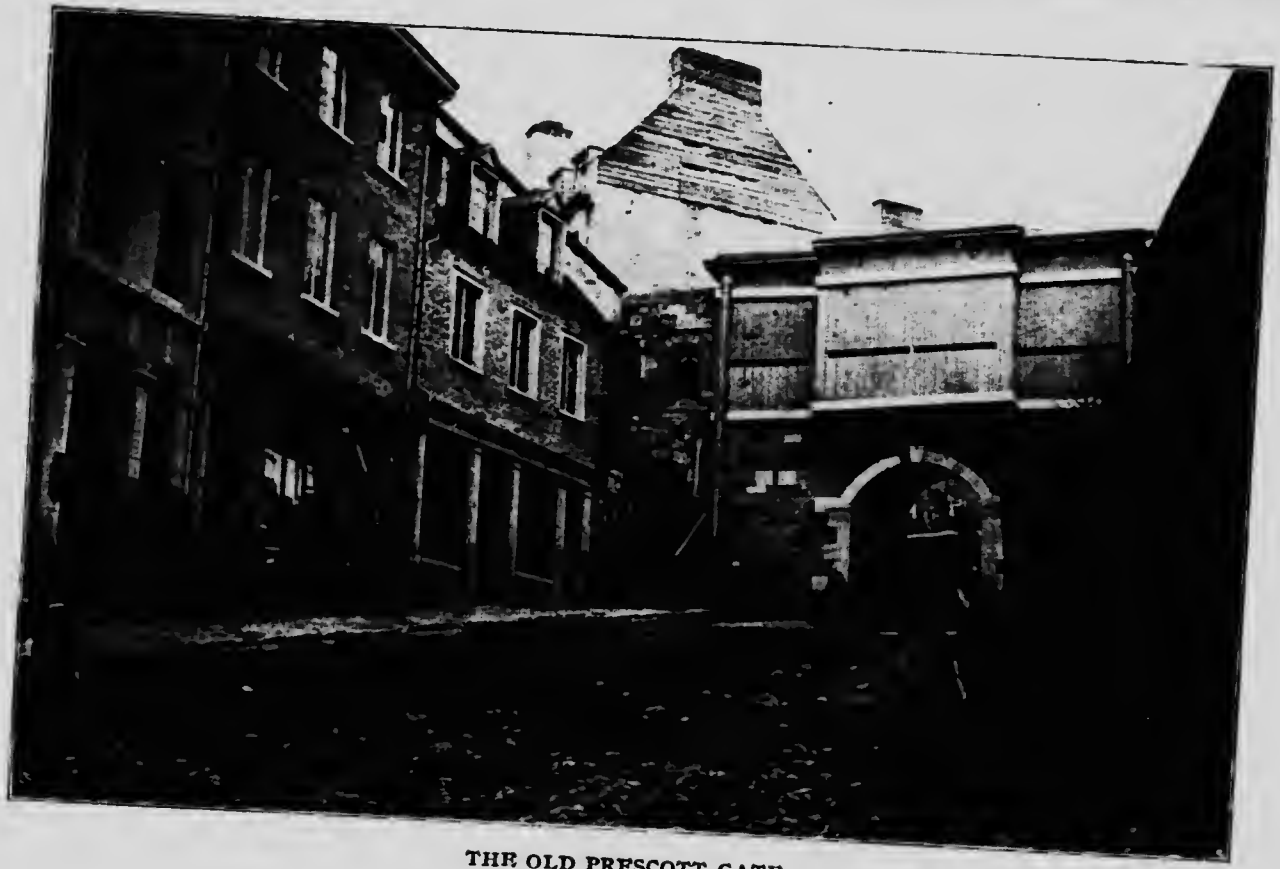
And so into the darkness disappeared the Little Sergeant, having thus attacked, in his whimsical way, the first barricade of his problem.

"So much for Monsieur le Capitaine and Mademoiselle Marie: he may live if he be wise. Now for Monsieur Adam and Mademoiselle, and the little Monette besides" was what he kept repeating to himself as he took the turn of the street into Côte de la Montagne.

So familiar was Sergeant Froissart with the streets of the city that he could have traversed them safely with his eyes shut; and so familiar was every soldier on guard with the voice and manner of the Little Sergeant, that neither pass-word nor explanation of any kind was necessary to make a way for him past gateway, barricade, or outpost sentinel. He always seemed to be on the king's service; and no one had ever suspected him of doing other than his duty.

So downwards he hastened through Prescott Gate, throwing a greeting and an *au revoir* at the sentry in the glare of the solitary lantern that hung in the postern; nor halt did he make until he had reached the first barricade.

This barricade had been built at the



THE OLD PRESCOTT GATE

entrance of the Sault au Matelot. A little to the west of the conjunction of Sous le Cap and the main street, a second barricade stood in the Sergeant's way: but both of these obstructions he nimbly surmounted, without attracting any special attention from the guards.

On his way down, the darkness which beset him was relieved here and there by the lanterns hung on the outposts, or from the straggling candlelight from the tenement windows. But when he had passed the second barricade the darkness became Stygian and bewildering.

In this deeper strata he was forced to grope his way with the greatest of caution, keeping close to the walls of the houses and pausing now and again to assure himself. At last the open palm of his hand came in contact with the rough-cast of a building which he seemed to identify by the feel of the stones of which it was built. A sigh of relief escaped him, and when he had reached the angle of the wall, he was no longer in doubt as to his bearings. The house he had reached was a corner

building, with its frontage facing the cross street. Turning down this cross street, the Sergeant finally succeeded in reaching the front entrance of the dwelling and there sat down on the doorstep to rest for a moment and collect his thoughts.

"*Ah oui; toujours le service et les amours, toujours le même, toujours le même,*" and the little soldier's head sank between his hands, as he continued to make the rhythm of his favourite phrases run from his lips with an accent all their own.

"*Toujours le même chez vous et chez nous.*"

The memory of what this house, at whose doorstep he now sat, had been to him, and the thought of what it still was to him, struck him as an offence against what he had come to do.

The house was the home of Monsieur Adam, and had been the Little Sergeant's home too, before he had taken to soldiering: it embodied one of the pleasantest chapters in Louis Froissart's life.

But had not the governor called Monsieur Adam a rebel, and had he not made

up this mind to arrest him? Perhaps the officer was already on his way with the warrant which he, Sergeant Louis Froissart of his Majesty's forces in Canada, had refused to serve! But was he not here to warn Monsieur Adam of what was going to happen? Ah well yes, but was this the way he was going to do his duty as a soldier? *Le service et les amours, toujours le même!* Would he return the way he had come *pour le service* and betray *les amours* and Monette,—*pauvre petite Monette!*—and Mademoiselle Marie and Monsieur le Capitaine and all the rest of everything and everybody?

Was Monsieur Adam, for sure, a rebel? The governor had said that he was, and had all but said the same thing about Monsieur le Capitaine. But did the governor know what a kind and generous master Monsieur Adam had been to poor little Louis Froissart, before the day of this damn invasion? Did he know what this house had been to the Sault au Matelot before the big handsome brother of Monsieur Adam had gone to the war and was

killed, bringing the tear always and still to the beautiful eyes of Mademoiselle Marie who was going to marry Monsieur le Capitaine Robarts by and by? Was the governor aware that he, Louis Froissart, had seen in that house the romance of *les amours* budding and blossoming in the lives of those whom he himself had learned to love above all else in the world, —alas, the romance of interrupted love that was going to see Monsieur Adam arrested and everybody's funeral too?

The comedy of life had evidently pretty well gone out of one of the warmest corners of the poor Little Sergeant's heart.

"And there is *ma chère Monette!* What does the governor know about her? And yet it is she that lives in this big house with all its doors and windows closed and barred as if it was already deserted,—it is she that lives in there with Monsieur Adam and Mademoiselle Marie, and it is Monsieur Adam that is to be arrested to-morrow and shot in the barrack-yard like one common rascal."

What a serious matter it is when a

man's destiny falls into his own hands! A man's judgment at its best makes but a wavering Providence.

"And if I go into that house and alarm it from garret to floor, what then? Traitor will it be that Monsieur will call me? Coward will it be that Mademoiselle and Monette will say? Damn to the whole thing say I, as I have told the governor another time. I am no traitor nor coward neither; and I will give warnir all the same. *Le service* say you, and *amours* also besides! Who says that Louis Froissart does not know all that and more likewise? So here goes; that door must open itself to me, *ma foi,* no matter who opens it. Louis Froissart is no longer foolish."

And thus it was that the Sergeant mustered courage from his own rather irrelevant words, and made his first attack on the door; and, when no answer came, he knocked again addressing the poor door's recalcitrancy after the manner of his usual gentle light-heartedness.

"Come there, old Sesame, get a move on

your shoes! You needn't keep an old friend of yours waiting on you. There's no chance for you to draw back now; so hurry up," and in this way, with his knuckles making accompaniment, Louis continued his attack until the alarmed voice of a woman was heard asking who was there.

"*Ah oui, Monette, c'est moi, ma chère!*"

"Oh, it is the monster is it? What brings you now? Is the siege over or have you lost your way?"

"Let me in, *ma chère,* and I will tell you all about it."

"Are you sure it is yourself or only another of the monsters of the Sault au Matelot whose friends are all foes?"

"Let me in, and you will see for yourself, *ma chère.*"

"And be eaten up with all the rest of us?"

"*Non, non, Monette!* Don't be afraid, It is only the monster of the warm heart and the stupid head,—your madcap Louis: let me in, please, before the patrol comes round."

The door was opened at last, though just so far as to let the Little Sergeant slide in, as if between the bars of a cage.

Then a comedy had to be played out as a preliminary by the comedian who, as has been said, was always looking for his opportunity and never failed to take it. Indeed for some little time there was little chance given to the Little Sergeant to explain to the adorable Monette the true purpose of his coming: there were so many personal greetings to be exchanged, so many details of disturbed head-dress to attend to and be excused for. At length the Sergeant had to tell Monette in so many plain words that Monsieur Adam was to be arrested, before he could get the purpose of his coming into the little woman's head.

"There was no other way for me to tell you, *ma chère,*" Louis pleaded, when with an ill-subdued scream, Monette flung herself into his arms and then struggled to free herself from him.

"Oh you cruel wicked monster, monsters all of you! Arrest Monsieur Adam, for

what,—to kill him, and the Mademoiselle Marie too, perhaps? How dare you enter this house to tell us all that? Arrest Monsieur Adam! Why, what has he done? What has Mademoiselle Marie done? I believe you would like to see all of us thrown into the vaults of the Chateau, me and everybody else. Oh monsters all of you,—the most wicked of monsters! Where is the brave Captain Robarts?"

"I hope he is at Près-de-Ville by this time, or *le service* may be after him as it is after all of us."

And then the Sergeant took time, after much soothing and a little further comedy, to get Monette to understand things as he himself understood them. It was not he that was the monster who was to make any arrest.

"I would therefore have you, *ma chère*, be a good and wise little girl. You will tell Mademoiselle Marie all that I have told you, and help her to take all precautions and make ready to go where all danger is not there. I will see Monsieur Adam in his warehouse, if you will let


THE SITE OF MONSIEUR 'ADAM'S HOUSE

me pass through that way. He must be there for he is always there, and I trust he will not be too stubborn if I see him first and alone, before the officer arrives with his warrant."

* * *

At what time Monsieur Adam escaped from the Sault au Matelot the governor never was able to find out. Neither Mademoiselle Marie nor her maid Monette could throw any light upon his disappearance, since they also had disappeared. All that the officer could say was that he had not delayed till next morning, but for all that had not missed being too late. And no one ever suspected Sergeant Louis Froissart of having been directly or indirectly disloyal to *le service* urged thereto by his faithfulness to *les amours.* As he himself was heard often to say, after peace had restored freedom of speech in such matters: Monsieur Adam was a free man when he disappeared from Sault au Matelot. He was no criminal fleeing from

justice. He had been proven guilty of no offence against the law.

*Le service et les amours!*

Besides all this, had not Sergeant Louis Froissart spent the night with Monsieur le Capitaine Robarts at Près-de-Ville, as he had been commanded by the governor, so that he might mature his plans for the driving of the disaffected from the city, before Christmas should bring upon the town that concerted attack which everybody was expecting?

## *CHAPTER IV*

### *The Narative of the Master of the Works*

THERE surely never has been such a Christmas since Christendom has had tales of impending evil to tell. The inevitable smothering open hand of fate seemed to have fallen upon our poor beleaguered town. Law-and-order was hourly kept on edge as to what was going to happen. From the Chateau to the ramparts, even to the ice-fringed livid river, there was to be found neither refreshing rest for the body nor solace for the mind of man. Not to miss our Christmas duty, there had gone up, from within the walls of the Basilica after early morning mass, a great cry unto God to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies. This cry had been repeated in the church of Notre Dame des Victoires and in the chapel of the Recollets and elsewhere in

private; and what more could we poor fate-stricken citizens do?

So, here about noonday, was I, the Master of the Works, standing on the platform of the barracks' court-yard, in company with the Little Sergeant, looking this way and that way for further hints of alarm of the approaching enemy. It was said that the invaders had been making it a boast, in their camps, that they would eat their Christmas dinner within the precincts of the Chateau; and the general-in-command, who was also our good and brave governor, had taken every precaution to have each man permanently at his post, as was right and proper, and as I myself had proposed should be done, the moment it was known that the enemy were on the march towards us. And so here, as I say, was I standing with Sergeant Louis Froissart, on the *qui vive* as all others were, before a final call to arms had been sounded.

As I made to listen to my companion's foreign talk, not altogether unpleasant to my English ears, there came a shrinking

and a sinking at my stout heart that I had seldom felt before.

From the day that I had given up my wanderings, *per mare et terras*, I had never made knowledge of a comrade for whom I had such a heart-fancy as I had for this same Louis Froissart. Those who knew us,—and that might safely be reckoned the whole town—were wont to marvel at the antithesis of character in our companionship. Yet the kittenish manner and *anglais entrecoupé* of the Little Sergeant were always like a tasse of Hollands or Jamaica to my energies, should these energies happen to be enervated by the fulfilling of my many duties. There was something in his prattle and loving kindness that ever warmed the cockles of my heart; and so I never had any thing but a good word to say of him; but rather, like the rest of the garrison made much of him at all times.

But so overcome was I on this memorable Christmas morning—so overwhelmed in fact with doubt and tribulation, that there was nothing but rebuke in my heart

for all mankind. The cheer and chatter of my little friend fell flat on my nerves. In his enthusiasm over the latest commission he had received direct from the governor, he was full of the details of his daily raids among the disaffected around the purlieus of Sault au Matelot; but his little ebullitions were lost on me, until at last I could see that he was wondering at my lack of appreciation to the point of taking offence at my silence. A Frenchman's *amour propre* is a very sensitive bit of emotional apparatus; and so to save appearances, I took part in the conversation, by remarking that though the day was passing quickly along, there was no sign of any preparations being made by the enemy, for the cooking of that Christmas dinner we had been hearing so much about.

"There is one damn sight for some people than that," said the Little Sergeant in his usual impulsive way. "There are two-three *canaille* scoundrels to find their hotel-de-Noel in the suburb *ce soir,* for sure, before much else is to happen, and I

guess Louis Froissart is right for once more."

I never took pleasure in profane words and, being in such poor heart I suppose, I rebukingly told him that it was a sin to speak so flippantly in presence of imminent danger, though at another time I might have had some word in my mouth to encourage him in his droll way of putting things, which we all found, and I myself particularly, so difficult to remember or put on paper.

Indeed a second after, I silently rebuked myself and in a more considerate tone said to him:

"This suspense is assuredly worse for all of us than certain danger pressing upon us face to face to our undoing. Even if we have the strongest faith in one another, this waiting on alarm makes us hide our faces from our friends. Standing still is the poorest game for a soldier to play. But what report is this you have to make of your mission among the disaffected in the Sault au Matelot? I missed hearing

fully what you were saying about last night's work in that quarter."

You see I knew very nearly all about the mission the governor had entrusted to the Little Sergeant.

"*Ah oui,* that is so: *mon épervier*—what you call it, scoop-net, eh?—has frightened many good fish, but others very bad are safe. The *canaille,* I know where to find *si bien,* all right. I have some cooking for them *ce soir.* The rascals outside yonder don't seem to be in no hurry to make hash of us, and so we will have to make some hash for them, *les fanfarons* they are. They have not yet finished their breakfast, *peut-être,* and since they do not want no dinner, I must see for the cooking of some *boudin* for their supper. I have some *pouding-de-canaille* on the cook-stove for them."

The Little Sergeant, as I well knew, had been doing his cooking on the principle of "*le service et les amours,*" as he did everything else. He had been separating the dog-fish from the shad.

The commission placed in his hands by the governor, as I had been informed from

FROM THE RAMPARTS

day to day, was being fulfilled carefully and judiciously. The Little Sergeant was no man to let the grass grow under his feet.

