

A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE.

I.

UP THE SAGUENAY.

ON the forward promenade of the Saguenay boat which had been advertised to leave Quebec at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning, Miss Kitty Ellison sat tranquilly expectant of the joys which its departure should bring, and tolerantly patient of its delay; for if all the Saguenay had not been in promise, she would have thought it the greatest happiness just to have that prospect of the St. Lawrence and Quebec. The sun shone with a warm yellow light on the Upper Town, with its girdle of gray wall, and on the red flag that drowled above the citadel, and was a friendly lustre on the tinned roofs of the Lower Town; while away off on the south and east and west wandered the purple hills and the farm-lit plains in such dewy shadow and effulgence as would have been enough to make the heaviest heart glad. Near at hand the river was busy with every kind of craft, and in the distance was tenderly mysterious with silvery vapors; little breaths of haze, like an ethereal colorless flame, exhaled from its surface, and it all glowed with a lovely inner radiance. In the middle distance a black ship was heaving anchor and setting sail, and the voice of the seamen came soft and sad and yet wildly hopeful to the dreamy ear of the young girl, whose soul at once went round the world before the ship, and then made haste back again to the promenade of the Saguenay boat. She sat leaning forward a little with her hands fallen into her lap, letting her unmastered thoughts play as they would in memories and hopes around the consciousness that she was the happiest girl in the world, and blest beyond desire or desert. To have left home as she had done, equipped for a single day at Niagara, and then to have come

adventurously on, by grace of her cousin's wardrobe, as it were, to Montreal and Quebec; to be now going up the Saguenay, and finally to be destined to return home by way of Boston and New York;—this was more than any one human being had a right to do; and, as she had written home to the girls, she felt that her privileges ought to be divided up among all the people of Eriecreek. She was very grateful to Colonel Ellison and Fanny for affording her these advantages; but they being now out of sight in pursuit of state-rooms, she was not thinking of them in relation to her pleasure in the morning scene, but was rather regretting the absence of a lady with whom they had travelled from Niagara, and to whom she imagined she would that moment like to say something in praise of the prospect. This lady was a Mrs. Basil March of Boston; and though it was her wedding journey and her husband's presence ought to have absorbed her, she and Miss Kitty had sworn a sisterhood, and were pledged to see each other before long at Mrs. March's home in Boston. In her absence, now, Kitty thought what a very charming person she was, and wondered if all Boston people were really like her, so easy and friendly and hearty. In her letter she had told the girls to tell her Uncle Jack that he had not rated Boston people a bit too high, if she were to judge from Mr. and Mrs. March, and that she was sure they would help her as far as they could to carry out his instructions when she got to Boston.

These instructions were such as might seem preposterous if no more particular statement in regard to her Uncle Jack were made, but will be imaginable enough, I hope, when he is a little described. The Ellisons were a West Virginia family who had wandered up into a corner of Northwest-

ern New York, because Dr. Ellison (un-ceremoniously known to Kitty as Uncle Jack) was too much an abolitionist to live in a slaveholding State with safety to himself or comfort to his neighbors. Here his family of three boys and two girls had grown up, and hither in time had come Kitty, the only child of his youngest brother, who had gone first to Illinois and thence, from the pretty constant adversity of a country editor, to Kansas, where he joined the Free State party and fell in one of the border feuds. Her mother had died soon after, and Dr. Ellison's heart bowed itself tenderly over the orphan. She was something not only dear, but sacred to him as the child of a martyr to the highest cause on earth; and the love of the whole family encompassed her. One of the boys had brought her from Kansas when she was yet very little, and she had grown up among them as their youngest sister; but the doctor would not let her call him father, and in obedience to the rule which she soon began to give their love, they all turned and called him Uncle Jack with her. Yet the Ellisons, though they loved their little cousin, did not spoil her, — neither the doctor, nor his great grown-up sons whom she knew as the boys, nor his daughters whom she called the girls, though they were wellnigh women when she came to them. She was her uncle's pet and most intimate friend, riding with him on his professional visits till she became as familiar a feature of his equipage as the doctor's horse itself; and the doctor educated her in those extreme ideas, tempered by humor, which formed the character of himself and all his family. They loved Kitty, and played with her, and laughed at her when she needed ridiculing; they made a jest of their father on the one subject on which he never jested, and even the antislavery cause had its droll points turned to the light. They had seen danger and trouble enough at different times in its service, but no enemy ever got more amusement out of it. Their house was a principal

entrepôt of the underground railroad, and they were always helping anxious travellers over the line; but the boys seldom came back from an excursion to Canada without adventures to keep the family laughing for a week; and they made it a serious business to study the comic points of their beneficiaries, who severally lived in the family records by some grotesque mental or physical trait. They had an irreverent name among themselves for each of the humorless abolition lecturers who unfailingly abode with them on their rounds; and these brethren and sisters, as they called them, paid with whatever was laughable in them for the substantial favors they received.

