

A CANADIAN SUNSET.

Over the snow clad hills the amber glory fades,
Leaving a world of grey,
The bright, cold, sapphire of the northern sky,
Has slowly passed away.

Up from beyond the ridge of frozen pines,
A glow of crimson spreads;
Dyeing a world of whiteness, with the rosy flush,
A dawn in summer sheds.

While far away, the fleecy softness of the scattered
clouds,
Seems bathed in floods of light.

A parting promise from the drowsy sun
Bidding the world good night.

Beyond the range of earthly vision dim
He wins his silent way,

To rise on other lands, in summer beauty glowing;
A harbinger of day.

"Good night" we say, and watch our friends de-
parting.

To reach a fairer clime.
Good night to us, is but to them Good morning,
Beyond the shores of time.

GEORGEY CUTHBERT STRANGE.

DOLLY DEERING'S CHRISTMAS

A SIMPLE STORY.

BY HUNTER DUVAR.

It was the first day of November and a very uncomfortable first of November it was. People's noses were red. Cold raw fog hung on whiskers and beards as dew drops hang on a spider's web. The trees, all but leafless, loomed through the fog like smears. Curs that ran out to bark at you carried their tails slantingly, the fog having soaked out their usual insolent curl, for it is a curious fact in dogology that the meaner the cur, biped or quadruped, the tighter does he curl his tale. Hens with their feathers all ruffled the wrong way moped under fences, like played-out politicians dragged by party storms. Ducks were making a great do in puddles, and like other quacks, were getting along swimmingly. Some of the more devout school boys, on the foundation of that truly christian King Henry VIII. for ten poor scholars, surreptitiously read in their prayer books the supplication for fine weather, for their bonfire on Guy Fawkes, his day, the 5th, "the glorious fifth November which let us all remember."

Nobody blessed the weather, or they blessed it the wrong way, as Giles Deering stamped along from the sale by auction of the estate of Puddleford Granges on which he and a half a dozen others were small tenant farmers. It was a pretty estate of five or six hundred acres, just large enough to have enabled the late proprietor to expend six times his income in keeping up the pretences that modern civilization demands. The estate was now on the market, with the quondam owner in that debtor's prison unfavorably known to Little Dorrit's father as the Marshalsea.

Giles Deering was one of a race that is now as extinct as the Pelasgi. He wore top boots. That fact alone is sufficient to relegate him into a period of somewhat remote antiquity. In person, portly, face rubicund, shoulders round, limbs herculean. His breeches (pardon the expression,) plenteous in width and of a stiff ridge and furrow fabric, called corduroy, stopped short where they met his boots. In a side pocket of this integument, known as the fob, he carried a stout silver watch, three inches in diameter by two inches thick in the centre, that had belonged to his grandfather, and to which was appended a steel chain on which were hung a crooked sixpence and a cornelian seal. When he wanted to know what o'clock it was, he hauled on the chain with both hands and the timepiece came out with a plop like a cork out of a bottle. Stand-up linen collars of great height and cruelty nearly cut his ears off. A waistcoat with two huge flaps like modern gripsacks covered his expansive chest and reached to his thighs. Over all was a royal blue broadcloth coat cut square in the tails, with six bright brass buttons in front, the size of half dollars, and two on the small of his back, so that the view of his gable end was quite picturesque, especially when surmounted by his billycock hat—the term "billycock," I infer, being derived from a mixture of sweet william and a cock of hay. Such was the personnel of the father of dear Dolly Deering. Mrs. Giles Deering was so plump and comfortable in person that she might be called a personage. And then as to her daughter—O dear! Words fail me to decide sweet Dolly. When she flitted about in the orchard the young men could hardly make up their minds whether it would be nicer to bite a red-checked apple or Dolly's red cheeks. I know which I would have preferred. She was indeed a duck and a darling and a delightful and a Dolly, and that is all that need be said.

Dolly had many admirers, what pretty girl has not? It is quite right for a pretty girl to have hosts of admirers, but it is best to have only one true lover. I mean only one at a time. Where there are two or more they are apt to clash.