Nay, it was always a puzzle to me where he kept his resources of action and endurance in that small body of his. The favourite phrase, which he was always repeating at odd times and in the oddest of manners, supplied him somehow or other with courage for every emergency and complacency of purpose at every turn. Day and night he had been flitting around the Sault au Matelot and its purlieus, with the governor's list of the disaffected hidden away in his tunic, and with copies of the oath of allegiance always in readiness to present while giving every one, who would wisely take it, the chance of escaping from being driven beyond the walls, to endure the terrors of winter and the doubtful hospitality of what he called the *fanfarons* of the St. Foye and the suburbs beyond the Palais. No more faithful subject had King George in Canada than my little friend and comrade, Sergeant Louis

Froissart—no more steadfast adherent was there to the Christmas principle of good will to men in times either of war or peace.

"For sure you will come with me *ce soir;* for sure, and never say die, my good friend: some fine things will make you please yourself, by and by. No, I have done wrong thing to no man. *Le service et les amours, toujours le même,* that's me all the time. Four-five *français* that is all, *tout à fait,* no more for sure, for my net. More Yankee beggars, *mauvais poissons* for sure—*ah oui,* they make good fry for the kettle *pour les fanfarons. Mauvais sujets* these *messieurs,* and out they must go as the governor says, and you too, *et tous les bons français,* besides. The Patrol will be on time and you and me we will all be there in the dark and quiet too. They think we don't know them,—nor what they be doing, the *canaille,* they don't know nothing. I will scoop them all, that is the word, into my *épervier,* and then all will be well for the king in Sault au Matelot,—for you, for me, and for the

general. Bravo! for sure you will come my good friend, for sure and no mistake. *A neuf heures,* and you know very much where."

And so with these whimsical and yet not altogether enigmatical words, uttered after the Little Sergeant's inimitable way of saying things, my comrade left me to my own wretched thinkings, until some word should come to me of the approach of the enemy. Everything was in readiness to receive them whenever they should come; and, if nothing happened between noon and sundown. I promised myself to join the Patrol in the Sault au Matelot, in order to give them my advice and assistance if they were called for.

## *CHAPTER V*

### *The False Alarm*

AND much after the same manner does the narrative of the Master of the Works continue to a finish.

An hour before sundown, the attack on the Palace Gate had been resumed with as much impetuosity as ever. The incessant roar of the cannon could be heard, with some little discomfort, I confess, to the pans of my ears, as I stood at an outpost near the palissades of St. Genevieve where I had been called to superintend certain changes in the barricade that had been raised there, in case the outer wall should by any chance be carried by storm. Of course we all knew that there was not much immediate danger from these attacks on the Palace Gate, which we had strengthened from time to time and which was

THE OLD LOUIS GATE

well guarded from under cover. But while we were all busy at work, with the resoluteness of soldiers, a report was brought to me that a large body of men under one of the invading generals, as it was supposed, was drawing near to the Louis Gate, and it was not for me to hinder the men from going over on a rush to the walls to find out what was going to happen. I knew that there could be no entrance for the rascals that way no more than by the Palais, so we crowded behind the parapet of the part of the wall nearest to the gate, peering out at the enemy's movements. What we saw was the approach of the so-called general towards the gate, preceded by a soldier waving a flag of truce. As soon as he came within hearing distance he raised his voice and then we all stood up from behind the parapet in a body to hear what he had say.

His words I have no mind to repeat as they were spoken, even could my memory be depended upon for such a task; but they would no doubt have been very interesting, —perhaps more so than to any of us,—to

my friend the Little Sergeant had he not been otherwise engaged in the Sault au Matelot. My indignation was at the bursting point through the audacity of the adventurer,—for I never could think of either general other than as such,—and, if I had not had in hand for the time being my own duties, a warmer reception would have been given him than he expected.

Even at this distance of time my emotion boils over at the purpose of his coming which was made very plain to all of us before he had gone far with his oration. His words were the words of an arrant coward, and couched in them neither more nor less than an appeal to the disaffected, as if we were all of that kidney. In his whinings, he said that he was under instructions to offer indemnity and safe conduct from the place, if we had a mind to make a present of it to him and the government he represented. "Open the gates to us" was the scandalous purport of his vile suggestion. "We will see that you are well taken care of." Otherwise he said, we might be guilty of an injustice

towards ourselves, and it was no intention of him or his military colleague to push matters to a cruel extremity with men who could not but be impressed with the righteousness of the cause being fought for; namely, liberty for a down-trodden colony.

Maddened beyond endurance by these words, I took no further thought than to raise my voice in its fullest compass and threw back upon the poltroon the insult he had meant for us, the brave defenders of a beleaguered town. It was perhaps no function of mine to do this; but it was done as I describe; and even while I was speaking a great confusion arose all behind and around me, and extended later to the fellows the cowardly scoundrel had brought with him, as if they were worthy of being called an army, retreating as they did pell-mell from the guns mounted on the masonry of the gate-way.

"So this is the kind of plum-pudding they would eat at our expense on a Christmas," cried out a big brawny corporal standing near me. "These scoundrels are, as you say, arrant cowards all

of them, and, if I were in command, I would have done as you have done and given them smoke with my words as well. It is not too late even yet to have a hunting party sent after them before they reach cover."

"They are not likely to make traitors or cowards of us as they have been trying to make of some wretches in Sault au Matelot," said another soldier near by. "Thank God, though, the Little Sergeant will soon send all such as a Christmas present to the St. Foye and perhaps farther let us hope."

* * *

When darkness had settled upon the city for another day, there arose an alarm of another kind which not a little disturbed those who were not yet in possession of the lesson concerning the character of the invaders that we had just received near Louis Gate. Shortly after sunset, the battering at the Palace Gate had ceased as it usually did. Still the poltroons were seemingly not done yet with their Christmas

THE ROCK OVERLOOKING PRES-DE-VILLE

celebrations: for the garrison soldiers had hardly risen from their evening meal when a great illumination spread itself all along the western wall and lit up the tops of the higher buildings in the streets. Had the enemy made up their minds after all to make a general attack? Did they propose to supplement their braggadocio by a foolish attempt on the outer walls? The source of illumination, when I first saw it, I could locate nowhere, setting aside all deception of distance in such cases, save in the trenches of the upper slopes that overlooked the battlements. The affair could only be another phase of their childish game of bluffing. In fact, there was nothing to be alarmed at in the least degree. For when the matter was seen to by myself and a company of my workmen, it was found to be only a series of gigantic bonfires, just as I had at first surmised, laid along one of the trenches on the height of ground, near the glacis. I was now settled in my mind that there would be no Christmas attack on the town, and felt relieved that I would

be free to join the Little Sergeant in the Sault au Matelot. For as I may say, I was now fired with the greatest bitterness against the disaffected of that district, who, by their rebellious conduct had brought disgrace and insult on all good and loyal citizens, as had been witnessed by us that afternoon outside of the Louis Gate. In my opinion now, these creatures deserved the worst treatment Sergeant Froissart, in his tender mercies, was preparing for them.

## *CHAPTER VI*

### *The Raid of Sault au Matelot*

IT was a few minutes after nine of the clock when I approached the place of rendezvous, which—although the Little Sergeant had not indicated it in so many words—I knew as well as he did, from having been there with him more than once before. Nor was I surprised to find him standing with the Captain of the Patrol, within the deepest shadow of the barricade near the entrance of the Sault au Matelot, closely scrutinizing the large building on the north side of the street. Even as I came up, on tiptoe as it were, I could see three men enter the building in question by a side door.

The Little Sergeant's fry for the *fanfarons* was evidently not far from the cooking now; and the *cuisinier* was not to be turned aside from his purpose either;

for, when I had touched him on the shoulder, he merely raised his arm by way of caution, knowing without turning round, as if by instinct, that it could be no other than myself.

"*Les poissons*" he muttered "have a scaly look, though, fish-like, they use not their sense of smell. They keep good time for you and for me, though; I think I must have told them to be on time," and he shrugged his shoulders as was his wont when getting off a bit of sarcasm. "Keep near; be still, or *les trois qui suivent* may come scared."

I took the necessary precautions, and so safely were the three of us concealed that it was impossible for any one to see us, as we kept watch on the side door, by which I had seen the three men enter the building opposite.

After an interval of two or three minutes, three more men made their appearance and disappeared in the same way, taking as little precautions to be hidden as the others.

"Some more and our turn will be then,

too," again muttered the Little Sergeant. "My, won't they laugh round their heads when they find how *mon épervier* can scoop?"

Then three more men came along.

"One more three, and then we join the *canaille*. It is *la Société des Trois* and our number is true."

And almost immediately three more men came in sight, and as soon as they had disappeared the Sergeant exclaimed:

"Now, *mes amis*, it is time; these are all to come; it is time now for us, *bien!*"

In a moment we were on the inside of the door the men had entered by. The Little Sergeant had provided himself with a dark lantern, though he knew the way upstairs as well as did the men we were after and he knew also that I was no stranger to the place either.

"That's so now: *le service*, no more *les amours*,—the scoundrels, the hang-dogs! Never say no to me: *en haut* we go,—*vite* but quiet as one little mouse!"

Arriving on the landing, we passed along a narrow passage, until, we stood

before a closed door, from which a streak or two of light came from the edges when our lantern was turned aside.

We had overheard some murmuring of voices before we had reached the end of the passage, but it was not until we had come to a pause at the door we could distinguish what any one was saying.

At length we all could hear one voice above the others, and we were glad of it, for it gave substantial evidence that the men we were after were worse in their character than we had imagined. Recklessly they were like so many ostriches failing to take precautions for their own safety.

For these were the words which I overheard, as I well remember:

"There is no sense in our waiting until after we have been all hanged, to reap our reward. I believe that the Chateau bloodhounds are at our heels, though none of you seem to know it. Christmas, that was to bring so much to all of us, has come and is going, and we are just where we were and worse. That puppy-dog of a Sergeant

Froissart has been sneaking round town with the precious oath of allegiance in his hand for every suspect to sign and be safe. Do you think I would sign such a paper? Would any of you be coward enough to sign it? Fire was to have answered fire this very evening, had we been ready, as we ought to have been. Had there not been cowards amongst us, the town would have been by this time in flames or in the hands of our friends beyond the walls. And now what are we going to do? Send for the Little Sergeant to hear us say our prayers or the Master of the Works to make our coffins?"

"No need for that, old man; I will send the Captain of the Patrol here back now to find his men, to make a funeral procession for you all, and then you may die where and how you want to."

So said my friend the Little Sergeant under his breath, though there was little need for him to hide what he had to say in any whisper, since the sound of confusion from within and the scuffling of feet was sufficient to let us know that our im-

mediate presence was not yet suspected. My own indignation was very great, since I had heard my name mentioned with such effrontery, and I was now prepared for anything, even to the bursting open of the door with my broad shoulders.

I could see that the Little Sergeant was in no mood either, to trifle with the rascals who had just insulted him.

The Captain of the Patrol had disappeared.

Every one within seemed to be speaking at one and the same time, though in a hushed tone. Indeed we could make nothing further of what was being said inside.

Then the Sergeant tried the door, but it was surely barricaded within, since it remained immovable to the by no means gentle push we both gave it, which would have burst any lock.

At last when my comrade thought he had waited long enough for something he expected to happen outside, he shook the door with some violence and rapped aloud.

"Ho, there within!" I myself shouted.

THE SAULT-AU-MATELOT DISTRICT

"Open the door or we will have it opened by force for you," and I hardly had spoken when a first alarm of the Patrol was sounded in the street.

"Make no mistake; we are not to be trifled with."

Deep and instant silence had now fallen upon the nest of scoundrels: they knew that there was no escape for them.

After some further parley, the obstructions were removed from the door and we were finally admitted; and, as we entered, the candlelight within shone upon the lividity of fear on the twelve cowardly wretches whom we had now no thought of pitying.

"*Ah oui, messieurs,* we are all in time, and I see we are all here," said the Little Sergeant advancing to a table in the centre of the room while taking from the pocket of his tunic a book and a paper. "This is a copy of—I say not what in such company" said he, continuing to hold the Bible in one hand, "and this is the oath of allegiance to His Majesty King George of England," holding the paper in the other.

"Which you will have? You need both don't you, messieurs—at this very moment too? But you have refused both, have you not, just a little while since when you were making some sport with our good names."

During the further deep silence which followed these words, the alarm of the Patrol was heard for the second time.

The sound deepened the look of despair on these twelve cowardly faces.

"Now this is all I say to you, messieurs," continued the Little Sergeant, whom I had never respected so highly as I did at that moment. "My word for you is short and you may have heard it before. It is *le service et les amours,* and that is not much, though you know neither the one nor the other, what it mean. For you this moment it mean this: I love none of you, nor my friend here; nor the governor loves none of you, nor the king either. So you must go elsewhere. *L'amour de la patrie* does not lay hold on you ever; and *le service* must now lay hold on you, and you must go where you can do yourselves only harm. *Oui, le service* is after

you. The king's soldiers come; don't you hear them? That is their feet on the stair and in the corridor: that is the Patrol and its brave captain. They are at the door, they are here: Bravo,*pour le service du roi; à bas tous les traitres!*"

The men were cowards all of them. They made no resistance and the soldiers had them all bound two by two ready for the march in almost the time it takes me to tell it.

I was delighted at the way the Little Sergeant had done his duty.

When we arrived in the street, another smaller group of these wretches was taken up by us and then another, before we had passed Prescott Gate.

Reaching the Place d'Armes, they were all rushed together at its centre where the governor was waiting to receive them and give them their *congé* in due official form.

"You have not been true to England, your mother and protector," is virtually what the governor said as I remember, "and you must seek for protection else-

where. As I have been told by my faithful officer, Sergeant Froissart, you have had every opportunity to bethink you of your conduct, towards this our city. It will now be well rid of you, as it will of all traitors. Get ye gone then to the banishment which you so richly deserve; and let us see this matter of the present siege brought to a final issue by brave resistance and not by cowardly connivance at our enemy's treachery. Sergeant Froissart and you my faithful Master of the Works, I would have you conduct these persons who are no longer the subjects of King George, to the Louis Gate and there with the men under your command see that they find exit from this city of Quebec, to have from henceforth no share in our common citizenship."

And thus was that memorable Christmas brought to an end, as far as Sergeant Louis Froissart and myself were concerned. When we had duly driven the scoundrels beyond the gate and were well within again, I could hear my little comrade and fellow gossip humming to an outlandish air I had never heard before:

## LE SERVICE ET LES AMOURS

*Le service et les amours,*
*Toujours le même, toujours le même,*
*Toujours le même, chez vous et chez nous!*

## *EPILOGUE*

### *All's well that ends well*

*"Ah oui, Monette, ma chère Monette!* You have heard then, Monsieur le Capitaine, you have heard!"

The siege was over. How it culminated in the success of the British arms is a matter of history. The saving of the city was the saving of Canada, and to the loyalty of the French inhabitants of the time may be traced many of the results which have made of the country what it is to-day.

The bravery of Monsieur le Capitaine and the steadfast integrity of Sergeant Louis Froissart had brought to each of these soldiers what the bravest soldier never despises, namely well deserved recognition from the service. The governor had reason to challenge, before the siege was over, his suspicions of the former, and even began to think, before springtime

came, that he had made a mistake in his estimate of the character of Monsieur Adam and the charges of disloyalty which some had urged against him.

Be this as it may, the return of Monsieur Adam in the spring of the year, when the awakening of trade demanded his presence, was not interfered with. He was one of the richest of the merchants of the lower town of his time,—a man of strong personality and rugged ready opinions which, as some thought, had encouraged the disaffected in their hazardous courses. That was all there was in it, at least so Louis Froissart had been heard saying more than once, even in the presence of the governor.

"So you have heard, Monsieur le Capitaine?"

"That is true, I have heard. But what of that? You would not have me speak to you until I am at Près-de-ville, would you?"

"Ah you do not forget, I see, Monsieur le Capitaine; but that, you know, is of the old olden time."

And the two soldiers laughed and shook hands for the second time.

"Do you always try to forget the olden times, Louis Froissart, that are not so very old either?"

"Ah no; but what of Mademoiselle?"

Monsieur le Capitaine smiled and shook hands again.

"She is very well indeed."

"And Monsieur Adam?"

"Oh, he is well."

A pause.

"Is there anybody else you would like to ask about,—nobody of the name of Monette?"

"*Ah oui, Monette, ma chère Monette!* You have heard then, Monsieur le Capitaine, you have heard!"

Then Monsieur le Capitaine told the Little Sergeant many things that were of great interest to both of them and made them shake hands very often. But none of these things seemed to be of more joyous import than the tidings that Monsieur Adam would return almost imme-

NOTRE-DAME DES VICTOIRES

diately and that Modemoiselle and her maid would return with him.

