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"Speak, Grace, speak!" reiterated the elder, in a faint voice.
"As I hope for mercy I believe it is all true," replied the step-daughter, with slow emphasis, after a searching scrutiny into the lineament of the stranger. "There are little Annie's eyes and forehead; I should know them if I lived a thousand years. Oh, mother, mother, what does it all mean?"

"That God has brought a miracle to pass—that the lost one is restored," faltered the latter. "Come, girl; come, Annie—poor wanderer!—to your mother's arms!"
Then that dark stranger uttered a wild cry, and sank in the embrace of her parent.

It was an effecting scene. Grace and Claudine wept, and when, alarmed at length, they unwound the arms of the mother and child, they found that both were insensible.

With a strange eagerness, and alternate smiles and tears, the poor stranger (now no longer such) told her moving story to the circle of listeners, who gathered round her as soon as she recovered from that temporary trance; for the different relatives of the family came flocking in, upon the first notice of the extraordinary event that had occurred; mingling in her narrative English, French, and Indian expressions, in a manner difficult to comprehend. Enough was gathered, however, to satisfy those present as to her identity with the child, who had strayed into the forest from that very spot twenty-one years before, and who was believed by everyone to have perished for want of food. She was like one come back to them from a sojourn in some distant world, the gentle girl; her ideas, habits, and appearance were all so different to those of what is termed civilisation. Yet she was frank and innocent in her soul as the fair child they remembered so well. She told them she was married now, and that her husband would soon arrive, as he had only gone to barter some peltries with a trader in the village. She brought her babe—a patient-looking, dark-eyed boy—and held it for her mother to kiss, and to each of her new-found relatives, and the face of the simple nursing of the wild beamed with transport as she spoke to it in the sweet Indian tongue.

Many a rugged face was turned aside, and more than one fair bystander's eyes filled with involuntary tears at the sight. And was this Annie Dacre!—the pet of the family, the first-born of the settlement the mother of an Indian child!

The inveterate prejudices of race which at that period, and ever among the English of the New World, opposed an alliance with the natives, was not expressed in other than a few rueful glances and half-smothered sighs; had it been, it would have turned the cup of happiness, which now overflowed for the restored one, to bitterness instead, and inflicted upon that pure heart a most cruel wound.

"Come hither daughter," said her mother, placing a small stool at her side. "This is your own little seat; your brother Leonard made it for you long, long ago. I would see you as you were then, our own Annie. Sit thee down here. I cannot skip over so many years all at once; I have always thought of you as a child, and now you are a woman grown."
And she removed the beaded *agwagan*, or squaw's hood, laid the head of the wanderer in her lap, and stroked her long silky hair caressingly with her hand.

Suddenly the object of her tender regard appeared to listen; she raised her head, she sprang up with a glad exclamation "*Wetch-gu-yet!*" ("He comes!") and bounded to the door.

They followed her with their eyes. A tall stately Indian darkened the entrance, and their Annie was talking rapidly to him in his own tongue. He stalked in, that red hunter, with the air of a sovereign. He gazed, with a face perplexed but grave, first at the speaker and then at the assembled throng. He placed the stock of his gun deliberately upon the floor, and crossed his hands on the muzzle. He listened attentively to her words. There was an atmosphere of freedom about the Indian as he stood in his unembarrassed posture, with his plumed head bent slightly down, and a tinge of melancholy in his noble countenance, not unminged with pride. It might be that he, too, felt some scruple at the idea of an alliance with the strangers, for they were English—those haughty pale-faces, who had never mingled in blood or social fellowship with his people; it might be that he detected some hostile or ungracious sentiment in the faces before him; but he took up his gun, as his wife ceased, and observing composedly to her in Indian, "Little Moon can stay with them if she chooses, but this is not A-moos-took's home," turned towards the door.

Annie seemed suddenly converted into stone, and stood with lips apart and her eyes dilated upon the speaker. In the flush of her new-born raptures she had never anticipated this. Carried away by the discovery which unfolded to her such a world of sunny prospects, she imagined, simple one, that her partner would participate equally in the happiness it brought; for, in the boundless generosity of her heart, she had not conceived the difference in their relative positions in respect to her white friends, but in an instant it was all made apparent to her by his last words. Her husband was a stranger here—an unwelcome one, perhaps. He was right;

that was no home for him, whatever it might be to her. The dream was very sweet; it caused her faithful heart a mighty pang to relinquish it, but it was gone. Without a word, and very sadly, she took up her infant, gathered her boxes from the floor, imprinted a kiss upon her mother's cheek, and ere they became conscious of her intention departed with her husband.

They followed after, and endeavored by every means of persuasion to win her back, but without success; and all she would concede to the entreaties and prayers of her relatives was the promise of a speedy return. Then they lost sight of her among the trees of the adjacent forest.