Miss Kitty, having the same natural bent, early began to share in these harmless reprisals, and to look at life with the same wholesomely fantastic vision. But she remembered one abolition visitor of whom none of them made fun, but treated with a serious distinction and regard, — an old man with a high, narrow forehead, and thereon a thick upright growth of gray hair; who looked at her from under bushy brows with eyes as of blue flame, and took her on his knee one night and sang to her "Blow ye the trumpet, blow!" He and her uncle had been talking of some indefinite, far-off place that they called Boston, in terms that commended it to her childish apprehension as very little less holy than Jerusalem, and as the home of all the good and great people outside of Palestine.

In fact, Boston had always been Dr. Ellison's foible. In the beginning of the great antislavery agitation, he had exchanged letters (corresponded, he always used to say) with John Quincy Adams on the subject of Lovejoy's murder; and he had met several Boston men at the Free Soil Convention in Buffalo in 1848. "A little formal perhaps, a little reserved," he would say, "but excellent men; polished, and certainly of sterling principle": which would make his boys and girls laugh, as they grew older, and sometimes pro-

voke them to highly colored dramatizations of the formality of these Bostonians in meeting their father. The years passed and the boys went West, and when the war came, they took service in Iowa and Wisconsin regiments. By and by the President's Proclamation of freedom to the slaves reached Eriecreek while Dick and Bob happened both to be home on leave. After they had allowed their sire his rapture, "Well, this is a great blow for father," said Bob; "what are you going to do now, father? Fugitive slavery and all its charms blotted out forever, at one fell swoop. Pretty rough on you, is n't it? No more men and brothers, no more soulless oligarchy. Dull lookout, father."

"O no," insinuated one of the girls, "there's Boston."

"Why, yes," cried Dick, "to be sure there is. The President has n't abolished Boston. Live for Boston."

And in fact the doctor did live for an ideal Boston, thereafter, so far at least as concerned a never-relinquished, never-fulfilled purpose of some day making a journey to Boston. But in the meantime there were other things; and at present, since the Proclamation had given him a country worth living in, he was ready to honor her by studying her antiquities. In his youth, before his mind had been turned so strenuously to the consideration of slavery, he had a pretty taste for the mystery of the Mound Builders, and each of his boys now returned to camp with instructions to note any phenomena that would throw light upon this interesting subject. They would have abundant leisure for research, since the Proclamation, Dr. Ellison insisted, practically ended the war.

The Mound Builders were only a starting-point for the doctor. He advanced from them to historical times in due course, and it happened that when Colonel Ellison and his wife stopped off at Eriecreek on their way East, in 1870, they found him deep in the his-

tory of the Old French War. As yet the colonel had not intended to take the Canadian route eastward, and he escaped without the charges which he must otherwise have received to look up the points of interest at Montreal and Quebec connected with that ancient struggle. He and his wife carried Kitty with them to see Niagara (which she had never seen because it was so near); but no sooner had Dr. Ellison got the despatch announcing that they would take Kitty on with them down the St. Lawrence to Quebec, and bring her home by way of Boston, than he sat down and wrote her a letter of the most comprehensive character. As far as concerned Canada his mind was purely historical; but when it came to Boston it was strangely re-abolitionized, and amidst an ardor for the antiquities of the place, his old love for its humanitarian pre-eminence blazed up. He would have her visit Faneuil Hall because of its Revolutionary memories, but not less because Wendell Phillips had there made his first antislavery speech. She was to see the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and if possible certain points of ancient colonial interest which he named; but at any rate she was somehow to catch sight of the author of the "Biglow Papers," of Senator Sumner, of Mr. Whittier, of Dr. Howe, of Colonel Higginson, and of Mr. Garrison. These people were all Bostonians to the idealizing remoteness of Dr. Ellison, and he could not well conceive of them asunder. He perhaps imagined that Kitty was more likely to see them together than separately; and perhaps indeed they were less actual persons, to his admiration, than so many figures of a grand historical composition. Finally, "I want you to remember, my dear child," he wrote, "that in Boston you are not only in the birth-place of American liberty, but the yet holier scene of its resurrection. There everything that is noble and grand and liberal and enlightened in the national life has originated, and I cannot doubt that you will find the character of its

people marked by every attribute of a magnanimous democracy. If I could envy you anything, my dear girl, I should envy you this privilege of seeing a city where man is valued simply and solely for what he is in himself, and where color, wealth, family, occupation, and other vulgar and meretricious distinctions are wholly lost sight of in the consideration of individual excellence."