And Monsieur Adam did return at the specified time, as did also Mademoiselle and her maid. And there was a wedding early in June, though that is a story to be told all by itself. And there was a second wedding later on in the same month, though that is another story to be told all by itself. Monette said that she could wait until after Mademoiselle was married, and when that event of a marriage had been solemnized in the little Chapel of the Recollets, Sergeant Louis Froissart asserted himself and said that, monster as he was always being called, he would wait no longer than the middle of June; while the adorable Monette asserted herself in turn by saying that she would be married in no other church in the town than the one in which her fair mistress had been married, even if all the monsters of the Sault au Matelot should be let loose on her for doing so.

# THAT
# NORWARD BUSINESS ROMANCE

# THAT NORWARD BUSINESS ROMANCE

## *CHAPTER I*

### *Mr. Charles Mandeville, Promoter*

MR. Charles Mandeville was as near the end of his resources as he well could be. In his career as a promoter of commercial projects great and small, he had had many ups and downs; but as far his forecast of events went for the moment he could see nothing but final collapse for this Norward enterprise of his, unless something bordering on the miraculous should change his father's mind. And, even within a few miles from *La Bonne Ste. Anne,* the miracle that would finally set Mr. Charles Mandeville on his feet as an assured business venture *per se,* with or without his father's assistance,

was hardly to be expected by those who knew the full mental stature and character of the man.

Mr. Charles Mandeville had not lived all the thirty-five years of his life in the city of Quebec. He had reached manhood before leaving the West Indies, where his father, Major Mandeville, had been an officer of the Commissariat for many successive terms, and where he had done his best, first to make a soldier of his son Charles, and afterwards to make of him whatever he could be made into.

Even after Major Mandeville had married a second time, with a second family to support, he continued to foster as best he could his son's affairs,—nor forsook him and them even after, having drifted into dubious business ways in the Indies, the young promoter had drifted to New York and into further dubious business ways that issued in a final drifting to Quebec. It was while Mr. Mandeville was struggling with the men and angels of Gotham that a retreat was prepared for him in the ancient capital; for there, in the mean-

time his father had taken up his abode as a retired officer of the service, possibly induced to do so on account of the interest he had in a seigneury near that city which, as things turned out, had seldom any interest for him when the rentals and contras were made up at the end of the year. Indeed, as other things turned out, there was just enough of an income left to the Major to meet the responsibilities of being in the governor's set in a capital city; and thus, with little more than sufficient to make ends meet and sometimes barely that, the affairs of Mr. Charles Mandeville continued to be more or less of a nightmare to his father, with no assurance that they would ever be other.

The office windows of Mandeville & Co. looked out upon the Cul-de-Sac. In olden times the Cul-de-Sac had been open water —an inner petty harbour for small craft; but in later years it had been filled in, in front of the new market-house which had been built with the stones, and after the exact design, of the old Parliament Building, that once stood adjacent to the Bish-

op's Palace. The office windows of Mandeville & Co. therefore looked out upon the largest of the city's market-places; and, when the senior partner of the firm sat at his desk, his eye was sufficiently high above the sill of one of them, to enable him to see what was going on in the so-called Cul-de-Sac, without interrupting to any serious extent any enforced retrospect of his business affairs. As old Jules Lapointe used to say—Jules was all that ever could be traced, before the more prosperous Norward days, of any sign or symbol of the junior members of the firm—it was one thing to see Monsieur Mandeville five minutes before you were ushered into his presence and quite another thing to see him when you were once with him; and had you asked Jules to explain himself, he would probably only have shrugged his shoulders with no articulate explanation to give. What the old factotum of Mandeville & Co. wanted to say, perhaps, was that Mr. Charles Mandeville was always very busy whenever anyone was around or wanted something done, never very

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busy when he was beyond the inspection of others.

And on the Saturday market morning on which Mr. Mandeville's affairs were visibly approaching their very worst phase, old Jules Lapointe might have proved his proposition without much insistence, since, all alone in his office, Mr. Mandeville was only, after his usual manner, keeping at arm's length impending calamity, by listlessly looking on at what was going on outside and letting all solving of serious problems go to the dogs, with the chance that some of them would be good enough to solve themselves. Lying back in his office-chair, tilted at a dangerous angle from the table on which his feet rested, he for a minute or two, to give him his due, strove to wrestle with the cold-blooded facts of his financial straits, stern and ominous as the face of a relentless enemy; and perhaps would have continued to do so for some time longer as a sort of penance, had the temptation not come upon him to keep in touch now and again with the animated scene outside the window.

For the market-place was crowded to overflowing with hucksters and their customers. The whole scene looked like a veritable fly-spot where the sweets of earth had fallen—a world in miniature— a *practical* world as some would make of this bigger world of ours, with nothing in it but buying and selling and the making of profits and losses,—with money and money's worth as the only standard,—with nothing mythical or troublesomely enigmatical about it, save making sure of the change returned after a bargain had been struck. And the whole compass of this little world Mr. Mandeville could watch without changing his position on chair and table, since his head could be turned, with perfect comfort to his ratiocinative faculties, as it lay in the swivel of his hands clasped behind it.

All at once some object in the market-place drove all nonchalance out of Mr. Mandeville. The impetus of taking his feet suddenly from the table drew upon all that was safe in that dangerous angle at which he had tilted his precious body.

For a moment there was a grotesque outspreading of arms and legs as of a man seeking to rest from swimming on his back. The front legs of the chair came suddenly and ridiculously to the floor, as did also Mr. Mandeville's; while Mr. Mandeville himself, caring now more for a standing position than any other, raised himself to his full height at some distance from the window, and fixed his eyes on what had driven him from his *pose* of contemplation. The line of vision from Mr. Mandeville's eye to the disturbing object of attention was naturally enough a straight line; and at the end of that straight line was to be seen,—nothing perhaps very extraordinary —only the lithely attractive form of Miss May Langton stooping over the wares of one of the huckster-stalls.

And what huckster, pray you, was there who would not want to prolong a bargaining with such a customer, even if there were only one standard in that miniature world of his, and though he might know nothing of the interest the prolonging of the bargaining had for some third person making

a line of vision of his own from his office window to his, the huckster's, table of kitchen-stuff? Indeed it was wonderful how interested that third person came to be in his line of vision and what was at the end of it, before several other hucksters were through their bargaining with Miss Langton.

Nor was the interest of Mr. Mandeville altogether objective. Immediately on assuming his new point of observation, he not only smoothed down his hair with his hands but took out from some mysterious somewhere a pocket comb and miniature looking-glass and gave the parting down the middle a finishing touch or two, as it were, you know. Then he drew the lapelles of his coat closer to his shirt front as if to hide from somebody's gaze how much or how little of a heart he had, and finally shook his legs one after the other and his arms too, as if to re-establish the proper set of his whole suit of fashionably cut clothes. Yet all the time he never once took his eyes off the movenents of Miss Langton.

"What would women do without the excitement of marketing?" was what Mr. Mandeville audibly said to himself when through with his hasty interim toilet; and, as if pausing for a reply from one of these cold-blooded facts of his business difficulties, he complacently leaned his six foot frame against his office desk, either to improve his *pose* or to support himself while beginning some task all over again.

"There is nothing in it for me though, I'm afraid, unless some people could be made believe that two were preferable to one."

And but for a satirical something that accompanied these words, after they had passed Mr. Mandeville's lips, one might have thought that he was only following up the idea of marketing in the Cul-de-Sac.

Suddenly he moved from his desk, with a divergency in his line of vision.

"That Norward business, if it were only properly handled, with the credit of the old man's estate and somebody else's money behind it, would change the look of things for me very materially. It is the

only thread of hope I can see, and but for the old man's—"

But Mr. Mandeville's line of vision again suffered deflection and he hurriedly reached over for his hat.

"She is through with her purchases I think, and I may be of some assistance to her with her parcels. Ah, if it were not for these blood-sucking debts of mine that are choking me to death, and of which she can know nothing! I do not believe a thought of me ever entered her little head, all the times we have met on the street and elsewhere: yet I must find that out for myself."

Then addressing Jules, as he hurriedly passed through the outer office, Mr. Mandeville told him that, if any one called, he was to say that he had gone to the bank.

## *CHAPTER II*

### *From the Market to the Bank*

THE first of all romances on record had a flavor of the products of the kitchen-garden about it, though perhaps the thought of a world's history at its incubation did not occur to Mr. Mandeville as a justification of his condescension, when, accidentally or aforethought, he accosted Miss Langton on her way from the market-place, redolent, as that locality always is, of garden-stuff and other comestibles of digestion and indigestion.

The first greeting pleasantly and unabruptly over, Mr. Mandeville proffered, in the most unaffected way, as if such were a habit of his on special occasions, to free Miss Langton from the burden of her small market-basket, or, if she would rather, of some of the tiny parcels she was carrying.

"Oh thank you very much indeed: these are only trifles, Mr. Mandeville, and I must not take you out of your way on any account. You know the bulk of my marketing I send over to the butcher's and he brings it home for us all in one box. In my basket here there is only a little fruit for my uncle's dinner to-morrow and I was afraid it might be injured if I left it behind, to be bruised by the butcher's boy. Thank you very much: there is no need for you to waste your time by acting message boy," and in no part of her manner did Miss Langton show that she was in any way overcome by this meeting with Mr. Charles Mandeville, however patronizingly handsome and well-dressed he looked.

Still, Mr. Mandeville insisted on carrying the basket of fruit, protesting that he would at least take better care of its contents than a careless butcher's boy; and finally Miss Langton gave way to his polite importunity, rewarding his urbanity with a smile that might mean all that Mr. Mandeville found in it, or only stand as the token of common civility. And thus

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with the flavour of the products of the kitchen-garden and a prospect of domesticity about them, these two well-dressed and well-behaved persons passed away from the crowding Cul-de-Sac, throwing discretion to the gossip-winds of the street leading to Miss Langton's home.

The first of bankers must have had a very early time of it too in the world's history. The institution over which Shylock the First was called upon to preside, must have been a very private bank with its offices located no doubt in some sheik's tunic or turban. But it was a bank all the same—a private bank. And since old Amos Langton was one of the best known and richest brokers in the town, with a private bank of his own at his back, Mr. Mandeville was well within his rights and the limits of the truth, when he left that message with Jules Lapointe in regard to where he was going; though perhaps again he had not taken time to think of it in that light.

The house in which Amos Langton lived and did his business was once one of the

landmarks in the business centre of lower town. It has long disappeared in the improvements of later times. It had its business offices on the ground floor and its comfortable dwelling apartments above. And though a little out of date as things go now in the matter of living and trading, there was in these times no more condescension required from any one visiting Mr. Langton in his home than from those visiting him in his broker's bank. If, therefore Mr. Charles Mandeville found any penance in his walking home from market with Miss Langton to her uncle's place of residence *en haut,* perhaps again he did not think of the sheik's tunic and turban as a justification of his condescension, being more interested in the prognostic he thought he saw in the conversation he was having with Amos Langton's niece.

*A bit of luscious fruit* in the one hand, and a *woman's love* in the other: *a bit of useful work* in the head, and *the love of money* in the heart! What a chance for combinations and permutations of good

and evil! What a world's history there has been made out of them! How the condition of things goes from faith to folly, before the lesson of truth comes home to us. The pleasurable that is legitimate and the industrial that is beneficent developed into wantonness and money lust and back again until there comes no "back again" for men or angels, when all our combinations and permutations of the good and the bad lie in a universal dust heap!

Mr. Charles Mandeville was only a bit of a philosopher. He had in his keeping however, for the length of a whole street, Miss Langton's market basket of fruit; and his philosophy, as far as it went in its instant exercise, was how he was going to have this bit of luscious fruit assist him in building a railway and fill his pockets with money. That was the permutation he had on hand, while the combination was more simply direct—the love of a woman and his hatred of honest labour.

There was not much chance for conversation that would promote an ethical per-

mutation or a commercial enterprise where the sidewalk was so narrow and the basket of fruit had to be so gingerly cared for. Yet Mr. Charles Mandeville had made progress in the maturing of his plans before he stood with Miss Langton at the door of Amos Langton's residence, though no one could very well trace either the plan or its progress in the conversation which passed between them, as between man and woman, on the narrow sidewalk of one of Quebec's streets. For, if polite and friendly, it was shockingly common-place, as the *au revoir* at the end of it proved. Nevertheless the plan in its progress involved a pretty dashing bit of horsemanship against the cross-wall of fate, on the part of Mr. Mandeville.

"I shall most certainly, Miss Langton, do myself the pleasure of calling to-morrow, if you and your uncle have no objections to Sunday visits."

And Mr. Charles Mandeville was holding his hat over his head *au monsieur* as he thus issued an invitation to himself.

"Oh, thank you Mr. Mandeville; my uncle, I am sure, will be delighted to see

you. Sunday is really the only day he has for receiving his friends in a social way."

"One thing you may be sure of, Miss Langton, and that is that we will not drive you out of the room by our talking shop on Sunday. You know, we business men cannot very well miss, when we meet, talking about that which is so near to our interest. But I will protect you to-morrow. Tell your uncle he wont have to blame us for not looking after his fruit dessert. You will confess that I have fulfilled my function as message boy fairly well; at least I have taken the greatest care of my trust, haven't I, Miss Langton?"

"Certainly I will tell uncle of your great kindness to me this morning. It has been very good of you indeed, Mr. Mandeville, to take all the trouble you have taken, and during business hours too."

"Good morning!"

"Good morning, Mr. Mandeville."

"To-morrow remember! *Au revoir!*"

"Good-bye, Mr. Mandeville, and thank you very much."

And yet it was after a conversation, no more substantial in any part of it than such an ending, that Mr. Charles Mandeville made up his mind to take that break-neck rush at the blank wall of fate, and be a Providence unto himself and his Norward enterprise in his own right. Who will say that Mr. Mandeville was only a bit of a philosopher, if from a bit of fruit innocently carried from the market-place, he proposed, after all, to build the Norward Colonization Railway?

## *CHAPTER III*

### *Major Mandeville and his Lawyer*

"WHAT that scapegrace of a son of mine expects me to do for him further, unless it be to land myself with him in Queer Street, is more than I can tell. Do you know, Farquhar, the young sinner has actually been pleading with me for some time back to apportion him some part of that blessed seigneury of mine, claiming that it is his through his mother's interest, and that there is a chance for him doing something with it? What think you of that for cheek and daring? And yet to think what I have done for that fellow!"

So spoke that rubicund son of a soldier, Major Mandeville, father of Mr. Charles Mandeville, while having a chat one morning on sundry public and private matters with his legal adviser, Mr. Farnham

Farquhar, in that legal adviser's office in lower town. As he himself was for ever saying of himself, "Major Mandeville did not confide in everybody over his private affairs;" and yet somehow or other the Major's private affairs were not unfrequently an open secret in the city, thanks, perhaps, to the Major's morning visits to lower town, where the good old fellow's predilection for the best brand of whiskey and the latest gossip on 'Change was so well known that it was hardly ever spoken of. Sometimes people laughed over Major Mandeville's peculiarities of temper; but they respected him all the same as a gentleman of the old school,—as bluff and hearty an old soul, as they off-handedly called him, as ever stumbled in shoe leather. If he was proud and a little irascible at times, his honesty of purpose and transparency of opinion might be taken as an assurance that, when he did sometimes make a mistake, it was from his childlike desire to have things always done for the best.

"Ay, you may well look at me with these

cautious old grey eyes of yours, Farquhar; but it is truth I'm telling you, though it isn't every one I would tell it to. He has been at me for months over the matter of the transfer, and calls me every thing that is stubborn and cruel because I don't give way to him. Why can't you say something? Have you no opinion to offer to a friend except when there are going to be law costs? I am waiting to hear from you. What think you of the whole blessed thing?"

Mr. Farquhar was the most cautious of men and the shrewdest of lawyers. He knew Major Mandeville's financial position better than the nearest Bradstreet's agent knows any merchant's of to-day. In fact he was a kind of Bradstreets for the Peter Street of his time,—the confidential agent of many of the old families—an old bachelor who sometimes made too much of keeping his own counsel, but seldom missed making a little more from his silent methods of circumspection as a professional man.

"Of course, Major, I would rather not

venture on giving any opinion that would be worth as little as mine would be under such circumstances; these family matters are always best settled amongst yourselves," and Mr. Farquhar sought refuge in his snuff-box, taking a pinch himself and then offering the bit of silver plate to the Major.

"I would rather have your advice than your snuff." blurted out the Major; "your caution always puts me out of patience. What are you afraid of? You're not going to lose a case, man. Out with it open and above board! What have you to say about a prodigal that reviles his father because he wont give him the chance of cheating him for the fortieth time?"

Mr. Farquhar took the first instalment of his pinch of snuff and then said that a son was of one's own blood.

"Then you think the fellow may have some show of justice in his claim?"

"I don't think any one has a nearer claim to your property than your own children, that is far as I will go in giving you advice, unless as a friend you would

have me speak more freely, which is not always the most discreet thing in the world to do."