Dolly had had a lover.
Alack! William Shakespeare, how dimly correct you were when you said that the course of true love never did run smooth. Samuel Freeman was Dolly's only one. But Samuel Freeman was poor. Why is it, O great ruler of Love's Universe! why is it that almost all true lovers are poor? This does not seem in accordance with the fitness of things. Yet such was the case with Freeman. It almost makes me a

manichean to see how things go wrong. He was a well-built youth, and could have spent a good deal of money without winking, but he had none to spend. He was school master and catechist for Henry VIII's ten poor scholars, and had no resources but his annual dole, which amounted, all told, in modern sterling, to seven pound ten, equal to \$37.50 per annum, which in Tudor days had been paid in bonnet pieces. The most sanguine temperament could scarcely expect that sum to provide luxuries for the household of children Dolly would be sure to bring him. Dolly's quarrels ensued. Dolly, poor thing, did nothing but cry. It would have mollified the heart of a whinstone to see the pearly tears running down her damask cheek and dropping off the point of her pretty little nose into the buttermilk as she mournfully churned the day's cream. Mrs. Deering, like the sensible mother she was, put her foot down, (she wore number nines,) and vowed stoutly that no young man should have a daughter of hers unless he could show a clear incoming of not less than fifty dollars a year.

What would you have? Fate is cruel.

refrain of "east-indy-companie, east-indy-companie." She came to the conclusion that all young men are hateful, especially those that wanted to take her to the fair and buy candies for her. She told her mother she would never marry, a remark at which that astute woman quietly smiled. But her dreams were troubled. She seemed in her slumbers to see her Samuel in the uniform of a Bheel daycote (whatever that may be) with a tremendous sword in his hand, cutting down whole companies of British troops of the line. At other times she would dream of him as in the magnificent dress of a rajah, and near him, seated lovingly on a divan, a lady surpassingly beautiful, with Kohinoors in her hair and emeralds all over her scarlet jacket, and with voluminous skyblue silk trousers, but, shocking to relate, no stockings, and tiny slippers of dead gold turned up at the toes. Then Dolly would wake with a shudder, and console herself with the reflection that dreams always came true by contraries.

more! whereupon the Squire gie him a cut with his hunting whip and the auctioneer heaved a ink bottle at Billy and told him to 'get out o' that!' 'Ninety-six hundred says a dandified kind of a chap that nobody seemed to know, that was smoking one o' your newfangled cigars 'Ninety-six hundred' says he. 'And fifty' says Lawyer Scratch. 'And fifty more' says the dandified chap. Lawyer looked bitter glum and bid no more. 'At ninety seven, seven seven, seven, seven,' says the auctioneer, 'seven, seven, at ninety and seven, no more bids? at seven? seven? going, no advance on seven? go-o-o-ing at seven, last offer, seven? Gone!' It had gone to the dandified chap, who handed a paper to the auctioneer, and walked away smoking. Then it came out that the stranger was a lawyer man from London. I asked the buyer's name and he told me 'On Commission.' That's what he said it was. 'On Commission?' said Dolly, wonderingly. 'It can't be a man's name. What does it mean?' 'Dang'd if I know,' said Giles Deering. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks passed, and no sign of the new squire.

was, but I know a good deal was done with cotton wool and whalebone, and stay laces, and sheet lead, and powder of pearls, and rouge des roses, and savon dental, and racine de voilette, and cold cream, and lavender water, and glycerine, and fixatine, and other mysteries of beauty's armory that it would be profane even to guess at. All was, at length, ready, and the invitations had been gloated over, and the dresses tried on, and the running about with mouths full of pins was over by the time it was Christmas eve, and the shining arc of the lady-moon, in her last quarter, smiled down through a serene sky betokening a clear and frosty kindly Christmas morning.