Kitty got her uncle's letter the night before starting up the Saguenay, and quite too late for compliance with his directions concerning Quebec; but she resolved that as to Boston his wishes should be fulfilled to the utmost limit of possibility. She knew that nice Mr. March must be acquainted with some of those very people. Kitty had her uncle's letter in her pocket, and she was just going to take it out and read it again, when something else attracted her notice.

The boat had been advertised to leave at seven o'clock, and it was now half past. A party of English people were pacing somewhat impatiently up and down before Kitty, for it had been made known among the passengers (by that subtle process through which matters of public interest transpire in such places) that breakfast would not be served till the boat started, and these English people had the appetites which go before the admirable digestions of their nation. But they had also the good temper which does not so certainly accompany the insular good appetite. The man in his dashing Glengarry cap and his somewhat shabby gray suit took on one arm the plain, jolly woman who seemed to be his wife, and on the other, the amiable, handsome young girl who looked enough like him to be his sister, and strode rapidly back and forth, saying that they must get up an appetite for breakfast. This made the women laugh, and so he said it again, which made them laugh so much that the elder lost her balance, and in regaining it twisted off her high shoe-heel, which she briskly tossed into the river. But

she sat down after that, and the three were presently intent upon the Liverpool steamer which was just arrived and was now gliding up to her dock, with her population of passengers thronging her quarter-deck.

"She's from England!" said the husband, expressively.

"Only fancy!" answered the wife. "Give me the glass, Jenny." Then, after a long survey of the steamer, she added, "Fancy her being from England!" They all looked and said nothing for two or three minutes, when the wife's mind turned to the delay of their own boat and of breakfast. "This thing," she said, with that air of uttering a novelty which the English cast about their commonplaces, — "this thing does n't start at seven, you know."

"No," replied the younger woman, "she waits for the Montreal boat."

"Fancy her being from England!" said the other, whose eyes and thoughts had both wandered back to the Liverpool steamer.

"There's the Montreal boat now, comin' round the point," cried the husband. "Don't you see the steam?" He pointed with his glass, and then studied the white cloud in the distance. "No, by Jove! it's a saw-mill on the shore."

"O Harry!" sighed both the women, reproachfully.

"Why, deuce take it, you know," he retorted, "I did n't turn it into a saw-mill. It's been a saw-mill all along, I fancy."

Half an hour later, when the Montreal boat came in sight, the women would have her a saw-mill till she stood in full view in mid-channel. Their own vessel paddled out into the stream as she drew near, and the two bumped and rubbed together till a gangway plank could be passed from one to the other. A very well dressed young man stood ready to get upon the Saguenay boat, with a porter beside him bearing his substantial valise. No one else apparently was coming aboard.

The English people looked upon him

for an instant with wrathful eyes, as they hung over the rail of the promenade. "Upon my word," said the elder of the women, "have we been waitin' all this time for one man?"

"Hush, Edith," answered the younger, "it's an Englishman." And they all three mutely recognized the right of one Englishman to stop, not only the boat, but the whole solar system, if his ticket entitled him to a passage on any particular planet, while Mr. Miles Arbuton of Boston, Massachusetts, passed at his ease from one vessel to the other. He had often been mistaken for an Englishman, and the error of those spectators, if he had known it, would not have surprised him. Perhaps it might have softened his judgment of them as he sat facing them at breakfast; but he did not know it, and he thought them three very common English people with something professional, as of public singing or acting, about them. The young girl wore, instead of a travelling-suit, a vivid light blue dress; and over her sky-blue eyes and fresh cheeks a glory of corn-colored hair lay in great braids and masses. It was magnificent, but it wanted distance; so near, it was almost harsh. Mr. Arbuton's eyes fell from the face to the vivid blue dress which was not quite fresh and not quite new, and a glimmer of cold dismissal came into them, as he gave himself entirely to the slender merits of the steamboat breakfast.