The Major grew very red in the face, yet waited to hear the lawyer to the very end of his caution, if not to the full stretch of his own patience.

"That seigneury of yours, you know, Major—"

The drawl of the lawyer made the Major even redder in the face and caused him to move restlessly in his chair.

"You know that it is not of much value to you, as things stands at present: in fact if the figures of last year's statement prove anything, they prove that it is worth less than nothing to you."

"And I suppose it would soon double its present value,—twice nothing and a fraction over,—if I were to transfer it to such a far-seeing financier as my son Charles."

"That is as you look at things, yet such a transfer would at least relieve you of the taxes that are not likely to grow less as the municipalities, in which the pro-

perty lies, continue to make their improvements of roadways and bridges, churches and school-houses. I am speaking to you now in your own interest, with no concern about your son's."

"Do you know that there are sixteen thousand acres in the property?"

The lawyer smiled and said that he was quite well aware of the extent of the Major's *blessed* seigneury, as the Major himself was always calling it.

"And that's quite an estate to part with while a man is still alive and kicking," continued the Major shaking his head.

"There is certainly space enough in it to raise the wind, but what of that, if the wind does not blow any gold dust your way, my dear Major?"

"But surely you do not think that poor Charley would find any more gold dust in the wind that he would raise on it."

By this time Major Mandeville's voice, it may be said, was almost as loud as it would safely go. Like a mountain tarn, the Major was always instant in his wrath.

In the present instance, the signs of a

storm were hardly visible before the storm burst, and in the very midst of a sneezing fit too.

Mr. Farquhar, on the contrary, was so calm and collected in his whole demeanour that he was able to help himself again from the silver box without the faintest approach to a sneeze.

"So this is some infernal blessed conspiracy against me and my property," shouted the Major, between two sneezing fits, "Some infernal plotting and planning to make ducks and drakes of my property. Here have I been worried to death over that rascal's importunity from day to day and from week to week; and now when I come to you for advice,—yes sir, for your advice,—you side with him, you agree with him, you abet him in his nefarious purposes, you,—you,—yes,—I do not know what you don't do," and the Major's last fit of sneezing came not a moment too soon to save him from further actionable utterances.

But the grey eyes of the lawyer,—these cautious old grey eyes of his, as the Major

had called them—never changed a ray in their light.

"You asked for my advice, didn't you, Major Mandeville?"

"Yes, of course I did."

"And I gave it, didn't I, civilly and respectfully?"

"But—" stammered the excited client.

"My dear Major Mandeville, there is no *but* about the matter. I have not been pleading in behalf of your son, but only in the interests of an honest client of mine who is a little short of temper at times. My advice I had intended to give gratis. But no self-respecting lawyer can give advice and be suspected of betraying his client's case at one and the same time, without charging for the advice and costs for the insult."

"Ah you old beggar, I see you are at your old tricks again,—always on the charge."

"My fee is twenty-five dollars," said Mr. Farquhar, smiling and taking a third pinch of snuff.

And the hearty guffaw of the Major, when he saw that the lawyer was only funning, could have been heard down the street had the window been open.

"Well, well, old fellow, I will think over the matter. That scapegrace deserves no quarter from me, and he will only have you to thank for it, if anything should happen to change my mind, which I thought could not possibly have been changed short of a miracle."

## *CHAPTER IV*

### *Major Mandeville is Confidential*

SOME time afterwards, when the idyll of the Cul-de-Sac had run its course for about a week, with a second Sunday's dinner at Amos Langton's in prospect, Major Mandeville presented himself once more at Mr. Farquhar's office. The Major was always carefully groomed, but this morning there were certain finishing touches noticeable about his *tout ensemble* —from the gloss on his satin hat to the polish on his leathers, not to speak of the emphatic moss-rose in his button hole— that indicated fair weather in the Major's temper if not in the Mandeville prospects generally.

"Yes," said he "I now believe, my dear Farquhar, that you were right about the disposing of that blessed seigneury of mine: your advice was a sound one, and

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I have made up my mind to act upon it and let my son Charles have the property made over in his own name."

The Major spoke with a jauntiness of manner a little overdone, and his nervousness did not escape the cautious old grey eyes that were looking him all over without seeming to notice anything unusual, and yet seeing him through and through.

"You mean that I should prepare the papers for the transfer of the property?" said the lawyer.

"Yes I feel that that is now the best thing for me to do. As you said yourself the last time I saw you, the property has never added anything very much to my income, but, far other, has been a serious expense to me for some years past, and it is just as well that Charles should try his hand at making something out of it."

"Your son, I suppose, has plans of his own in hoping to make something of the property?" and the cautious old grey eyes looked steadily for a moment at the middle stud in the Major's shirt front.

"Well, yes, that is—"

"Of course it may not be necessary to refer to these plans in the deed of transfer, but some hint of them might help me in the wording of the deed."

And the grey eyes this time ventured as high as the Major's rubicund non-committal smile.

"Well you see, Charley has some notion of raising the wind on the property as you have called it, though there may be no more gold dust in the wind he will raise than there has been in the whole blessed thing for me. But there is no need to say anything about Charley's plans in the deed—"

"Which is to reveal no family secret," said Farquhar with all seeming interest gone out of the grey eyes.

"I am not so sure that there is any family secret about the affair," and the red of the Major's face deepened just a little. Then subduing this his first touch of temper that morning he said: "there is at least no secret that you may not know, Farquhar. I am not in the way of telling everybody about my affairs,—but with

you it is different. The fact is Charley assures me that he can secure advances on the property which he can utilize in his developing the property itself."

"Ah, he is going in for colonization, is he?"

"Oh yes, something of that sort; though I do not know for certain what the full nature of his plans may be. I have no doubt he will be coming to you for advice some of these days as soon as the transfer is made and he gets things into shape. All I know and feel convinced of is that it will be a good riddance for me. You have said so yourself, Farquhar, haven't you? Charley says he will never ask me for another shilling as long he lives, and that is something I have never known him to say before in my lifetime. So you see, old man, I may escape the alms-house after all."

"How much does your son expect to secure on the property as a first advance?" asked the lawyer without any seeming purpose in his question.

"Well as to that I am sure I could not

say: you know I have never been much of a business man since I left the Commissariat. Charley says he will require quite a pot of money for his new enterprise: you couldn't say yourself, Farquhar, how much could be raised on the property as a first go off?"

"That would perhaps depend on the character of your son's scheme."

"May be you could give Charley a pointer or two as to the way of going about the matter of raising the wind as you call it."

"That depends also."

The Major rose hastily from his seat,—flushed, paused, and sat down again, while the lawyer busied himself among his papers for a minute.

"What a tantalizing old beggar you are Farquhar! I see you want to make me angry again, with your 'depends and depends' and your aggravating caution. Now let me tell you that I am not going to get angry for you or for any other man this morning; so there's for you!"

The lawyer had to turn to a heap of papers to hide his broad smile.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Major, even if it be a fee out of my pocket. I think there is no necessity for either of us to get angry with one another."

And the two men laughed, the Major with his usual guffaw.

"What a cool customer you are, Farquhar! I see well enough what I have to do; and then you will be saying, as so many do when my back is turned, that that old duffer Major Mandeville is always letting the cat out of the bag. However, if I do not speak my mind, I will be getting angry again; so I may as well deliver myself of the whole thing in good temper as in bad, since there is no hiding anything from these infernal old grey eyes of yours. So hand over that snuff-box of yours and I will tell you the whole yarn."

And Major Mandeville did tell his lawyer the whole yarn.

And what was better or worse, just as you look at it, he told others too, and dur-

ing the week following that second Sunday's dinner which Mr. Charles Mandeville took with Amos Langton and his niece Miss Langton, the news was all over the town that the firm of Mandeville & Co. were engineering a scheme to build a railway from the city to Lac de l'Isle, at the foot of the Laurentides.

Nor was the project without its attractiveness for the capitalists of Peter Street, though it gave some of the *quid nuncs* a feverish time of it in the local stock market. The back country, lying within the shadows of Mount Pinkney and along the southern slopes of the Valcartier highlands had from the earliest days of colonization in Canada attracted settlers. In later years the same territory provided many fairly fertile farms for what were called "old country settlers" as distinguished from the *habitants* of earlier times; and the projectors of the Norward Colonization Railway were not to be found fault with for expressing their belief that there was room for a further migration to that part of the country, if only an easy

outlet for lumber and farm produce were provided.

The building of local lines of railways had not yet seized the public mind. The building of highways was about all the people could well undertake; the expense of securing these having been almost a too heavy burden on the seigneurs, as Major Mandeville knew to his cost. Besides the profits accruing from the building of many of the trunk lines in America promised no inducement to capitalists to seek fortunes in the building of railways great or small in Canada. Still, since the building of the Norward Colonization Railway was to be a little out of the line of ordinary railway building, it would have to be judged on its own merits.

"I must have a horse," said an elector once to an electioneering agent out on a vote-purchasing expedition.

And to make matters a little plainer, the elector laid his one forefinger over the other, the cross indicating that his vote was purchasable for ten dollars.

"*Certainement,*" said the canvasser,

"there will be no difficulty about that," and on the strength of the promise the vote was cast to the satisfaction of the canvasser.

Immediately after the election the elector made his request a demand.

"*Certainement,*" said the canvasser, "there will be no trouble about that."

Thereupon the electioneering agent at once proceeded to the Palais and purchased a saw-horse built on the plan of a double cross, sending it by local express to the elector.

"It was a wooden horse you sent me," said the elector in disgust and anger on meeting the canvasser on the street one day. "*Ah oui,* a blamed saw-horse—a wooden horse you sent: do you take me for an ass?"

And so when it became known that the Norward Colonization Railway was to be a wooden railway there was a good deal of merriment all over the town, at the expense of its promoters, much in the same way as there was about the habitant's wooden horse.

Yet, as people very soon began to say, there was some kind of a method in the promoters' madness. The building of a wooden railway was an experiment worth the trying, since the expense of laying hardwood rails would bring the scheme within moderate limits of expense, especially in a district where the best of hardwoods could be had for the cutting. Even some thought that, with a comparatively modest initial outlay, the whole scheme of colonization, of which the building of the railway was only part, might eventually give a surprising return to the share holders, possibly a fortune to the immediate promoters.

## *CHAPTER V*

### *Mr. Charles Mandeville's Forerunner*

THE Norward scheme was now fairly launched. The mixed ridicule over the habitant's wooden horse and the projected railway's wooden rails was soon drowned amid the plaudits over the colonizing of the country, which is always accounted a popular movement in a new country. The government had been induced to come to the support of the enterprise. The leading merchants took stock in it, and vied with one another in being elected directors. Mandeville & Co. finding their premises on the Cul-de-Sac either too small or too humbly situated, betook themselves to larger premises nearer the business centre, amid a flare of plate glass, gilded gauze, and imported furniture. For them the brightest prognostics of success were in the air. Even the Major's prestige

was in the ascendant. The gloss of that gentleman's satin hat and leathers was never so faultless, his rubicund smile never more radiant, his *tout ensemble* never so self-conscious or patronizing.

But the glory of the son far outshone that of the father. Mr. Charles Mandeville had the world of the ancient capital at his feet. And, if it wasn't a very big world, it was big enough for him to shine in, as long as his penny candle held out. With his colonization scheme carefully and attractively set forth on paper in the most teeth-watering terms, he was able without much difficulty, to raise a comfortable ten thousand on that *"blessed"* seigneury, the transfer of which had been safely seen to by the lawyer of the grev eyes. Mr. Charles Mandeville was now a seigneur in his own right, with no beggarly waiting for the shoes of another man. And being such—not to speak of him which so many now did, as one of the most enterprising promoters of the times—no broker or banker was likely to have a word to say against his way of doing business, for

some little time at least. The leading merchants, jealous of their own caution, smiled upon him; the highest social circles, even to the aggressively exclusive Citadel set, petted him; while his own open-handed benefactions made him, before a month was over, the most popular man in the city.

"Hallo, Farquhar, still grubbing among these hothouse papers of yours! Do you never take a holiday?"

Major Mandeville, the ever ready forerunner of his son's popularity, looked like the morning itself, bright and shining. He had just rushed in on his friend Mr. Farnham Farquhar. As to date, it could not have been more than a week or two after the raising of that mortgage-wind had so prosperously filled the sails of the Norward business.

"Ah thanks: I sometimes think that the taking of snuff is about your only recreation, and I must confess that I do enjoy a sniff once in a while from your sneezing mull, though I do not care to carry any trace of it home with me. Why, do you

know, the very last time I was here—you remember how you tried to make me angry, you old beggar, and then proposed to charge me for it—eh, that was not the last time—well never mind—I took snuff with you anyway, and had fits for it when I got home for touching the vile stuff, as Mrs. Mandeville calls it. I suppose, Farquhar, you are sometimes glad and sometimes sorry that you never got married?" and the Major became quite merry in his manner.

"Did you come in to discuss with me in a friendly way the broad question of marrying and giving in marriage, or am I expected to give you a written opinion on the subject. For the latter, professional usage demands that I should charge you the usual fee."

"Oh, there you go again, you old beggar of ways and means: I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, always scenting a fee in every word a friend says to you, no matter what the subject."

Thus, and with more of it, did Major

Mandeville and his lawyer exchange full morning greeting to each other.

"But I say, Farquhar," said the Major settling down to the burden of his gossip or something else, "about this Norward business; has Charley been to see you yet, as I suggested to him he ought to? He certainly needs a good steady lawyer like yourself to keep things straight, you know."

The cautious old grey eyes made a search for that shirt stud of the Major's and found it.

"What, are things going crooked already?"

The Major laughed his loudest.

"Why, things were never so booming for us all before. I am sure you will now confess with me that there is something in poor Charlie after all, though I really wish he had made you his legal adviser and business confidant."

"Your son knows his own business best, and so do we—that is you and I, Major, —know ours too."

And if there was any reading of the

grey eyes that could be depended upon, it was evident that some one had been making a mistake.

But, as we know by this time, Major Mandeville was not a man to read any thing but the largest of print, unless some one was near him to put his eye-glasses on for him. And so he blunderingly went on to speak of that Norward business and other matters as if he was only speaking of them to himself.

"It has been quite a god-send to Charlie I tell you,—quite a god-send to us all, as we all expect."

"He certainly seems to be making more of the Mandeville seigneury than you were doing, and that is always something to be of good cheer about."

"They say that the stock is being taken up like hot cakes."

"To the burning of nobody's fingers, I hope, either now or afterwards."

There was no reading for any one in the lawyer's eyes: all light of self-interested enquiry had gone out of them. So the

Major kept the leading as he thought safely and well.

"I do not think it would be wise for me anyway to burn my fingers with it, whatever other people may do, now that the thing is launched."

"And I, for one, am glad to hear you say so, Major Mandeville," said the lawyer; "an estate of sixteen thousand acres is surely enough to throw away in one year."

The Major made an effort to read, but the print was not yet large enough. Mr. Farnharm Farquhar's only interest in the world, for the moment, was centred in Major Mandeville's shirt stud.

"You surely do not think there is anything bogus about the business?"

"Oh no, by no means, my dear Major, far from it. Your son knows more of life than to have a bubble burst in his hand. Besides the stock market is barometer enough to give him warning in time."

Major Mandeville was glad, very glad indeed, to hear his friend Farquhar talk in that hopeful way. He would take the pains to mention the matter of his friend

Farquhar's opinion to his son the very first chance he had. In fact, there was no man's opinion and judgment he, Major Mandeville, thought so much of or put more faith in, than his friend Farquhar's.

"But I suppose your faith is not sufficiently strong in the thing to induce you to put any of your savings in it?"

"That is as it may be, if these savings were an available asset or even in existence. Your own example of not wishing to burn your fingers is surely not an unwise one for a poor man like me to follow."

"Then you think, Farquhar, that my way of looking at things about taking stock and that sort of thing is right and proper?"

"Most assuredly I do."

"Then so do I, and there the matter rests as far as I am concerned and Charlie too. But do you know—"

And the Major made a long pause as if he had something further to say. Indeed so prolonged was the pause, that client

and lawyer thought it proper to bridge it over with more snuff taking.

"You have not heard anything about him of late, have you, Farquhar?"

"About whom?"

"About my son Charles?"

Mr. Farquhar said he had not laid eyes on the Major's son from the moment the transfer of the seigneury had been concluded. But he added that, if he had not heard of him, it was not because people were not talking of him and his great colonization scheme.

"I wish that things will so turn out that you will be in the way of seeing more of him in a business way. I do wish things would turn out that way for both of you. For, to tell you the truth Farquhar," and here the Major drew his chair nearer to the lawyer's desk, "the young fellow is a little inclined to go the paces when his oats are good and plentiful. I suppose you have not heard that he is thinking of getting married?"

"To be sometimes glad and sometimes sorry, even as a poor old bachelor like

myself was made out to be by you a minute ago."