Early the next morning the matron was seated again, with her knitting, but alone and in her sleeping room, when a soft voice said,—

"Mother, An-nie is come."
It was her child. She had stolen in noiselessly, and seated herself by her side.
"A-moos-took say, 'Go to your mother, so she may be glad.' My mother will love A-moos-took, too, for he is good." And as she spoke she laid her head gently in her parent's lap, and drew the arm of the latter around her.

An hour later, the mother and child pursued the path leading to the graveyard of the village. As they went along Annie tried in vain to recognize the features of her birthplace; everything was changed. The trees and stumps had disappeared in many places, even to the summit of the hills; rail fences partitioned off the different farms; rows of Lombardy poplars stood in the green lanes; and numerous habitations bordered on a great high-road that led through the centre of the vale, among which could be distinguished the spire of a distant church. There was but one element of the landscape that reminded her of her childhood—the river that wound along the alluvial tract; it was still the same. In every other respect the hand of progress had entirely altered the original aspect of the settlement.

They stood at length within the small enclosure sacred to the dead; but among the crowd of picketed graves Annie was bewildered, and stopping abruptly, she asked her mother in a subdued voice if there were not once only two graves there? and when the latter answered in the affirmative, she said that she thought so; and followed on until she was brought to a retired spot, where, among some cedars, and surrounded by white palings, a head-board appeared which contained the following—

JACOB DACRE, Esq.

One of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace and formerly Capt. in the King's Orange Rangers. The deceased came to New Brunswick with the Loyalists, at the close of the rebellion in the American Provinces, in the year of our Lord 1784, and was the first settler in this valley; in which he died, universally regretted. He taught his children to fear God and honor the king.

"This is where your father lies, my love," said the widow. "He never held up his head after the day you left us, and your name was the last word he ever spoke; you were his dearest child."

"Annie will come and talk to her father," returned the latter, softly, wiping her tears away with the lappet of her Indian dress. "She has been away from him very long time. She will come often, mother. It's all she can do now."

And she kept her word; for often in after years the villagers, as they passed by the burial place, would observe an Indian woman kneeling by a grave, and they went on without disturbing her—they knew it was Annie Dacre holding, as she termed it, "a talk with her father."

After a time, A-moos-took, for his wife's sake, overcame his repugnance, and began to mix sociably with his English connections; and in justice it must be confessed that the latter did everything they could to make him forget those distinctions of race which, at their first meeting, had kept him aloof, and presented a bar to cordial intercourse between them. But the Micmac no sooner felt that he had established a relationship of kindness with the strangers than he threw off his reserve altogether, and smoked his stone calumet at their respective firesides in token of accepted friendship. From that moment he was as one of themselves.

Annie visited her mother daily, and speedily won the hearts of her kindred by her child-like simplicity and affection; and when the summer was over she took possession of a chamber in the house appropriated to her use, and together with her husband, remained with them while the snow lasted; but as soon as the spring freshets were fallen and the butternut trees in their first leaf, they were off again, like a pair of birds, to their old forest-haunts.

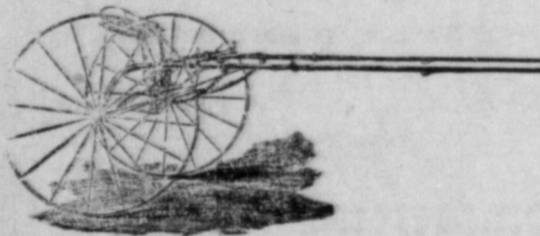
The good folk of the vale found it quite impossible to eradicate the tastes which the Indian founding had acquired among those with whom a singular destiny had thrown her for so many years; and finally they desisted from all attempt to wean her from them, though it grieved them sorely that one so reputedly born should betake herself to such outlandish and unchristian-like ways.

But, after all, this was a mere matter of opinion; and as for Annie, she often laughed when they spoke to her on the subject, and could never be made to understand that it was wrong to pursue the

Continued on page 8.

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Reserve for Unadjusted Losses, 254,523 45
Reserve for Re-Insurance, 1,742,245 41
NET SURPLUS, 1,301,235 39
Total Assets, \$5,305,004 25
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New Assurance Written in 1889, 175,364,129
Total, 806,380,795
Premium Income in 1889, 49,357,525
Interest and Other Income, 5,065,765
Total Income, 54,423,290
Payments to Policy holders, 11,842,568
Assets, 107,150,309
Liabilities (4 per cent.), 84,329,235
Surplus, \$22,821,074
Ratio of Assets to Liabilities, 127 per cent.

Of the Life Assurance Companies of the world THE EQUITABLE has for ten years transacted the largest annual new business (in 1889, \$175,364,129; for ten years held the largest 4 per cent. surplus (December, 1889, \$22,821,074); for four years held the largest outstanding business (December, 1889, \$631,016,666); while its superior financial strength is shown by its high ratio of Assets to Liabilities, 127 per cent.
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