He was himself, meantime, an object of interest to a young lady who sat next to the English party, and who had something soft and Quaker-like or dove-like in the gentleness of her face and manner. She glanced at him from time to time, out of tender gray eyes, with a furtive play of feeling upon a sensitive face. To her he was that divine possibility which every young man is to every young maiden; and, besides, he was invested with a halo of romance as the gentleman with the blond mustache, whom she had seen at Niagara the week before, on the Goat Island Bridge. To the

pretty matron at her side, he was exceedingly handsome, as a young man may frankly be to a young matron, but not otherwise comparable to her husband, the full-personed good-humored looking gentleman who had just added sausage to the ham and eggs on his plate. He was handsome, too, but his full beard was reddish, whereas Mr. Arbuton's mustache was flaxen; and his dress was not worn with that scrupulosity with which the Bostonian bore his clothes; there was a touch of slovenliness in him that scarcely consorted with the alert, ex-military air of some of his movements. "Good-looking young John Bull," he thought concerning Mr. Arbuton, and then thought no more about him, being no more self-judged before the supposed Englishman than he would have been before so much Frenchman or Spaniard. Mr. Arbuton, on the other hand, if he had met an Englishman so well dressed as himself, must at once have arraigned himself, and had himself tacitly tried for his personal and national difference. He looked in his turn at these people, and thought he should have nothing to do with them, in spite of the long-lashed gray eyes.

It was not that they had made the faintest advance towards acquaintance, or that the choice of knowing them or not was with Mr. Arbuton; but he had the habit of thus protecting himself from the chances of life, and a conscience against encouraging people whom he might have to drop for reasons of society. This was sometimes a sacrifice, for he was not past the age when people take a lively interest in most other human beings. When breakfast was over, and he had made the tour of the boat, and seen all his fellow-passengers, he perceived that he could have little in common with any of them, and that probably the journey would require the full exercise of that tolerant spirit in which he had undertaken a branch of summer travel in his native land.

The rush of air against the steamer was very raw and chill, and the for-

ward promenade was left almost entirely to the English professional people, who walked rapidly up and down, with jokes and laughter of their kind, while the wind blew the girl's hair in loose gold about her fresh face, and twisted her blue drapery tight about her comely shape. When they got out of breath they sat down beside a large American lady, with a great deal of gold filling in her front teeth, and presently rose again and ran races to and fro from the bow. Mr. Arbuton turned away in displeasure. At the stern he found a much larger company, most of whom had furnished themselves with novels and magazines from the stock on board and were drowsing over them. One gentleman was reading aloud to three ladies the newspaper account of a dreadful shipwreck; other ladies and gentlemen were coming and going forever from their state-rooms, as the wont of some is; others yet sat with closed eyes, as if having come to see the Saguenay they were resolved to see nothing of the St. Lawrence on the way thither, but would keep their vision sacred to the wonders of the former river.

Yet the St. Lawrence was worthy to be seen, as even Mr. Arbuton owned, whose way was to slight American scenery, in distinction from his countrymen who boast it the finest in the world. As you leave Quebec, with its mural-crowned and castled rock, and drop down the stately river, presently the snowy fall of Montmorenci, far back in its purple hollow, leaps perpetual avalanche into the abyss, and then you are abreast of the beautiful Isle of Orleans, whose low shores, with their expanses of farmland, and their groves of pine and oak, are still as lovely as when the wild grape festooned the primitive forests and won from the easy rapture of old Cartier the name of Isle of Bacchus. For two hours farther down the river either shore is bright and populous with the continuous villages of the *habitans*, each clustering about its slim-spined church, in its shallow vale by the water's edge,

or lifted in more eminent picturesqueness upon some gentle height. The banks, nowhere lofty or abrupt, are such as in a southern land some majestic river might flow between, wide, slumbrous, open to all the heaven and the long day till the very set of sun. But no starry palm glasses its crest in the clear cold green from these low brinks; the pale birch, slender and delicately fair, mirrors here the wintry whiteness of its boughs; and this is the sad great river of the awful North.

Gradually, as the day wore on, the hills which had shrunk almost out of sight on one hand, and on the other were dark purple in the distance, drew near the shore, and at one point on the northern side rose almost from the water's edge. The river expanded into a lake before them, and in their lap some cottages, and half-way up the hillside, among the stunted pines, a much-verandaed hotel, proclaimed a resort of fashion in the heart of what seemed otherwise a wilderness. Indian huts sheathed in birch-bark nestled at the foot of the rocks, which were rich in orange and scarlet stains; out of the tops of the huts curled the blue smoke, and at the door of one stood a squaw in a flame-red petticoat; others in bright shawls squatted about on the rocks, each with a circle of dogs and paposes. But all this warmth of color only served, like a winter sunset, to heighten the chilly and desolate sentiment of the scene. The light dresses of the ladies on the veranda struck cold upon the eye; in the faces of the sojourners who lounged idly to the steamer's landing-place, the passenger could fancy a sad resolution to repress their tears when the boat should go away and leave them. She put off two or three old peasant-women who were greeted by other such on the pier, as if returned from a long journey; and then the crew discharged the vessel of a prodigious freight of onions which formed the sole luggage these old women had brought from Quebec. Bale after bale of the pungent bulbs were borne ashore in the careful arms