"But this is no laughing matter, I assure you," said the Major.

"Then it must be an exceptional case. People have been married and given in marriage since the world began, and yet their friends have always made it a laughing matter, have they not? Who is the fortunate bride this time?"

"Well, of course, there is nothing really settled, you know, nothing at all; but I think Mrs. Mandeville has come to an opinion as to who the Mrs. Charles Mandeville that is to be is going to be. I have not met the young lady myself, but the girls,—I mean Charlie's sisters—have met her at one or two public places, and they seem to have quite an opinion of her good looks and pleasant manners. They say she is a lady every inch of her, and what more would one want than that?"

By this time the Major's voice was reduced to the confidential tone of the drawing-room. The conversation in itself sounded out of place among the dryasdust

details of a lawyer's office, but the simple-minded old courtier was never sure of the pathways into which his fondness for gossip of all kinds would lead him; and Mr. Farquhar, not wishing to disturb his inclinations to anger at every visit, was quite willing to hear him out, hard-shell old bachelor though he was.

"I believe you know the woman yourself, old fellow. At least they say you are well acquainted with her uncle."

The grey eyes, these cautious old grey eyes that the Major would so often swear half-jokingly over, when he was from under their influence, stared into the flushed face of his client with a light that his client had never seen in them before. Was it the lawyer's turn this time to get angry?

"You do not mean to say that your son Charles Mandeville proposes to marry Miss May Langton, the niece of Amos Langton the broker? The thing is absurd, for I surely would have heard something of this sooner, or seen something of it for myself."

"That is the maiden's name anyway," said the Major.

The lawyer was certainly disturbed in his manner. For a moment he seemed a little bewildered. Then recovering his equanimity and settling once more into his professional non-committal manner, he said:

"This is news and no mistake."

"Good news to you, I hope," said the Major, not knowing very well what else to say.

"Good or bad: what does it matter to a poor old lonesome bachelor? But you may go home and tell your son from me that, if he marries May Langton, he will have for a wife the best of women in the city. That is all I have to say in the meantime, and I charge no fee for my opinion either."

But it was true what the Major had said: this was no laughing matter, as was evident.

"You know the Langtons, then, Farquhar?"

"I should think I ought to."

"They say that old Amos is very rich."

"He is I believe one of the wealthiest men in the town."

"He is deeply interested in the Norward Railway?"

"So I have heard."

"And I would not be astonished if Charley and he should make a team of it, if things go well."

The lawyer's face was easy to read now.

Even the Major became disturbed in manner also. Had he been making mischief again with his gossiping?

"Well of course you know, Farquhar, there's nothing settled. I have been letting my tongue get the better of me, I'm afraid. But there is really nothing of any kind settled yet, nothing whatever. I don't speak about my personal affairs to every one: but with you it is different: it always seems as if I should tell you everything; and, as a friend of yours, I may have gone too far. But, believe me, there is nothing settled, nothing at all. I do not believe that Charlie has spoken seriously either to Amos Langton or his

niece about anything I have been telling you about. But the arrangement would be a good thing for Charlie, wouldn't it?"

"And for Miss Langton?"

"It wouldn't be a very bad arrangement for her either, if this Norward scheme comes out all right, would it, as far as wealth goes?"

"And for her uncle?"

"Well it certainly wouldn't be bad for him."

"And for me?"

"For you?"

"Ay, where do I come in?"

"You mean as Charlie's lawyer?"

"No sir, I do not mean as your son's lawyer:" and the grey eyes were not to be deprived of their assertiveness now by any professional etiquette. Mr. Farnham Farquhar had now risen to his feet and was looking Major Mandeville straight in the face.

"I ask again where do I come in. in this grand scheme of money-getting and wife-giving? Perhaps you do not think that I have anything of a personal interest in

this matter. Are you aware, Major Mandeville, that I have the honour of being the godfather of Miss May Langton, the niece of Mr. Amos Langton. This is no business romance to me, as it may be to your son. I have more at stake in this matter than he has. My friend George Langton left in my hands, when he died, a trust which I dare not betray, and which becomes more and more sacred to me as the years go by. I have given you one message to take home to your son, and now I give, on second thoughts, another. As godfather of the maiden whose heart he would win, I forbid him to make any proposal of marriage to her until this Norward business is so sufficiently matured as to give some evidence of its ultimate success. When the Norward Colonization Railway is once running, it will be time enough to think of marrying and giving in marriage."

*A bit of luscious fruit* had only so far been brought into combination with *the love of money. The love of woman* had yet to be secured.

## *CHAPTER* VI

### *The Lawyer and Amos Langton*

THE building of a railway, even if it be only a wooden railway, takes time,—which may be a merit or a drawback in the eyes of its promoters, as things turn out. It also takes more money than is ever at first contemplated. And when the hard cash of the paid-up stock has been drawn upon to the overdrawing, and the usual bank credits are near the end of their patience, the period of business worry and financing shifts sets in, with the possible issue in sight of the candle that burns itself at both ends.

The Norward Railway, however, was no "Standard Oil" launch of present day device. The *bit of honest labour* in it kept to a safe extent in the background *the love of money* as a possible second term in any subsequent ethical permutation. The

spirit of benevolence and progress could be traced, by those who would, in its purpose of colonization. Then, there was the rubicund forerunning of Major Mandeville! Who could withstand that as an assurance of good faith, if not a security for investment in railway stock? It was all very well for people afterwards to say that had the particulars of Mr. Charles Mandeville's previous careers been known on 'Change, the forerunning of Major Mandeville would have had a much steeper hill to try its breath upon. But these particulars were not all known even to Major Mandeville, nor to Mr. Farquhar, nor to any of the capitalists of the town: and hence matters had to take their course, as they generally do when a financier's record is incomplete, on the strength of the surface-look of things. Why, who was there in Peter Street who was not likely to be a little astray in his estimate of how things were going to turn out, when even old Amos Langton proved himself to be a little at sea over this Norward business?

To his credit or discredit, Mr. Charles

Mandeville, petted as he was by the sycophants of Mammon and rushed, as he said he was, with his duties of railroad building, never thought for a moment to stay his hand in the developing of the idyll of the Cul-de-Sac. That *bit of lucious fruit* had lead to results, if not yet to the fullest results of marriage and giving in marriage. Amid all his pressing engagements, which according to old Jules Lapointe's expressive shrug were even now not all so very pressing, he never failed to wait upon, at judicious times and seasons, Amos Langton and his niece. As the Major had surmised in the hearing of Mr. Farquhar, you remember, Amos Langton and Charles Mandeville did come to make a team of it; and who was to say that, if all went well with this Norward business, there was anything to prevent the said team from keeping up an even pace to the very end of their running. That message from the godfather of Miss Langton had been duly delivered to Mr. Charles Mandeville; and he had been warned more than once, nay almost daily,

against a certain pair of legal danger-incubating, grey eyes,—confound them,—which had once brought a certain rubicund Major to his senses with a sharp turn. Indeed Mr. Charles Mandeville had no intention to come into any open conflict with the godfather of Miss Langton, nay, was very much in mind to respect his suggestion of delay, since it was to his own interest to do so. But beyond that, he was able to hold his own with Mr. Farnharm Farquhar any day or anywhere,—in Amos Langton's business office on a week-day or in his drawing-room of a Sunday afternoon.

Amos Langton's office—that inner den of his, well back from the public gaze—had wittingly, and perhaps not unfittingly, been called a place of cobweds. It is true that there were always one or two of these gossamer receptacles of dust and dead flies in the darker corners. But the cobwebs referred to especially were the cobwebs of business enterprises in the making and unmaking, with their victims in all stages of expectancy, decay and decease.

How Amos Langton came to have the name of being eccentric and penurious no doubt arose from his fastidiousness in dealing with details, and in his unusual ways of testing trade fluctuations to his advantage. It is true that he had often been known to get angry at some trifling overcharge in hotel-bill or carriage hire, to the uttering of words insulting and violent. Once a merchant in a neighbouring city bought the evening paper for him as an act of courtesy, but that courteous gentleman had to accept the coin he had spent on purchasing the paper, before he could get Amos Langton to accept it. And there was no man in the town who could meet his heavy losses with more equanimity than he. He would fume over unnecessary words in a telegram announcing a loss of thousands of dollars, but no one would ever hear him uttering an impatient word over the loss of the thousands. The *penny-wise* habit of accumulating clung to him from his early experiences, and since it had not in its wake the usual *pound-foolish* conduct-correlative, those who

found him disinclined to condone their mistakes made with him in co-partnership, were not slow to speak of him derisively as an "old flint" or as something worse. Bring one man with his gains of thousands in commercial contact with another man and his losses of thousands, and the blame for the failure will somehow or other get located sooner or later as a consequence from the success. To urge against him that he was always the first to drop out of an enterprise the moment it showed any signs of wobbling was to be unjust towards Amos Langton's marvellous trading instincts; and might possibly have been excused, had it been better known that the honest old broker had never been found to give a dog a bad name, until he was conscientiously convinced that the dog was worthy of no other kind of a name.

"No, Farquhar, I have not made my thousands by being absurdly suspicious of those who may help me in making more."

Mr. Farquhar the lawyer had just seated himself in a chair in the place of cobwebs,

*vis-à-vis* his friend the broker. It is not necessary to say that they were warm friends considering the bond of union between them in the personality of Amos Langton's little house-keeper.

"Is it suspicious to be careful in presence of our trust?"

"Oh bother take your old bachelor fancies! I tell you, as I have told you before, that I have no reason to find fault with the fellow, and I never break with even a fool-in-training, as long as he is a good customer and keeps his finger-nails under cover. You may be right in your surmises, but surmises are not facts. Whenever you have your facts trot them out, and you will not have me to blame for not examining them with you."

"You mean then that it will not be necessary for me to speak to you about this matter again?" said the lawyer.

"Perhaps that will be better for all of us: it will be some time yet before the trains are running on the Norward comfortably enough for a wedding trip."

"And about May?"

"You needn't be alarmed about the little house-keeper: she is well able to take care of herself, since she can take care of two old harum-scarums such as we are."

"But—"

"Oh bother again with your *buts*: it is not for two old fools like us to be worrying over the little house-keeper's future. We will only make people laugh at us. It is true, as you know, that young Mandeville drops in now and again,—well, all the time if you say so—of a Sunday afternoon, but that is all that is to be said about it. There's surely no harm in that: you used to do it oftener yourself, and I wish you would do it oftener again."

"But you know how people are talking."

"Let them talk, and give me my chance at them when their turn comes."

"Then you think that this Norward Colonization business is all right?"

"I certainly do; or I would not be in it. I know what I am doing with my money and know a corbie from a water-wagtail. The man who does not provide for a safe retreat in a business transaction is not of

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'such as sleep o' night.' As far as I am able to read the events that are worrying you, there is nothing of danger in them for you or for the little house-keeper either. So get off to the court-house with you, and act the corbie as much as you like, so long as you don't pick out my eyes."

Mr. Farquhar took up his hat to pass into the outer office. Then turning back, he spoke of the message he had sent to Mr. Charles Mandeville through his father the Major.

"You do not think ill of me for doing that, do you?"

"No sir," and the broker laid full emphasis on the last word. "No sir, that was the most judicious thing you could have done for me and for May."

"Oh, thanks, you endorse the delay, then?"

"With all my heart though there is no necessity for any one just yet to repeat it as coming from me too. You took the responsibility on your own move, and you are well able to carry it of yourself, without our making any more fuss over it.

There is no danger of the message being discarded as long as I am around. There is, in fact, no evidence that young Mandeville is dangerously head and ears over in love with our dear girl, and it would never do to have people thinking that we old fools were doing all we could to prevent a possible run-away match, with the shrewd little house-keeper as one of the contracting parties. Get out with you, and let me finish my mail!"

## *CHAPTER VII*

### *The Inauguration of the Railway*

THE opening day of the Norward Colonization Railway had arrived. Throughout the town there was a good deal of excitement. The narrow streets towards the bridge across the St. Charles were running over with sight-seers. The train itself was something to attract attention, with its cars decorated with banners of every hue and emblemage. No less a personage than the governor-general had been engaged to declare, when the proper moment arrived, the line open for public traffic, if happily that public traffic would ever be pleased to come.

The northern terminus of the road was, as has been already said, situated near Lac de l'Isle. The track of the old road-bed can be traced in a pathway through the encroaching bush, which still makes

easy portage for the angler on his way to spend an outing around the snag-girt winding baylets of the lake, with the expectation of getting even more than a basketful of the rich red-fleshed trout that abound in its waters.

Near the head of the lake, on a charming slope of hardwood growth, from which was taken much of the timber of the Norward's rails, there is a glen-like grateful spot, where the sportsman still sets up his camp, and where he may listen, if he be built that way, to the spirit-whisperings of the past that are ever weaving in the woodlands some tale or other of the loving-kindnesses of nature. In the gentle zephyrs, soft as the velvet of twilight, there may still come to him winging around, in sunshine or shadow, like the spirit of love itself, a sigh for the happiness with which this spot once rang from beech-ridge to lakeside,—for the holiday champagne exuberance of the heart of youth which pops and sparkles whenever there is being celebrated an event of such importance as the opening of the Norward Colonization Railway was

then to the good people of the ancient capital.

The day of the celebration opened auspiciously. There was joy in the sunshine, and joy in the chatter and laughter of the hundreds of invited favoured celebrants. And amidst the galaxy of fashion and social distinction—going from car to car—it would have been hard to find a face more winning, or a manner more attractive than Miss Langton's. She had place in the last car where were to be found the governor and his party, with the elite of the elite crowding round him; and, when her godfather old Mr. Farnham Farquhar took a seat unbidden near her, there was for him at least no personality that had more of an attraction from one end of the train to the other than hers. Dressed in a suit more sombre than guardian angels are said to wear, he kept these old grey eyes of his open to every event that involved the interests of his godchild if not of her uncle as well. He had never been appointed solicitor of the road, but he had business on hand that day all the same, whether we

are to think of Amos Langton as being acquainted with it or not.

Amos Langton was not in the car with the governor. The evaluation of the rolling-stock and sundry other mental inventories gave him, no doubt, all the worrying pleasure or pleasurable worry any designer of cobwebs could well desire, short of an actual winding up. Besides, the Mandevilles were in the car set apart for the elite, and that in itself was enough to induce the broker to find retreat in a car further on, where he seemed to be more intent on examining the road-bed and its gradings and curvings than sharing in the gayety in his vicinity. There never had been very much of a pulling together between Major Mandeville and Amos Langton, and relations had become all but visibly strained within the past six months or so. The period of financing shifts and straits, with floating hazardous advances to meet pressing expenses, had been giving Amos Langton a good deal to think about, during these months, and had besides opened his eyes to some features in Charles Mandeville's

pacings in the Norward team that were not altogether to his, the broker's, liking. And yet this, as will be said, was hardly justification for his leaving, contrary to all importunity, the company of his niece, protected though she was by her ever watchful godfather, unless he had, like Mr. Farquhar, some hidden purpose in view,—some business on hand of which even he himself could not well predict the outcome.

From settlement to settlement the inauguration train made its way. The jolting of the cars, which was a new experience to most on board, eventually passed unheeded, in the general merriment, by all but a very few. The confident manner of Mr. Charles Mandeville was enough to dispel all fear. There could be in *his* mind at least no foreboding of shrinking stocks or possible impending catastrophe, as he passed through the train whenever it came to a halt. The holiday, as any one seeing him would have thought, was all his own; and what chance had he himself for taking note of what other people were doing or thinking about? The holiday was all his

own, yes, his very own; for had his hopes not now reached their culminating point of full realization, with the sunshine of May Langton's presence to enhance the whole prospect of life? Who was to say that there was not for him now a final continuing success as the *protégé* of that young lady's uncle, even should this whole Norward business go to the dogs?

And while Mr. Charles Mandeville was having flashes passing through him of a future *dolce far niente* that was to be all his own, May Langton's uncle had his flashes of thought too, though he did not seem so amiable over them as was Mr. Charles Mandeville.

"Holiday, humph! I suppose it is something of that kind to the most of these people. As for me five minutes of such idling and tom-foolery goes a long way Maybe I have been baked differently from them: possibly I have been playing the losing game of slow suicide, in not subjecting myself oftener to such murderous treatment as we are having to-day on this old ramshackle of a would-be railway. Ay,

talk to it and it is sure to talk back at you. There it goes, another of these awakeners, —a jolt in the small of the back and a jump to knock your head off, and then the soothing of a sharp curve swinging you in the direction of eternity. And this is what these people are prizing as a holiday! To me it seems as if the engineer or contractor or whoever he is, has had in his plans the intention of killing us all off before ever a chance of a dividend comes round. There it goes at it again,—a jolt and a jumble ; snick, snack, and a running away; and off we go once more with our lives in our mouths! Oh, if I were only once rid of the whole confounded concern and these Mandevilles as well, I think then I might take a holiday and be thankful for it."