Now it happened on that Christmas eve our darling Dolly felt disinclined to rest. She was thinking of her absent Samuel in the East India Company's service, and the more she thought of him the more did the remembrance of the beautiful foreign lady in the skyblue silk trousers, that she associated with him in her dreams, become hateful to her. She drew on a hood and went out to indulge her sorrows in the snow-crust garden.

where he carried on a small cheesemongery business. His respectable uncle gave him half a sovereign and told him to go to the devil. Sam at first thought he would go, but, being no fool, he made enquiry in the lane and found that the stingy uncle was worth twenty thousand pounds if worth a penny. Our hero, therefore, made a respectable solicitor acquainted with the circumstances, and left with him a probable address: "Full Private Samuel Freeman, Bengal Infantry, India, or elsewhere." Then he went and enlisted.

It gives me pleasure to relate that the cheesemonger died within three years and Sam inherited as heir. It was for him the estate of Puddleford Granges had been bought "on commission." Dolly did not know this, but here was Samuel, her own true lover, standing with her by the garden gate.

Long time the lovers talked, talked in fact till the hoarse old clock on Henry VIII's foundation reluctantly counted out twelve time-beats and made it Christmas morning. It was time to part. Professors of ethics have not yet decided whether it is better to trust one's sweetheart all in all, or not at all. It mainly depends on who the sweetheart is. The new squire of the Grange took a middle course and told her that he lived at Grange house and was the butler. Dolly, although wondering at the great rise in life from a school master to a butler, said nothing but rejoiced in his success. Then, with many caresses, they parted, he assuring her that she should have a good place at the feast.

Christmas morning broke clear, crisp and bracing, as it ought to do, and in due time the bells called all good christians to the worship so well becoming that most august of days. Everybody had on their very best. The village church glowed like a parterre of the most pronounced flowers, peonies, sunflowers, tiger lilies and marigolds, with intervening expanses of white waistcoat, while overhead rippled a surf of artificial sprays and nodding plumes of dried grasses and birds. The rector, Rev. Athanasius Stole, read the beautiful service, not neglecting to take up the offertory, which, if I remember aright, was on that occasion, for that most successful of all missions, the conversion of the Jews; and then the congregation dismissing, streamed in a gay and straggling procession towards the Grange mansion.

When Dolly and her parents were received by the servants and shown into the room where all the company were already seated at a long table, the dear child did not know (vulgarily speaking) whether she stood on her head or her heels. For, places being found lower down for her parents, she was escorted and placed directly under the mistletoe—next to two vacant chairs at the head of the table, facing the whole company. She could do nothing but blush, and secretly look round for the butler.

At length a door opened and the rector, actually the rector! advanced, leading by the hand—O heavens!—Dolly's Samuel, and pronounced in a pulpit tone: "My christian friends, let me present to you the new Squire of the manor, Mr. Samuel Freeman." The shock was so great that every one preserved a profound silence, except one man who sneezed, but afterwards apologised. Dolly was so frightened that she thought she would have fainted and fallen under the table. The general astonishment suddenly broke into a hubbub of congratulation, while the new squire and the rector slid into the two vacant seats and the latter said grace. The dinner was proceeded with, but so upset was dear Dolly that she does not remember to this day what she ate, except an odious-looking bulb like a black potato that the new squire told her was snufflers, or truffles, or some word to that effect.

A vast quantity of solids having been put out of sight, came the order for unlimited beer. Gracefully rising in his place of honor at the head of the table, next to Dolly—only think, next to Dolly!—her own Samuel, with a froth-tipped pot of beer in his hand, drank the health of all the company, then threw himself into an oration, as follows:

"Friends," said he, after draining the pot and inserting his right hand fingers between the buttons of his buff vest, "I have called you together on this merry Christmas on an important occasion. An important occasion. Fill your mugs. I have been a schoolmaster on the foundation of the devout King Henry the Eighth, originator of the Great and Glorious English Protestant Reformation. Let us drink to the pious memory of Henry VIII. Empty your mugs and fill again. By the blessing of providence and the death of an uncle I have risen to be one of the wealthy of the land. A plutocracy is one of the brightest jewels in the British crown. Don't let your mugs stand empty. But what is a plutocracy, and what is the estate of Puddleford, and what is Henry the eighth, and what is a home, and what is beer without a wife? Friends! I have determined to take a wife, and she is here present!" (At this juncture there was an universal flutter and some of the unmarried girls gave little squeaks as if there were a mouse somewhere.) "And this is the wife!" continued he in stentorian tones, in the most barefaced manner he Dolly a roosting kiss before the w' pany—while she, poor soul



HANGING UP THE MISTLETOE.

It is a very true sentiment, beautifully expressed by Mr. Swinburne of London, that

A little sorrow, a little pleasure,
Fate metes us from the dusty measure
That holds the date of all of us;
We are born with travail and strong crying,
And from the birth-day to the dying,
The likeness of our life is thus.

The end of it was that Sam Freeman disappeared one night, and not till a week afterwards did he send word, by the carrier, that he had enlisted in the service of the Honorable East India Company.

There ensued a weary and a settled melancholy after the first burst of grief. The sweet voice of Giles's daughter was no more heard lilting "linkum come ledly" and "my love he is a comely lad," and the like, as she drove her cow, Mooley, to the pasture, giving it a gentle cut now and then with a little hazel switch across its well-fed flank, more in kindness than in anger. The hum of her spinning wheel reeled off no longer a joyous "birr-whirr and around-a" but fell into a monotonous

All this, except the dreams and the determination never to marry, was past and gone four years before the evening when her father, Giles Deering, came home from attending the sale of the estate on which he was a tenant. That worthy man arriving at his ain fireside, pulled off his blue coat, and took a handful of tobacco out of one of the flaps of his waistcoat, filled and lighted his churchwarden pipe, a yard long, and sitting down in his shirt sleeves, smoked gravely.

"Tell us about it father," cried Mrs. D., "was the estate sold?"

"Aye, worse luck," replied Giles, "we have gotten a new master now. Lawyer Scratch put up an offer of eight thousand pound—eight thousand pound—seems a deal o' money don't it? Squire Briggs bid five hundred more, a thousand more, a hundred more to that, and then Billy Ogpen, Lee's hired man, who had six quarts o' beer or thereabouts inside of him, roars out, 'and five pence ha' penny

The public mind had already settled that Mr. O. Commission—for this they supposed was his name—was one of "your fly-away chaps" who would live in London and never come near Puddleford Granges. At length a cheery rumor circulated that a brewer's drag, laden with beer from a near town, had been seen to drive through Grangehouse gate. Mrs. Bundles, the housekeeper, who was sold with the furniture, confirmed the rumor, and added that the new squire was coming down to give a Christmas feast in which all the neighbours were to share. Everybody rejoiced and thought it was very kind of Squire Commission. Then what an outburst of clean starching and putting of hair in papers, and trying over half-forgotten steps of reels and contra dances, and making up of caps and bonnets, and ironing of ribbons, and hunting up of gloves, and letting out of tucks, and turning of skirts, and consideration of breadths. I am not so learned in ladies' toilet as I once

Dolly wept with her handkerchief to her eyes as she paced slowly up and down the little walk, among the gaunt walkingstick-like stems of dead sunflowers and holy-hocks. Gently a hand was laid upon her shoulder and a well remembered voice whispered "Dolly, dear!" With a smothered scream she started and found her own true lover bending over her with love in his eyes. "Sa-sa-muel!" she stammered out, and the dream-lady in the skyblue trousers vanished forever.

This simple story may be an idyl, but it is not a romance. There is no mystery in it. There is no mystery in anything. I daresay the Eleusinian mysteries, if we only knew, were mere cider-cellar business, and the mysterious mumblings of Memnon no more than an anticipation of Edison's telephone. When Sam Freeman left his native village he sought out his deceased father's brother, his only relative, and found him with a canvas apron on, behind a counter in an obscure lane in London