of the deck-hands, and counted by the owners ; at last order was given to draw in the plank, when a passionate cry burst from one of the old women, who extended both hands with an imploring gesture towards the boat. A bale of onions had been left aboard ; a deck-hand seized it and ran quickly ashore with it, and then back again, followed by the benedictions of the tranquillized and comforted beldam. The gay sojourners at Murray Bay controlled their grief, and as Mr. Arbuton turned from them, the boat, pushing out, left them to their fashionable desolation. She struck across to the southern shore, to land passengers for Cacouna, a watering-place greater than Murray Bay. The tide, which rises fifteen feet at Quebec, is the impulse, not the savor of the sea ; but at Cacouna the water is salt, and the sea-bathing lacks nothing but the surf ; and hither resort in great numbers the Canadians, who fly their cities during the fierce, brief fever of the northern summer. The watering-place village and hotel is not in sight from the landing, but, as at Murray Bay, the sojourners thronged the pier, as if the arrival of the steamboat were the great event of their day. That afternoon they were in unusual force, having come on foot and by omnibus and calash ; and presently there passed down through their ranks a strange procession with a band of music leading the way to the steamer.

"It's an Indian wedding," Mr. Arbuton heard one of the boat's officers saying to the gentleman with the ex-military air, who stood next him beside the rail ; and now, the band having drawn aside, he saw the bride and groom, — the latter a common, stolid-faced savage, and the former pretty and almost white, with a certain modesty and sweetness of mien. Before them went a young American, with a jaunty Scotch cap and a visage of supernatural gravity, as the master of ceremonies which he had probably planned ; arm in arm with him walked a portly chieftain in black broadcloth, prepos-

terously adorned on the breast with broad flat disks of silver in two rows. Behind the bridal couple came the whole village in pairs, men and women, and children of all ages, even to brown babies in arms, gay in dress and indescribably serious in demeanor. They were mated in some sort according to years and size ; and the last couple were young fellows paired in an equal tipsiness. These reeled and wavered along the pier ; and when the other wedding guests crowned the day's festivity by going aboard the steamer, they followed dizzily down the gangway. Midway they lurched heavily ; the spectators gave a cry ; but they had happily lurched in opposite directions ; their grip upon each other's arms held, and a forward stagger launched them victoriously aboard in a heap. They had scarcely disappeared from sight, when, having as it were instantly satisfied their curiosity concerning the boat, the other guests began to go ashore in due order. Mr. Arbuton waited in a slight anxiety to see whether the tipsy couple could repeat their manœuvre successfully on an upward incline ; and they had just appeared on the gangway, when he felt a hand passed carelessly and as if unconsciously through his arm, and at the same moment a voice said, "Those are a pair of disappointed lovers, I suppose."

He looked round and perceived the young lady of the party he had made up his mind to have nothing to do with resting one hand on the rail, and sustaining herself with the other passed through his arm, while she was altogether intent upon the scene below. The ex-military gentleman, the head of the party, and apparently her kinsman, had stepped aside without her knowing, and she had unwittingly taken Mr. Arbuton's arm. So much was clear to him, but what he was to do was not so plain. It did not seem quite his place to tell her of her mistake, and yet it seemed a piece of unfairness not to do so. To leave the matter alone, however, was the simplest,

safest, and pleasantest ; for the pressure of the pretty figure lightly thrown upon his arm had something agreeably confiding and appealing in it. So he waited till the young lady, turning to him for some response, discovered her error, and disengaged herself with a face of mingled horror and amusement. Even then he had no inspiration. To speak of the mistake in tones of compliment would have been grossly out of place ; an explanation was needless ; and to her murmured excuses, he could only bow silently. She flitted into the cabin, and he walked away, leaving the Indians to stagger ashore as they might. His arm seemed still to sustain that elastic weight, and a voice haunted his ear with the words, "A pair of disappointed lovers, I suppose" ; and still more awkward and stupid he felt his own part in the affair to be ; though at the same time he was not without some obscure resentment of the young girl's mistake as an intrusion upon him.