Thus with foolish thoughts did Amos Langton make amusement for himself in his seat well forward in the train; but the train, sullenly ignoring the foolishness, went crazily on in its own way, giving heed to nothing save its own eccentricities.

And amid all this jumble of holiday-

making, what a jubilant brilliant part Major Mandeville was allowing himself to play in the open bloom of colonial courtiership,—sunning himself in his son's success and his own importance as the *sine qua non* of the whole enterprise, with due submission of course to the benign presence of his excellency the governor-general!

"I cannot very well understand what there is in the future for such an undertaking as this," said the governor as the speed of the train came to a snail's pace on one of the heaviest grades.

"Ah, my lord, great undertakings have nearly always had small beginnings, and we are all hoping that this one will be no exception."

It was Major Mandeville who had ventured to make reply to his excellency.

"That is so, my dear Major: the great enterprises are those that are near us and in which we have direct personal interest. But will the building of wooden railways, think you, come to be taken up elsewhere?"

"Surely so, your excellency" returned

the Major, "if the Norward prove anything of a success."

"Ah, then you think it will, Major?"

But as if to give interruption to what the Major had it in mind to reply, or emphasis to the governor's very mild satire, the train here came to a standstill near a high trestle-work that had to be brought to the attention of all on board, to be admired as the most difficult exploit of engineering skill on the whole road.

## *CHAPTER VIII*

### *The Walking Match on the Trestle Bridge*

THERE was certainly something exceptional about the filagree piece of engineering, to say the least of it,—something worth taking note of, perhaps, as engineering skill went in those days.

All the passengers had been invited to examine it, and to do so they had of course to leave the cars.

The governor was pressed for his opinion on it by Major Mandeville, who, as has been hinted, had not laid aside his finesse of forerunning all morning, within the charmed circle of the vice-regal party.

"A surprising piece of ingenuity, I must confess, Major Mandeville!" said the governor, who had had his full share of the old forerunner, and was not above

taking gentle reprisal. "A most striking bit of wood-work weaving. I would say however, that the safest sections of it are to be found at its two ends."

A gentle ripple of laughter followed the governor's irony, though Major Mandeville did not see very well where the joke came in. That gentleman assured his lordship that the bit of wood-work weaving, as he had called it, had been thouroughly tested in all its parts.

"Oh, I am glad to hear you say so, Major," said his excellency. "It certainly ought to be stronger than it looks, or some of us might feel a little nervous while passing over it."

"I assure your excellency that there is no danger whatever in the structure," said the Major, with his face tinged a shade redder. "My son has seen to that, and there is Mr. Langton, over there: he is an interested shareholder, and will tell you that every precaution has been taken to have every part of the work carefully and scientifically tested."

Amos Langton had previously ap-

proached the edge of things with the others and had not seen who were pressing behind him.

"His excellency would like to know what you think of the trestle-work, Mr. Langton," said the Major, stepping forward and touching the broker on the shoulder, "now that you see it in its finished state."

"I would think less of it, were the train on it and I were on the train," said the broker; and again the laugh was contrary to the Major's expectations, making the tinge on his face a little deeper.

Mr. Farquhar, who was standing near, was sure that Major Mandeville was in a fair way of throwing etiquette to the winds, as he sometimes did in his office.

Even the governor thought it best to join in the laugh dubiously and wanted to know where his friend Mr. Langton had been all morning.

"I have not had the pleasure of seeing you since we left the terminus."

"No, your excellency, I have been on an

inspection tour, confessing my sins of omission all by myself. My father confessor here has had duties of his own to attend to, and so I had to do a little self-absolving on the quiet."

The droll audacious manner of the old broker, fun provoking at all times when there was no business in it, was well known to the governor, as it was to every one in the town, citadel set and all.

"Ha, ha, Major Mandeville, what is this I hear about you and your neglect of having one of our party confessing his sins all by himself?"

The governor had evidently not yet forgiven the Major's forerunning, and the merriment over this classifying of the old soldier as a father confessor for the crowd became all the more pronounced when it was seen how he took it.

"My lord, I am no man's father confessor."

The laugh was now no longer of the indirect kind. It became audible and infections. For what are people out on a

holiday for if not to laugh and at trifles too; though the governor's joke was no trifle to poor Major Mandeville!

"I did not mean to affront Major Mandeville, my lord, by calling *him* my father confessor," said Amos Langton. "I meant my friend Mr. Farquhar here: you know he is still a lady's man."

And now the laugh could be heard at a distance.

"I wonder what they are laughing at," said Mr. Charles Mandeville, when he saw his father turn from the governor's side.

He had not missed hearing even the milder sounds of merriment, while leaning over the embankment with his protecting hand stretched out towards Miss Langton who had gone nearer the edge in advance of him.

"I think my uncle must have been saying something amusing to the governor," said Miss Langton: and she drew back to join her uncle and Mr. Farquhar and the others, with Mr. Mandeville following. Then she jokingly asked her uncle what he

had been saying about her behind her back.

"If I have not been saying it, I have certainly been thinking that you should keep away from the embankment: there is danger enough in sight in that road on stilts, without our making more."

"Oh, uncle, I thought you would have a better word than that to say for the Norward; and Mr. Mandeville here to listen, too."

And certainly Mr. Charles Mandeville was anything but pleased at having the Norward Colonization Railway called a road on stilts in the hearing of the governor or even in his own. Was there something in the wind that he knew nothing about? Was the old broker going to go back on him? Had these cunning old grey eyes of the lawyer, that his father was always swearing at, been ferreting out things? Was Amos Langton getting to be aware of the skeleton in his, Charles Mandeville's, closet?

"Tuts, tuts, Mr. Langton," he however, forced himself to say; "you know that

yonder trestle-work has been inspected in all its parts not once but several times, and there is nothing dangerous about it."

"Danger sometimes comes to us with our eyes shut, young man," answered Amos.

Meantime signals had come from the train and the most of the group had returned to their car. The governor, turning to Miss Langton, said:

"On the faith of what Mr. Mandeville says, we had better get to our car; and, in keeping with your uncle's opinion about hidden dangers, we will shut our eyes—though I will be sorry to lose the light of yours even for a moment—and think of something the least dangerous while the train is taking us across. Come along Miss Langton: see, the others are already in their places before us!"

But Amos Langton did not follow the governor.

Nor did Mr. Farquhar.

Mr. Charles Mandeville looked from the one to the other.

"I did not know that you were timid, Mr. Langton."

"I did not know it myself, until I came in presence of that dandy-long-legs of yours. Are you really going to take all these cars over that thing at one and the same time?"

"We cannot very well take them over one by one unless some of us stay behind to push them over."

Then the three men looked at one another, eye to eye, two of them wondering within themselves if this was where something should happen, and the third wondering whether something was going to happen before its time.

"What say you, Farquhar, are you willing of your own aforethought to risk your life on that structure? As for me I am going to remain behind to push you across on shanks's buggy."

"There is risk any way you like to take it," said the lawyer.

"But I assure you, gentlemen, that there is no danger to any one," exclaimed the railway promoter ruffled out of his *au*

*monsieur* manner. This fooling may be expensive to all of us, and is quite out of place: there is no danger of any kind."

"That may be as you say, but no train is going to imperil my life on the top of that crow's nest on a hen-coop. What do you say, Farquhar? Will you stay behind and give me a push if I need it?"

A quick shooting glance passed from the broker's eyes to the lawyer's.

"It will be fun for both of us to walk across," said Mr. Farquhar. "I think I will stay to push or be pushed."

"You are certainly being pushed to make a fool of all of us: so I will leave you to settle the matter between you. The people on board will have to be told of your walking match, and unless you have some object in view that nobody knows anything about save yourselves, we had better pass it off as a match to make fun for the crowd. A walking match be it then, gentlemen, with the handicap against the law which never wants to be on the losing side."

And almost immediately the word went

round the cars that there was a walking match on between Mr. Amos Langton and Mr. Farquhar.

"Yes, across the trestle-work," said Mr. Mandeville running from car to car with the bluffing intelligence. "The train will be drawn up upon the other side to give every one a chance to see it."

And the funniest of all the occurrences of that memorable day sunk out of sight in presence of the competition that followed. There was no competition, until Mr. Charles Mandeville, for purposes of his own, started the race in the minds of the crowd, and then left it to the crowd to keep it up in imagination.

Step by step, cross-bar by cross-bar, did the lawyer and the broker follow the track, in full view of the excursionists once more out on the track to see who was going to win. The competitors did not know the full meaning of the cries of impatience, alarm, and oftener derision that greeted their efforts from time to time. Nor did they very much care. They were exchanging snatches of conversation which

Mr. Charles Mandeville would have been not a little alarmed to have heard, and which the holiday-mongers would hardly have understood without explanations. There was a match on; but it was not one between the broker and the lawyer, but one between Mr. Charles Mandeville and these two, with the handicap very strongly in the latters' favour.

"We must not be in the way all the time," said Amos putting foot on the trestle-bridge and starting the race for the crowd on the far side of the miniature canyon.

"You mean that you would give the scoundrel his one more chance?"

"Yes, if the little house-keeper is likely to gain her chance of escaping heart-whole."

What would these two have thought had they been told that, at that very moment, Mr. Charles Mandeville was having his chance in the match which the crowd of excursionists were not looking on at? The stakes in the visible match—the supposed walking match between Miss

Langton's uncle and her godfather—were but the momentary fun and frolic of yonder holiday makers; while the stakes of the real match were no less than *the love of a woman* and *the love of money.*

## *CHAPTER IX*

### *Mr. Charles Mandeville's Secret*

"I did not think your uncle was so timid," said Mr. Mandeville, taking his chance as it was offered to him in the absence of the guardian angel of the sombre suit.

Meantime the so-called walking match had just started, and it could not come to a finish for five or ten minutes at least.

"I never saw the trait in him before, in all the business transactions I have had with him."

Mr. Mandeville and Miss Langton were alone in the governor's car, the elite of the elite having followed his lordship who was anxious to see all that there was to be seen, and for whom any kind of a match had an irresistible attraction, as Mr. Mandeville very well knew.

Miss Langton was unwilling to leave the car with the others, when she heard incidentally what was to be seen outside.

"Perhaps you have never met my uncle at a pic-nic before, Mr. Mandeville," said she. "You know how some people a' more timid than others."

"But there really could be no danger, Miss Langton; one is as safe aboard this train as in the Governor's Garden, whether the train is on or off the trestle-bridge."

Yet the sounds from outside still disconcerted her.

Nor had the flush gone from her face.

"You know I am not over fearless myself, Mr. Mandeville."

The sounds of merriment and excitement continued.

"Are these people laughing at my uncle and Mr. Farquhar?"

"They are only watching them coming over the track of the trestle-bridge, I think; it is always easy for people at a pic-nic to find fun in anything."

"But was there anything so very strange in my uncle and Mr. Farquhar deciding to walk across the track, instead of coming over by the train? Perhaps they wanted to see what it looked like from the centre of it. Are you sure that nothing will happen to them?" and she stood up as if at last she had made up her mind to join the others.

"There is not much indication of danger to any one in these sounds that come to us from outside," he said detaining her. "Many things that are not accidents and have no danger in them to any one are happening everywhere and every day." Then drawing nearer to her and speaking in a low sympathetic tone, he continued:

"We have known one another, Miss Langton, ever since this railway began to be built; and now that it is completed I would like to tell you a secret if you will only grant me permission to do so."

The danger, which her uncle had said sometimes came in an inexcusable way, had evidently come into the conversation, unless Miss Langton was in love with Mr.

Charles Mandeville. As the sounds from outside indicated, her uncle and Mr. Farquhar were still wrestling with the dangers of the long bridge; but here she was all alone with a trestle-work of her own to face.

"Do you not know Mr. Mandeville, that secrets are very dangerous things to carry about with one?" and she could not repress the blush that would come.

"Then, is that not a reason why I should wish to get rid of this one of mine? But really Miss Langton, this secret of mine is not of the very dangerous kind."

"Like the trestle-bridge, I suppose. Yet do you know, Mr. Mandeville, I really saw your father and the governor turn a little pale when we were passing the middle part of that very bridge in which you say there is no danger."

"But the Norward Railway is now an accomplished fact, and I am now a free man,—free from a promise that may be broken to-day."

To a woman not in love with Mr.

Charles Mandeville, the trestle-bridge was almost safer than this kind of thing.

Neither blush nor tremor, though, was to be seen again in Miss Langton's manner.

"Come," she said starting up, and again making for the steps of the car, "let us face the fun and find out how it is faring with uncle and Mr. Farquhar."

"One moment, Miss Langton" said Mandeville, with a flush all over his own face now; "your uncle knows my secret, I believe, and I think it would be well for you to know it too."

"And Mr. Farquhar, does he know it also?"

"He certainly does; and there is no harm in my saying that it has something to do with a promise my father made to that gentleman a year ago."

"So it is a business secret. Oh, I am so glad, for we four will be able to talk it over among ourselves when we all meet. What is that? Some accident? Come quick, Mr. Mandeville; do not let us linger;

there must be something wrong or they would not be making such a noise."

But Mr. Mandeville knew from the laughter that mingled with the shouts that there was nothing wrong.

Amos Langton and the lawyer had arrived safely from their trip across the trestle-bridge. That was all, leaving out the rejoicings over their arrival, which were hearty and prolonged. During the rush for the cars which followed, Mr. Mandeville had only time to say:

"May I take the liberty of speaking to you, Miss Langton, about this matter again before the day is over?"

"Certainly, Mr. Mandeville: what harm can there be in that, seeing it is a business secret known to no less than four people, and to be listened to by all of us?"

Had Miss May Langton been making sport of Mr. Charles Mandeville? One would hardly have thought her to be a woman of that kind, at least Mr. Charles Mandeville would never have thought it, after all his condescension of manner

towards her, from the day he had carried that basket of fruit home for her from the Cul-de-Sac, and after all the friendly relations that had been established between them since. Of course she was not in his set. But had he not made up his mind to marry her? How could he arrange matters otherwise with her uncle? He had been in no haste to secure her for his wife, simply because it was not in his interest to hasten matters. How was he to know what would happen before he had fully matured this Norward deal? How did he know how the ferretings of old Master Grey Eyes were going to turn out? He had been writing to New York he knew. But Master Grey Eyes would hardly dare spring any mine without old Langton's sanction, and Amos Langton was too deep in this Norward business to want to do either it or its promoter a harm.

Ay, was Miss Langton really making sport of Mr. Charles Mandeville? Or was it only what was left of a shrivelled up conscience that was giving the man a momentary shake up in his nerves? Would

any woman dare make sport of such as he? Don't be a fool, old man! There is no woman born that would dare play pitch-and-toss with the expectations of Charles Mandeville.

But how was Mr. Charles Mandeville to make sure of his ground by further conversation, with the people now all on board again, and with his duties of the day upon him?

Even the two run-aways—these heroes of the trestle-bridge as they were called for many a day—had climbed to their places again and the train was no longer to be delayed.

"Miss Langton I still have it in mind to tell you that secret," he said hurrying past her after the train had started. "I would like to tell it to you yourself first though,—no matter how many are to know it after." And as he said it Mr. Mandeville was now again all smiles, as if the thoughts of a drowning man had not been flooding his mind to distraction when he had left her last. With the bloom of his unabashed devil-may-care air about him once more,

he spoke to her as if he did not mind who heard him, forgetting even that Mr. Farquhar was once more in his old seat in the governor's car.

## *CHAPTE X*

### *The Two Old Match-Breakers*

WHILE the road was in process of construction, the shrill scream of the engine's whistle had for months been intermittently arousing, as a seeming anomaly, the primeval echoes around Lac de l'Isle. There was something startling in its awakening cry of coming progress. And on the day of inauguration, with patience outworn to see this strange thing, the peasant farmers had assembled from miles around, to blend their rejoicings with every noise that either engine or excursionists were suffered to make.

There had never been such a large gathering in the vicinity of Lac de l'Isle before, if we are to except the pre-historic times when the Iroquois used to muster

for an attack on the settlements of their enemies the Hurons.

The day was a day to be remembered: for what could have passed more auspiciously than the proceedings around the lunch-table, with the proudest of the land smiling upon the poorest, and speaking so hopefully in their hearing of the future of their country? The governor's words had lost every trace of reprisal against the tiresome forerunning of Major Mandeville, and the other speakers, taking their cue from him, suffered no word to escape them that would mar the congratulations which passed from mouth to mouth.

Amid the general rejoicings, which he knew would brook no corrective of any kind, even Amos Langton had to keep in check his *penchant* for satirical utterances; and not once did he refer directly or inderectly to "that crow's nest on a hencoop" which he and his friend, Mr. Farquhar, had ventured to cross on foot to the amusement of the whole party.

Moreover, was it not a day to be remembered by Mr. Charles Mandeville, who

now might let all serious problems of financial anxiety go to the dogs, if fate would only not play him false in his last *grand coup*?