It was late twilight when the boat reached Tadoussac, and ran into a sheltered cove under the shadow of uplands on which a quaint village perched and dispersed itself on a country road in summer cottages ; above these in turn rose loftier heights of barren sand or rock, with here and there a rank of sickly pines dying along their sterility. It had been harsh and cold all day when the boat moved, for they were running full in the face of the northeast ; the river had widened almost to a sea, growing more and more desolate, with a few lonely islands breaking its expanse, and the shores sinking lower and lower till, near Tadoussac, they rose a little in flat-topped bluffs thickly overgrown with stunted evergreens. Here, into the vast low-walled breadth of the St. Lawrence, a dark stream, narrowly bordered by rounded heights of rock, steals down from the north out of regions of gloomy and ever-during solitude. This is the Saguenay ; and in the cold evening light under which the traveller approaches its mouth, no landscape could

look more forlorn than that of Tadoussac, where early in the sixteenth century the French traders fixed their first post, and where still the oldest church north of Florida is standing.

The steamer lies here five hours, and supper was no sooner over than the passengers went ashore in the gathering dusk. Mr. Arbuton, guarding his distance as usual, went too, with a feeling of surprise at his own concession to the popular impulse. He was not without a desire to see the old church, wondering in a half-compassionate way what such a bit of American antiquity would look like ; and he had perceived since the little embarrassment at Cacouna that he was a discomfort to the young lady involved by it. He had caught no glimpse of her till supper, and then she had briefly supped with an air of such studied unconsciousness of his presence that it was plain she was thinking of her mistake every moment. "Well, I'll leave her the freedom of the boat while we stay," thought Mr. Arbuton as he went ashore. He had not the least notion whither the road led, but like the rest he followed it up through the village, and on among the cottages which seemed for the most part empty, and so down a gloomy ravine, in the bottom of which, far beneath the tremulous rustic bridge, he heard the mysterious crash and fall of an unseen torrent. Before him towered the shadowy hills up into the starless night ; he thrilled with a sense of the loneliness and remoteness, and he had a formless wish that some one qualified by the proper associations and traditions were there to share the satisfaction he felt in the whole effect. At the same instant he was once more aware of that delicate pressure, that weight so lightly, sweetly borne upon his arm. It startled him, and again he followed the road, which with a sudden turn brought him in sight of a hotel and in sound of a bowling-alley, and therein young ladies' cackle and laughter, and he wondered a little scornfully who could be spending the summer there. A bay of the river loftily shut in by rugged hills lay

before him, and on the shore, just above high-tide, stood what a wandering shadow told him was the ancient church of Tadoussac. The windows were faintly tinged with red as from a single taper burning within, and but that the elements were a little too bare and simple for one so used to the rich effects of the Old World, Mr. Arbuton might have been touched by the vigil which this poor chapel was still keeping after three hundred years in the heart of that gloomy place. While he stood at least tolerating its appeal, he heard voices of people talking in the obscurity near the church door, which they seemed to have been vainly trying for entrance.

"Pity we can't see the inside, is n't it?"

"Yes; but I am so glad to see any of it. Just think of its having been built in the seventeenth century!"

"Uncle Jack would enjoy it, would n't he?"

"O yes, poor Uncle Jack! I feel somehow as if I were cheating him out of it. He ought to be here in my place. But I *do* like it; and, Dick, I don't know what I can ever say or do to you and Fanny for bringing me."

"Well, Kitty, postpone the subject till you can think of the right thing. We're in no hurry."

Mr. Arbuton heard a shaking of the door, as of a final attempt upon it before retreat, and then the voices faded into inarticulate sounds in the darkness. They were the voices, he easily recognized, of the young lady who had taken his arm, and of that kinsman of hers as he seemed to be. He blamed himself for having not only overheard them, but for desiring to hear more of their talk, and he resolved to follow them back to the boat at a discreet distance. But they loitered so at every point, or he unwittingly made such haste, that he had overtaken them as they entered the lane between the outlying cottages, and he could not help being privy to their talk again.

"Well, it may be old, Kitty, but I don't think it's lively."

"It *is* n't exactly a whirl of excitement, I must confess."

"It's the deadliest place I ever saw. Is that a swing in front of that cottage? No, it's a gibbet. Why, they've all got 'em! I suppose they're for the summer tenants at the close of the season. What a rush there would be for them if the boat should happen to go off and leave her passengers!"

Mr. Arbuton thought this rather a coarse kind of drolling, and strengthened himself anew in his resolution to avoid those people.

They now came in sight of the steamer, where in the cove she lay illumined with all her lamps, and through every window and door and crevice was bursting with the ruddy light. Her brilliancy contrasted vividly with the obscurity and loneliness of the shore where a few lights glimmered in the village houses, and under the porch of the village store some desolate idlers — *habitans* and half-breeds — had clubbed their miserable leisure. Beyond the steamer yawned the wide vacancy of the greater river, and out of this gloomed the course of the Saguenay.

"O, I hate to go on board!" said the young lady. "Do you think he's got back yet? It's perfect misery to meet him."