When the last speech had been delivered and the breaking-up around the lunch-table had followed, the announcement was made that the excursionists were to reassemble, for the return trip, on the third blowing of the engine's whistle and a final ringing of the bell.

"The bell-call will be time enough for us, Farquhar," said Amos Langton, laughing and dusting the crumbs from his vest. "We have had *our* walking-match, and the others can now have their chance of making fun for themselves or anybody else they have a mind to."

"I did't think you were so easily tired out as that," said the lawyer, "I would like to take a stroll as far as the lake," and he turned away as if he did not want to wait for the broker to change his mind even.

"See here old man," and Amos went up to Mr. Farquhar, drawing him aside and

addressing him in an undertone; "that creeping melodramatic look in these old eyes of yours will do us a damage before the day is over. You had better dispense with it. It is enough for the two of us to be laden down to the gunwale with all manner of suspicions and all that sort of thing, without making an exhibition of ourselves and our burden. Even that old dunderhead of a Major Mandeville, I believe, could read the anxiety in that tell-tale face of yours. Do you think that I am not as anxious as you are? Would any one know from my looks that I am anxious about anything save this humbug of a railway that these fools have just been praising to the skies? Come, come, Farquhar, this won't do, you know."

Amos Langton evidently, thought himself quite as much of an expert in taking charge of the Farquhar will power, as the lawyer had shown himself to be in bringing Major Mandeville up at a sharp turn, temper and all. What is strength of character is mere imbecility when brought face to face with a stronger mind.

"Where were you going, anyway?"

Mr. Farquhar dropped the fiction of that stroll of his as far as the lake. Quite meekly he said that he had no intention of going anywhere in particular—he would just follow the crowd— here or yonder— anywhere.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," said Amos. "The crowd is not all going in one direction, and there is only one element in the crowd you are sufficiently interested in, to follow it. That is what is the matter with you. You want to anticipate events. You want to drive the little house-keeper to take the bit between her teeth. We must not appear to be in any one's way. I have told you that before. You were in the car all the way up, until I forced you to take a walk across that ginger-bread bridge with me. This won't do, Farquhar, won't do at all. I know I am bullying you. But folly and friendship are unsafe bedfellows. Stay where you are therefore. Let fate work out the problem of love as best she may, all by herself. The little house-keeper knows what's what as

well as we two old foggies of male grandmothers. A woman's instinct is more to be depended upon than a man's judgment. What do we know of the secrets of love-making or of love-breaking, tell me that? Besides you said you had some papers to show me about that West Indian affair. You have the evidence complete, I think you said."

"Ay, and of the New York business as well," said Mr. Farquhar.

"Come then over to the clearing yonder, where we are not likely to be interrupted and let me have the details of the whole story in some kind of a connected way. I could only catch snatches of it on our way across that hen-coop on end. And so these fools thought we were having a walking-match of it!"

Mr. Farquhar, after casting his "creeping melodramatic eyes" across the clearing, suggested an adjournment towards a huge boulder, that is if ever he was to be master of his own movements again.

"You are master often enough over other people's movements to put up with

a little bullying from an old friend," said Amos smiling. "You know you cannot have your own way all the time. Did you bring these papers with you? We can sit down here."

"I did not think that it would be wise," said the lawyer; "but these notes will show you what is in store for us, if the villain wins on this last chance you are giving him."

"A celebration of this kind would have been a poor place at which to make any *dénouement,* where the little house-keeper might have had more than her share of bad news," and Amos Langton took the slip of paper from Mr. Farquhar and read it carefully from beginning to end.

"My dear Farquhar, this is a lamentable business indeed."

All brusqueness had now gone out of the old broker's manner.

"I am ashamed, heartily ashamed of the part we have to play in it. And just to think that we may have to condone everything that fellow has done in his lifetime for the sake of our dear girl. And it was

you who read the purpose of his plannings from the very beginning, even before I—poor blind fool that I have been—began to suspect! For a whole year his game has been to escape the responsibilities of a lifetime's rascalities, by having alliance with me and mine. And at this very moment he may be trying to win the affections of the woman he would deceive, attacking her poor dear trembling heart as a matter of business for certain."

The two old friends looked solemnly into one another's faces.

"You have no stock in this Norward Railway concern, have you, Farquhar?"

"None, unless you call a life's interest stock."

"Ah, yes, you mean the little housekeeper," and there was no trace of a smile on Amos Langton's face now, or sternness either.

"Ay, this is a lamentable business, Farquhar—a very lamentable business indeed," he kept saying.

"Then you have no stock in it?"

"Not a copper."

"Nor any of your friends?"

"Not that I know of, beyond yourself,—no personal friends."

Amos Langton was silent and looked out across the clearing.

"But wl. do you ask?" said Mr. Farquhar.

"Because I have made up my mind that there is nothing in it for anybody, unless—"

And something came into the old man's throat, as he took his friend Farquhar's hand in his as tenderly as if it had been a woman's.

"Yes," said he, after drawing a full breath that sounded very much like a sigh, "I would give all the money I possess in the world to save our little woman's name from being noised abroad in any scandal. To save her name I would forgive him everything, and let him win his game too. Even now fate may be writing out its decree against us and her. Pray, Farquhar; I beseech you, pray as you have never prayed before that our dear girl

may be saved from the temptation of loving such a man."

After a continuous silence for several minutes, Amos Langton asked his friend if he had ever come into close conversation about this matter with his godchild.

"I know it was I that should have spoken with her," said he; "but what could two old codgers, such as we are, do in warding off danger under such circumstances. Even as it is, the story-book writers, if they get after us, will laugh at us for being two old fools—two old marplots fretting like two old maids over family matters. Besides, knowing what a a good sensible girl I had to deal with, and high spirited too, I was afraid to say anything to put her on her guard, even after you put me on my guard. Did *you* ever venture to broach the subject of her true feelings towards Mandeville?"

"Not till last night."

"And?"

"I merely hinted that in every one's life there came at one time or another some important serious problem,—some

turning point in one's whole future, when a friend's counsel was something indispensable, if the mistake of a lifetime were to be avoided."

"Well?"

"She said that such a serious problem had not yet come into her life, but if it ever did she knew where to look for an adviser that had no bias in his advice."

"Well?"

"Oh, I knew she was giving me a little bit of a gentle rebuke, for she knows that I have no full heart for Mr. Charles Mandeville."

"Yes?"

"Still, I was not going to be put out over that, and therefore asked her, bringing up about to-day's celebration, what she would do were such a serious problem to come into her life in the very near future; and, blushing a little, she said that she was not afraid of facing any such problem, but certainly would come to no decision without consulting the two best friends she had in the world."

"Do you really think she will marry him?"

"I think she sometimes wonders herself whether she ever will or not; yet I am sure she will do nothing without consulting you."

"Did she give a definite promise to that effect?"

"She gave me to understand that she would come to no decision whatever, without placing the whole matter in your hands."

"Then it may turn out that we have been only a pair of old fools after all," and Amos Langton looked relieved as he rose from behind the boulder where they had been seated.

"Would you advise me to speak with her about this matter on the way home?" asked Mr. Farquhar.

"Not for your life. To-morrow will be time enough. And then let us pray that it may be given us to act as well as speak."

## *CHAPTER XI*

### *Major Mandeville's Memory Fails Him*

IT was Major Mandeville, not Mr. Charles Mandeville, who attached himself, seemingly of his own free will and choice, to Miss Langton, after the party of excursionists had risen from the luncheon table, though neither Amos Langton nor Mr. Farquhar were aware of the fact till certain other events had happened. In fact, the moment lunch was over and the speeches all delivered, Mr. Charles Mandeville had mysteriously disappeared.

The others of the party had segregated into small groups, seeking their own pleasure in the clearing or in the forest or along the highway which ran through the settlement.

No, Major Mandeville did not know for certain where his son, Mr. Mandeville, had

gone, though he was sure he would be on hand before the train was ready to start on its return trip. And if Miss Langton was not otherwise engaged and would be pleased to permit him, he would be only too delighted to accompany that young lady along the railway track towards the lake. He had seen Miss Langton's uncle and his worthy friend Mr. Farquhar the lawyer,—his own lawyer too by the way—move in the other direction towards the settlement, but they would also no doubt return in plenty of time for the train. If therefore Miss Langton would be good enough to let him, nothing would give him greater pleasure indeed than to show her what there was to be seen of the locality which it was his son Charles's ambition to make the most of, now that the Norward Colonization Railway was completed. Well, yes, he should think so, he had been at Lac de l'Isle several times within the past few months: it was not easy to keep away from Lac de l'Isle these times if one was acquainted with Charles: he was always taking his friends out with him

when he had to visit the place on business, which was very frequently, now that the road was built.

"We often hear of you, Miss Langton, from Charles, very often indeed. He seems to be a particular friend of yours, or as I ought to say, in speaking properly, you seem to be a very particular friend of his. He says he often drops in to see your uncle of a Sunday afternoon."

Miss Langton, in return and properly enough, said that she had also heard a great deal of Major Mandeville, and hoped that she was not taking him away from any of his friends or any of the members of his family.

"Not at all," said the Major in his jauntiest way of entering a protest. "I think I gave my friends enough of my time and attention on the way up, to be excused for indulging in the greatest happiness of the day by having a walk and a chat with one so well acquainted with my son Charles as you are, Miss Langton."

It was not easy to know whether it was the Major's long-winded courtesy of words

or the lithe graceful pace at which Miss Langton was skipping over the railway sleepers that made the gentleman's face so red and his breathing a little difficult.

"You have never seen the lake, I suppose, Miss Langton?"

No, she had never seen the lake, though she had heard Mr. Mandeville speaking very highly of it as a possible pic-nic ground for the city people when the railway was once running regularly.

"Yes indeed, Charles is quite enthusiastic when he gets to speaking about the resources of the locality. He thinks that in time there will be quite a town built up around here. Have you ever heard him talk of the beautiful grove near the narrows: quite a romantic spot,—quite romantic, I assure you, Miss Langton. You would like to visit it I am sure, wouldn't you?"

And naturally enough again and properly too for a young lady who was enjoying everything that came in her way that day of country life and its picturesqueness, Miss Langton answered that she would be

FISHING CAMP, NEAR THE GROVE

very glad to visit a place the Major and Mr. Mandeville had praised so highly.

"You see I know a pathway through the bush." the Major continued, "a short-cut we call it, which will take us to the lake in a very few minutes, and the grove is just up from the shore of the lake. I am very sorry that Charles is not with us; he knows so much about everything and is so much more entertaining, as you must know by this time, Miss Langton, than his poor old father can ever expect to be. I wonder where he can have gone to."

A few minutes' walk farther on and the Major turned from the track and passed within the curtain of the bush, followed by Miss Langton.

"It is only a stone's throw or so from the rails to the lake" he said, holding the branches of some poplars aside to let his companion pass, "and not much more to the grove. You are not afraid of being in the bush, are you, Miss Langton? Some people are, you know. But we will soon be out in the open. Ah, you little beggar, I thought you were something bigger!

Only a squirrel, Miss Langton—a little brown fellow: there he goes along the path again!" and then the Major, getting rid of his fright, started off to tell his companion all he knew about the different kinds of squirrels of which he had any knowledge.

"Ah, just a few minutes more and we are there: I see the sheen from the water through the leaves: and at last we catch the first glimpse of the water. Now we are all right: step this way please: and take in the view! Isn't it charming?"

And a beautiful scene it was, interrupting, as it did, all conversation, until every trait in the blend of lake and forest and height of land had been arranged on the retina in due proportion to produce a properly balanced picture in the mind.

"Yonder is the grove we were speaking off," said the Major, pointing with his gold-headed ebony cane towards the southern side of the lake.

Then he began to talk of the excellent trout that his son's friends had taken from the lake during their holiday making, and

of the zest with which he himself had partaken of them at home.

"But we must not forget about the grove. I think you had better come this way, Miss Langton. None of the excursionists can have found their way so far, I am sure."

And the Major moved off in the direction of the grove by a pathway along the shore of the lake.

"I wonder in what direction your uncle and Mr. Farquhar could have gone. Possibly we may find them in the grove, though how—"

"I thought you said you had seen them going in the opposite direction," said Miss Langton, beginning to notice a nervousness in the Major's manner.

"Ah, excuse me, so I did: what treacherous tricks a man's memory will play him at times! What an incident that walking match was of theirs across the trestle-bridge! How eccentric Mr. Farquhar is becoming the older he gets! The older we get, do you know, Miss Langton, the less is our judgment to be depended upon.

Don't you think so? Now there is that case—"

But Major Mandeville did not finish the sentence. His satin hat gave a sudden jerk away from Miss Langton as he turned to look at the end of the lake they had just left. He evidently, from the way he turned round, did not wish to look at Miss Langton, whose face was flushed with an indignant crimson. They had both caught a glimpse of Mr. Charles Mandeville hastening towards them from the outskirts of the grove. When Mr. Charles Mandeville held out his hand to Miss Langton the father had hardly had time to turn round on him.

"Well by the powers and all the fates combined, Charles Mandeville how do *you* come to be here? You certainly must have dropped from the clouds since you could not have passed us on the pathway by which we came."

Mr. Mandeville said something about his going round by a longer road through the clearing, to see after some lumber he had ordered to be cut.

"I have just been thinking of showing the grove to Miss Langton here," said the Major "and we came by the short-cut through the pathway in the bush."

"Ah, that explains the matter," said the son.

But it did not seem to explain the matter to Miss Langton, who before she looked up at either father or son stepped to the side of the pathway, as if she would like to make out for herself how far it was to the grove.

Then she eliminated the Major entirely from the party.

"You have not seen anything of my uncle have you, Mr. Mandeville?"

"I was just saying to Miss Langton," said the Major, "that we might—no, no, not that either: I remember now—"

The poor old Major was evidently losing his head.

Nor did the son come to the father's rescue.

The young lady took a step or two towards the grove and then stooped to look at something on the path before her;

while the two Mandevilles looked sheepishly in one another's faces.

The Major raised his voice to make a last effort to redeem himself in the hearing of Miss Langton.

"The governor asked me during the lunch to find a seat for Mr. Langton in his car on the way home, as he would like to have the pleasure of his conversation. Do you think we could manage it, Charles? Hadn't I better get back to arrange to meet his lordship's wishes?"

This brought the son to the side of the maiden to explain to her, as if she had not heard a word the Major had said, that his father remembered something he ought to have seen to, before he had left the train.

"Will you permit me to assume his duty towards you by showing you over the grove now that you have come so far to see it?"

"Major Mandeville is his own master," said the angry little house-keeper, who had spirit enough to keep her anger well out of sight. "I thank him very much for having

brought me thus far." Then drawing herself to her full height and looking in no enervated way into Mr. Charles Mandeville's eyes, she said she would be very glad indeed to accompany him to the grove, if it would not inconvenience him in going so far with her.

## *CHAPTER XII*

### *The Secrets of the Grove*

WOULD it not have been better? Would what not have been better?

Well, would it not have been wiser for Miss May Langton to have refused Mr. Charles Mandeville's offer to accompany her to the grove of Lac de l'Isle? Her godfather had warned her against danger. But had not her uncle also declared that the little house-keeper was well able to take care of herself?

She was not so misguided as not to know what Mr. Mandeville's secret was. But love is as bold as a lion; and, if a woman's love happened to be involved in this case, Amos Langton had known what a dangerous thing it would have been to try to scare the lion away.

"You want to drive the little house-

keeper to take the bit between her teeth," he had said to Mr. Farquhar, and we know how Mr. Farquhar had to confess himself unable to read what was in her woman's heart towards this fellow Mandeville.

The grove was in its natural state, unkempt and hazardous to a lady's skirts. The only safe pathway through it was the gravelly bed of a dried-up brook.

At the head of this pathway an open space of grass carpeting spread itself out and here Mr. Mandeville made pause, after having assumed on the way the burden of the conversation, while referring to what he had it in his mind to do for Lac de l'Isle as a summer resort.

"I suppose you do not intend to ask me what that promise was that was once made in my behalf to your friend Mr. Farnham Farquhar," he said at last.

"So this is the day on which you mean to break your promise," she answered. Then with a nerved light in her eyes which Mr. Charles would rather not have seen, she continued:

"Do you think it right ever to break a promise?"

"But my promise may be broken to-day to the disadvantage of no one: I have reached the time-limit as we business men say."

"Well, if you break your promise to-day you must keep you secret a little longer."

"How is that? The divulging of my secret is involved in the breaking of my promise."

"But there are only two of us present; and you know there should be two more present if you would keep faith with those who already know your secret," and the confident polite tone of Miss May Langton, while thus replying to her would-be lover, was no disclaimer to her uncle's statement that she was well able to take care of herself.

Indeed Miss Langton's manner seemed to take the spirit out of the conversation.

But for a chattering, whimsically mocking grey squirrel overhead, the grove would have been at intervals as silent as a cemetery; though the noise the little crea-

ture made all but forced an oath from the lips of Mr. Charles Mandeville, after the fashion of men of limited language resources.