"Never mind, Kitty. He probably thinks you did n't mean anything by it. I don't believe you would have taken his arm if you had n't supposed it was mine, *any way*."

She made no answer to this, as if too much overcome by the true state of the case to be troubled by its perversion. Mr. Arbuton, following them on board, felt himself in the unpleasant character of persecutor, some one to be shunned and escaped by every manœuvre possible to self-respect. He was to be the means, it appeared, of spoiling the enjoyment of the voyage for one who, he inferred, had not often the opportunity of such enjoyment. He had a willingness that she should think well and not ill of him; and then at the bottom of all was a sentiment of superiority, which, if he had given it

shape, would have been *noblesse oblige*. Some action was due to himself as a gentleman.

The young lady went to seek the matron of the party, and left her companion at the door of the saloon, wistfully fingering a cigar in one hand, and feeling for a match with the other. Presently he gave himself a clap on the waistcoat which he had found empty, and was turning away, when Mr. Arbuton said, offering his own lighted cigar, "May I be of use to you?"

The other took it with a hearty, "O yes, thank you!" and, with many inarticulate murmurs of satisfaction, lighted his cigar, and returned Mr. Arbuton's with a brisk, half-military bow.

Mr. Arbuton looked at him narrowly a moment. "I'm afraid," he said abruptly, "that I've most unluckily been the cause of annoyance to one of the ladies of your party. It is n't a thing to apologize for, and I hardly know how to say that I hope, if she's not already forgotten the matter, she'll do so." Saying this, Mr. Arbuton, by an impulse which he would have been at a loss to explain, offered his card.

His action had the effect of frankness, and the other took it for cordiality. He drew near a lamp, and looked at the name and street address on the card, and then said, "Ah, of Boston! My name is Ellison; I'm of Milwaukee, Wisconsin." And he laughed a free, trustful laugh of good companionship. "Why yes, my cousin's been tormenting herself about her mistake the whole afternoon; but of course it's all right, you know. Bless my heart! it was the most natural thing in the world. Have you been ashore? There's a good deal of repose about Tadoussac, now; but it must be a lively place in winter! Such a cheerful lookout from these cottages, or that hotel over yonder! We went over to see if we could get into the little old church; the purser told me there are some lead tablets there, left by Jacques Cartier's men, you know, and dug up in the neighborhood. I don't think it's

likely, and I'm bearing up very well under the disappointment of not getting in. I've done my duty by the antiquities of the place; and now I don't care how soon we are off."

Colonel Ellison was talking in the kindness of his heart to change the subject which the younger gentleman had introduced, in the belief, which would scarcely have pleased the other, that he was much embarrassed. His good-nature went still further; and when his cousin returned presently, with Mrs. Ellison, he presented Mr. Arbuton to the ladies, and then thoughtfully made Mrs. Ellison walk up and down the deck with him for the exercise she would not take ashore, that the others might be left to deal with their vexation alone.

"I am very sorry, Miss Ellison," said Mr. Arbuton, "to have been the means of a mistake to you to-day."

"And I was dreadfully ashamed to make you the victim of my blunder," answered Miss Ellison penitently; and a little silence ensued. Then as if she had suddenly been able to alienate the case, and see it apart from herself in its unmanageable absurdity, she broke into a confiding laugh, very like her cousin's, and said, "Why, it's one of the most hopeless things I ever heard of. I don't see what in the world can be done about it."

"It *is* rather a difficult matter, and I'm not prepared to say myself. Before I make up my mind I should like it to happen again."

Mr. Arbuton had no sooner made this speech, which he thought neat, than he was vexed with himself for having made it, since nothing was further from his purpose than a flirtation. But the dark, vicinity, the young girl's prettiness, the apparent freshness and reliance on his sympathy from which her frankness came, were too much: he tried to congeal again, and ended in some feebleness about the scenery, which was indeed very lonely and wild, after the boat started up the Saguenay, leaving the few lights of Tadoussac to blink and fail behind

her. He had an absurd sense of being alone in the world there with the young lady; and he suffered himself to enjoy the situation, which was as perfectly safe as anything could be. He and Miss Ellison had both come on from Niagara, it seemed, and they talked of that place, she consciously withholding the fact that she had noticed Mr. Arbuton there; they had both come down the Rapids of the St. Lawrence, and they had both stopped a day in Montreal. These common experiences gave them a surprising interest for each other, which was enhanced by the discovery that their experiences differed thereafter, and that whereas she had passed three days at Quebec, he, as we know, had come on directly from Montreal.

"Did you enjoy Quebec very much, Miss Ellison?"

"O yes, indeed! It's a beautiful old town, with everything in it that I had always read about and never expected to see. You know it's a walled city."

"Yes. But I confess I had forgotten it till this morning. Did you find it all that you expected a walled city to be?"

"More, if possible. There were some Boston people with us there, and they said it was exactly like Europe. They fairly sighed over it, and it seemed to remind them of pretty nearly everything they had seen abroad. They were just married."

"Did that make Quebec look like Europe?"

"No, but I suppose it made them willing to see it in the pleasantest light. Mrs. March — that was their name — would n't allow me to say that I enjoyed Quebec, because if I had n't seen Europe, I *could* n't properly enjoy it. 'You may *think* you enjoy it,' she was always saying, 'but that's merely fancy.' Still I cling to my delusion. But I don't know whether I cared more for Quebec, or the beautiful little villages in the country all about it. The whole landscape looks just like a dream of 'Evangeline.'"

"Indeed! I must certainly stop at Quebec. I should like to see an American landscape that put one in mind of anything. What can your imagination do for the present scenery?"

"I don't think it needs any help from me," replied the young girl, as if the tone of her companion had patronized and piqued her. She turned as she spoke and looked up the sad, lonely river. The moon was making its veiled face seen through the gray heaven, and touching the black stream with hints of melancholy light. On either hand the uninhabitable shore rose in desolate grandeur, friendless heights of rock with a thin covering of pines seen in dim outline along their tops and deepening into the solid dark of hollows and ravines upon their sides. The cry of some wild bird struck through the silence of which the noise of the steamer had grown to be a part, and echoed away to nothing. Then from the saloon there came on a sudden the notes of a song; and Miss Ellison led the way within, where most of the other passengers were grouped about the piano. The English girl with the corn-colored hair sat, in ravishing picture, at the instrument, and the commonish man and his very plain wife were singing with heavenly sweetness together.

"Is n't it beautiful!" said Miss Ellison. "How nice it must be to be able to do such things!"

"Yes? do you think so? It's rather public," answered her companion.

When the English people had ended, a grave, elderly Canadian gentleman sat down to give what he believed a comic song, and sent everybody disconsolate to bed.

"Well, Kitty?" cried Mrs. Ellison, shutting herself inside the young lady's state-room a moment.

"Well, Fanny?"

"Is n't he handsome?"

"He is, indeed."

"Is he nice?"

"I don't know."

"Sweet?"

"Ice-cream," said Kitty, and placid-

ly let herself be kissed an enthusiastic good night. Before Mrs. Ellison slept she wished to ask her husband one question.

"What is it?"

"Should you want Kitty to marry a Bostonian? They say Bostonians are so cold."

"What Bostonian has been asking Kitty to marry him?"

"O, how spiteful you are! I did n't say any had. But if there should?"

"Then it'll be time to think about it. You've married Kitty right and left to everybody who's looked at her since we left Niagara, and I've worried myself to death investigating the character of her husbands. Now I'm not going to do it any longer, — till she has an offer."

"Very well. *You* can depreciate your own cousin, if you like. But I

know what *I* shall do. I shall let her wear all my best things. How fortunate it is, Richard, that we're exactly of a size! O, I am so glad we brought Kitty along! If she should marry and settle down in Boston — no, I hope she could get her husband to live in New York —"

"Go on, go on, my dear!" cried Colonel Ellison, with a groan of despair. "Kitty has talked twenty-five minutes with this young man about the hotels and steamboats, and of course he'll be round to-morrow morning asking my consent to marry her as soon as we can get to a justice of the peace. My hair is gradually turning gray, and I shall be bald before my time; but I don't mind that if you find any pleasure in these little hallucinations of yours. *Go on!*"

W. D. Howells.

SONG.

WE sail toward evening's lonely star,
That trembles in the tender blue;
One single cloud, a dusky bar
Burnt with dull carmine through and through,
Slow smouldering in the summer sky,
Lies low along the fading west;
How sweet to watch its splendors die,
Wave-cradled thus, and wind-caressed!

The soft breeze freshens; leaps the spray
To kiss our cheeks with sudden cheer.
Upon the dark edge of the bay
Lighthouses kindle far and near,
And through the warm deeps of the sky
Steal faint star-clusters, while we rest
In deep refreshment, thou and I,
Wave-cradled thus, and wind-caressed.

How like a dream are earth and heaven,
Star beam and darkness, sky and sea;
Thy face, pale in the shadowy even,
Thy quiet eyes that gaze on me!
O realize the moment's charm,
Thou dearest! We are at life's best,
Folded in God's encircling arm,
Wave-cradled thus, and wind-caressed!

Celia Thaxter.