Was the chatter of the squirrel any exponent of the funereal-fun in the air? Had certain business negociations reached their climax, too ridiculously sudden? How was Mr. Charles Mandeville going to grade the track to the right kind of climax, returning to his task *de novo*? Would another trestle-bridge have to be built? Yet even that from the standpoint of a business necessity might frighten some people.

"His lordship was in fine form to-day after luncheon, wasn't he?" and Mr. Mandeville turned to his *de novo*, as if nothing was going to happen after all. "His words were a great encouragement to everybody present, I am sure."

"And I am sure everybody was pleased with your very appropriate reply," was the young lady's response, given as if she was sure that nothing would or should happen.

"Well, it is pleasant to be encouraged by some one."

"You mean in well doing?"

"In any of our wisely thought-out enterprises."

"At least in such an undertaking as the building of a railway."

"Ay, in other enterprises besides railway building."

And then came another pause, during which the squirrel assuredly had the last of it, if not the best of it too: its ridicule was getting simply unbearable. Old Major Mandeville's temper would have gone off like the fire-works at a winter's carnival, in presence of its mimicry, and his son had enough to do to keep his temper under restraint.

"My dear Miss Langton, can you think of no more difficult a task for a man than the building of a railroad?"

"Do you mean a wooden railway?"

"Any kind of a railroad," and the chatter of that little grey beggar, as the Major would have called the squirrel, made Mr.

Mandeville's face almost as red as his father's ever had been.

"You are surely not laughing at the Norward Railway after what was said about it at lunch time."

"I am not laughing at anything," remonstrated Miss Langton.

"Not even at me?"

"Certainly not; do you think I would be capable of such a thing?"

Yet the squirrel could not be said not to be laughing at something or somebody, at least Mr. Mandeville would have willingly killed it had he had the means of doing so at hand.

Without showing his discomfiture too much, however, he brought the conversation back a step.

"You have not answered my question, Miss Langton?"

"How can I? I am not a man to know as much of business as that."

"Being only a woman?"

"Yes, *only* a woman."

"To throw difficulties in a man's way."

"Mr. Mandeville!"

"To avoid helping him, then, if that is the right way to put it."

"Why, what help can the administrator of the Norward Colonization Railway want from any one, now that the road is built?"

"I want your help as long as—as one—well—as long as one, you know, may have it."

And was it not well to have even a little grey squirrel at the moment to make light of the situation, now that Mr. Charles Mandeville had let his secret out so abruptly, if not inauspiciously, even as a business venture.

"So you want my assistance in a business way?" said the maiden taking her cue from the squirrel, and laughing merrily.

"In the worst way, rather," said the wooer solemnly.

"In money or returned railway bonds?"

"In something more valuable than either."

"And what can that be, I pray?"

"I would have your help, my dear Miss

Langton, payable in the bonds of a life's love."

And now the situation became so ridiculous—so solemnly ridiculous that Miss Langton and the squirrel and even Mr. Charles Mandeville himself had to join in the fun of it.

"But really, my dear May, it is very true: too true, Miss Langton, that is, as true as true can be;" exclaimed the latter, holding out his hand towards Miss Langton, as if he would seize hers.

"I think it is about time we were on our way back, Mr. Mandeville," she said a little nervously, it being the first time she had shown any unbending in her manner from the moment Major Mandeville had left them.

"But it is true what I have been saying to you, and I don't care who hears me."

"We had better, perhaps, not discuss this matter any further," and she hastened down the pathway of the dried-up brook.

"I am waiting for a reply," said he coming up to her."

"But just think, Mr. Mandeville—"

"Think of what?"

"Of your responsibilities."

"I would rather think of my happiness that is to be," and the promoter of the Norward Colonizatin Railway raised Miss Langton's hand to his lips, though without being permitted to kiss it.

"Now listen to me," said the niece of Amos Langton.

"I would rather not listen to anything unless it be your consent to be mistress of the Norward."

"But you *must* listen to me, and then we must go from this place at once."

And the will power of the old broker of Peter Street was in her eye and voice.

"Well, if I must listen, I suppose I must."

"You have broken your promise."

"Lawfully."

"You have divulged your secret."

"Well."

"Now I have made a promise which I am not going to break."

"A promise with a secret?"

"No sir, there is no secret."

"Then you really love me, May?"

"Mr. Mandeville!"

"But you do love me, do you not?"

"I am afraid that you will say that the promise I have made will hardly bear that out."

"You love another, then."

But by this time Miss Langton had entered the short-cut through the bush and did not halt nor speak a word until she had reached the track, though she knew that her would-be lover was immediately behind her.

"And what is this promise you have made?" he asked impatiently when they were again in the open.

"I have promised my uncle to consult and obey him in all matters pertaining to my settlement in life as the wife of any man."

"And as the good and faithful servant of your godfather too, I suppose?"

"That is as it may be; I have promised my uncle."

"Then you will be mine, if your uncle gives his consent?"

"I think we had better not discuss the subject any further: there goes the first whistle from the train: let us hasten away from this place where we may be overheard."

"Or seen together! But one word more," said he, as he stood in front of her, preventing further progress towards the terminus. "Am I to understand that I have your consent to place this matter before your uncle?"

"I would rather say no more about it."

"But you will let me do this much?"

"Like your father, you are your own master, now that the Norward is built."

"The Norward be hanged!"

"Not until my uncle is safely across that trestle-bridge again."

"Which he will surely be by to-morrow afternoon."

"Unless some other trestle-bridge comes in his way."

"Your godfather for instance?"

And the train whistle screamed again.

"There," she exclaimed as she made to

pass him, "we will be late in getting back."

"No danger," said he, a look of passion blending with his reckless supercilious-ness: "they will hardly leave without us."

"But all the people will be in their places."

"And will murder us if they see us return together, I suppose!" and Mr. Mandeville laid his hand on the now thoroughly frightened maiden's arm.

"Let them see us: let anybody see us: let everybody see us—I don't care how many or how soon: you will marry me: you must marry me, Miss May Langton or I am a—" and before the fateful word, whatever it was, reached her ear or any protest could escape her, Mr. Charles Mandeville had thrown his arms around Miss Langton and had imprinted a kiss on her cheek.

"There is no reason now why I should not see your uncle to-morrow," he said to her as he let her go, and as she sped along the railway track in answer to the screaming of the whistle for the third time.

What would have happened had the indignation of the girl found vent in words or tears? What had happened to Mr. Charles Mandeville as he stood looking after the girl whom he had insulted or who, if you will, had accepted him as a husband? Who can tell?

All that was known to her uncle and godfather as the little house-keeper took a seat between them in the governor's car was that, while the bell was still sounding its final wrangle, Mr. Charles Mandeville turned up at the train as if nothing had happened.

## *CHAPTER XIII*

### *A Final Duel of Words*

IF Mr. Charles Mandeville had been as *far ben* in the inner circle of the fates as he was in the "upper ten" of the ancient capital, he would have arranged for his interview with Amos Langton, the broker-banker of Peter Street in the morning of the day succeeding the inauguration of the Norward Colonization Railway, and not in the afternoon. No stock could have had for its holders a more auspicious market than the Norward the day after the speech-making at Lac de l'Isle. The morning paper was full of the celebration as it was also full of the praises of the enterprising spirit of Mr. Charles Mandeville. There was no reference made to the incident of the trestle-bridge,—not a word of that ingenious piece of engineering in the vapid descriptions of the scenery

through which the road ran, or of the rose-coloured expectations from the lumber and agricultural resources of the district. The reporter seemed to have received instructions that the amusing incident of the two citizens who had refused to risk their lives was not to be mentioned. And Mr. Charles Mandeville was in great glee when he took note of the omission, and finally made up his mind to carry out his intention of calling on one of these citizens, notwithstanding the uncertain opinion Miss Langton might entertain of the promoter's behaviour at Lac de l'Isle.

The reception which Mr. Amos Langton extended to Mr. Charles Mandeville in the afternoon was, as a Scotsman might say, somewhat to the north side of friendly. There was at least something in the broker's manner which denoted that he felt in no danger of losing anything by having the interview over and done with.

After the ordinary greeting, Mr. Mandeville expressed the hope that Mr. Langton was satisfied with the success of the celebration of the day before.

"You know, sir, that the enterprise is now as much yours as it is mine, and it must be pleasant for you to learn that you have not misplaced your confidence in any way."

Mr. Langton, however, only grunted in his characteristic way so well known to every one who had ever done business with him, and remarked that it was not always easy to say how matters were going to turn out with very many undertakings of the Norward kind.

"But this one of ours has gone on swimmingly from the beginning, and everybody seems to be satisfied with the outlook."

"That is as it may be," replied the money-lender with a doubting smile, as if some new trestle-bridge were in sight.

"I came in," continued Mandeville, who had had to submit on many previous occasions to the old man's humours, "to have a conversation with you about a matter which concerns—yes, concerns you—that is both of us," and the senior member of the firm of Mandeville & Co. was at last in presence of the problem of his life that

would not be solved of itself and which he was as yet unwilling to throw to the dogs.

"'I hope it is not about this railway of yours," said Amos Langton.

"Well no, it is not about the railway: that can take care of itself for a little while now. But why do you ask that?"

"Because I am thinking that your railway is no longer any concern of mine," and the stock-broker and banker looked Mr. Mandeville straight in the eyes, now that the latter had drawn up his chair in a confidential way to the old man's desk.

"What do you mean Mr. Langton?"

"I mean that I have sold out my interest in it this morning. I have nothing left in my hands save these mortgages as a first lien on the property, and I suppose you or your father will readily enough arrange to have these taken off my hands."

"What's that you say?" and Mandeville suddenly rose to his feet throwing over his chair in the agony of his first alarm.

"You do not mean to tell me, in this cruel

abrupt way, that you have brought ruin on the Norward and on me as well?"

"If you have been doing what is right, young man, there is no need for any one being ruined by any action of mine."

"But what will people say when they learn that you have withdrawn your confidence in the Norward?"

"I cannot prevent people talking as they have a mind to. I needed the money, and the sale of my stock was a legitimate business transaction in a rising market; and nobody can find fault with that."

"You might have at least spoken to me before taking such a step, considering the relations existing between us, and which, as I have been hoping, would become even closer, if I could once get you to listen to me on the matter which has brought me in to see you this afternoon."

The latter part of Mandeville's speech took none of the excitement out of his manner, but rather added to his confusion.

"You mean about my niece, I suppose," said Amos Langton.

"I mean on a subject much nearer to my heart than the Norward Railway, or any other business transaction."

"And I may as well tell you first as last that that affair is off too."

Mr. Charles Mandeville stood dumfounded, putting out his hand on the top part of the broker's desk to steady himself.

"You might have some consideration for a man's feelings," he stammered out after a painful pause, with the old man still looking him unabashed in the eye.

"How much consideration have you, yourself, been having for others' feelings, may I ask, young man, living as you have been so long in a fool's paradise or something worse?"

"Then your niece has been telling—"

"I would rather not have my niece's name mixed up in business matters."

"And somebody else has been throwing dust in your eyes."

"That's so, Mr. Charles Mandeville,—somebody else has been trying to do that," said the broker in his angriest manner.

"You yourself have been at that game for some time back."

The two antagonists now stood facing one another.

"So there is to be no quarter given?"

"If you mean that there is no likelihood of your ever marrying May Langton, you may safely put it in the way you have put it."

"That is as it may be, old man. And now listen to me. You think to frighten me, because you deem yourself out of the woods as far as this Norward business goes. But some men, even old men with their business wits about them, often count their chickens before they are hatched. I will marry Miss Langton or anybody else I have a mind to marry, without any of your assistance and in spite of any hindrances which Mr. Farnham Farquhar can throw in my way. You may take my word for that."

"And listen to me in your turn, young man, giving you the best name I can think of for you, though that is not very *à pro-*

*pos.* If I hear of any further attempt on your part to take advantage of that young woman's affections, it will not be that precious Norward Railway of yours that will come to grief, but your dubious transactions for a year or more past with the banks and commercial houses of this city will be made known to the world, and you yourself be forced to betake yourself once again to some country where your peculiar business methods are not known, there possibly to make expiation for your trickeries among honest men. Young man, I am done with you and your Norward schemings."

Then Mr. Charles Mandeville threw discretion to the winds. His game was up and he seemed to know it. The playing loose and inconsiderately, like a common villain, with the love of a pure-minded and high-spirited woman, to gratify his distaste for honest work and straightforward dealing, had been his hateful game; and, now that it was up, he proposed to be what he would call game to the end and brave it out.

"Now I know what to expect," and he thrust his flaming face nearer Amos Langton's. "Now I know who has been stuffing your credulous old ears. But I will be even with him yet. Now I know the unintentional injury my foolish gossiping old father did me when he took that godfather of a lawyer into his confidence. Old Master Grey Eyes may be in love with Miss May Langton himself for ought I know. The old fool has been as suspicious of me from the beginning as any rival could be. He has been defaming me, I suppose, to both you and your niece, though Miss Langton yesterday showed that his influence over her had been of little effect. And what need I care for either of you as long as I have the good-will of the woman I love. What does this old Farquhar know of me that will not bear the light of day? I would like to know that."

The cool bare-faced presumption forced Amos Langton to extremes.

"You would like me to tell you more of yourself, Mr. Charles Mandeville? I had not intended to say more than I have said,

but since you defy me as if I were the villain in this case—"

The two men, fiercely confronting one another, determined to have the matter out to the very bitter end now.

"Do you defy me, young man?"

"Defy you! ay, to the very gates of ruin for both of us!"

"Have you ever heard of a merchant of the name of Baptiste Frazier?"

"Never."

"Honest Baptiste as he was spoken of in St. Marco?"

"Never heard of man or place."

But the increasing paleness which spread over Mandeville's face showed how far the foil of his opponent, despoiled of its button, had struck home, forcing him to retreat behind a lie.

"But you have no objection that I should tell you a story connected with poor Baptiste's commercial ruin brought about by a certain adventurer."

"I have every objection to remaining here and being made a fool of."

"Did you ever hear of a Thomas G.

Parkerman of Lilleydale Manor near New York City — Parkerman of Thomson, Parkerman & Co.?"

"Never."

"You never had any dealings with him or the firm of which he is senior partner?"

"How could I, having never heard of either the man or the firm."

"That is, you are prepared to deny everything."

Mandeville bit his lower lip until the blood came.

"If that be the case," continued the broker, "I may as well tell you that by to-morrow morning the matter will be out of my hands, and the documents that have been placed in my possession corroborating—"

"You would inform my creditors, I suppose, that I am a liar and a swindler and everything that is bad."

"I am not likely to tell anything but the truth about any one. But no one belonging to me will ever be associated with a man who is not a criminal simply because he has not yet been publicly exposed.

These documents speak for themselves,—the documents which have been placed in my hands without my asking for them."

Then Mr. Charles Mandeville, as pale and as limp as a piece of bleeched cotton wrung from the hot water it has been in, lost all hope in himself, with nothing left of the nonchalance that had so often let serious problems solve themselves, and looked piteously in Amos Langton's face. His last line of defence had been thrown down. The assumed manliness of the swell disappeared in the cunning of a *sauve qui peut.*

"Have you any other word to say to me?" he asked the broker.

"You of course give up all thought of further annoying my niece?"

"I do on two conditions."

"Name them."

"The first is that you betray none of these confidences that have just passed between us this morning to Miss May Langton."

"Agreed," and the broker began at once to wonder if he had been too hard on the

fellow, the saving of his little house-keeper being so near his heart.

"The second, is that neither you nor Mr. Farquhar will interfere with my—" and he had to wait a minute for the words, "with my leaving the city. I would like that there should be no fuss made over my leaving."

"And the Norward?"

"Ah, yes the Norward!" and something of the old nonchalance again came into his manner: "Who knows but that the Norward may save me yet?"

* * *

The *love of woman* was not sacrificed to the *hatred of honest work,* whatever that *bit of fruit* had to do with the building of a railway.

Nor did the Norward save Mr. Charles Mandeville. Before a month was gone it had passed into the hands of a receiver, though not before the Master of the Norward had disappeared from his haunts in the city.

"There was something in that son of mine after all, if he had only had the staying power in him."

Even thus to Mr. Farquhar, Major Mandeville was proud to express his opinion, when he happened at long intervals to have a pinch of snuff from the lawyer's silver box. "Yes, say what you like about him, there was something in him."

The confidences between these two gentlemen, however, never extended to any hint as to how the Major had once a *lapsus memoriae* in the grove of Lac de l'Isle nor as to how Mr. Farquhar had come into possession of certain documents from the West Indies and New York. In fact the name of Miss May Langton was never mentioned between them after the day on which the Norward Railway was opened for traffic,—not even when Amos Langton came to the rescue of the Norward by having it developed from its infancy as a *chemin de bois* into a full grown *chemin de fer*.