

been turned to account by the industry of man. The stacks of the numberless steam-engine houses, pouring forth their volleys of black smoke, showed that there the miner plyed his trade, gathering copper, tin and lead from the bowels of the earth. In other places the hills were variegated with white patches, showing that there was found the clay of which such large quantities is used in the Staffordshire potteries. In the distance the Atlantic was visible, with here and there a white sail steadily pursuing its course. But it was the view at the south-west which charmed the senses most: towns, villages, spires of country churches, parks, castles, country-seats, farm houses, rich arable land teeming with the whitening crops, meandering streams, gentlemen's plantations and coppices, sixty miles of a bay-indented coast, where every inlet was studded with the white sails of the fishermen, the English channel in the distance, where numbeless vessels of every description were steering their course in every direction—all formed a scene so pleasing—so calculated to soften the feelings, and drive every other idea from the mind but perfect happiness, that I could not help exclaiming aloud, "Oh God! I thank thee that thou hast cast my lot in a land on which thou hast showered so many blessings!"

The spot where this occurred was on a plain bald part of the common, not a bush nor a stone within half a mile of us; this I mention to illustrate what shortly afterwards took place. We now pushed forward again until we came to the Church, an ancient gothic structure, its massy walls built of huge blocks of granite, and flanked by a tower at the eastern extremity. Just as we approached, the solitary bell in this lone spot tolled forth the passing notes which told that a soul had departed to another world. We alighted outside the little wicket which opened to the Church-yard, and tied our horses fast, for we knew that the dwelling of the witch was near. As we paused the bell stopped tolling, and the sexton came out of the Church with his spade and mattock and commenced digging a grave. I approached and accosted him as follows:—

"Friend, I perceive some one of your parishioners is dead; who or what was the deceased?"

"One of my parishioners," muttered he, "why yes, he was once to be sure, but a long time since."

"Ha! some poor fellow then I presume who, having spent his life in wandering through other countries, finding his race nearly run, returns to his native place to die?—I have known such instances."

"Ay, so have I; and sometimes known them to return after they were dead!"

"So you believe in ghosts then?"

"Who does not?"

"But this man?"

"What of him?"

"I thought you were saying——"

"Yes, I was saying I knew him once, a parishioner of mine, and a—he's dead, and I've got to dig his grave—that's all."

"Well, friend, as you seem reluctant to hold further conversation on this subject, you will be kind enough perhaps to inform me where stands the habitation of one Mrs. Eyres, who lives somewhere here about."

"Mother Eyres," muttered the fellow, with a stupid stare; "I don't think she can see you to-day—unless you've an appointment with her; if you have she'll be sure to keep it. She is easily found by those whom she wishes to see, and those whose company she does not desire may seek her a long time before they'll find her.—Walk a quarter of a mile from the Church in any direction you choose, and if she desires to see you you'll find her! if you do not, you may return from whence you came, for your journey will have been in vain."

Finding it impossible to obtain any further directions I determined to obey his advice. We then left him and were just turning an angle of the building when we discovered a wild figure at some distance, beckoning us towards her; she wore neither cap nor bonnet, and her grizzled hair fluttered in the breeze; her clothes were disordered, and her long thin attenuated form seemed dilated to more than its usual dimensions. Without deigning a word, she beckoned us to follow a beaten path which wound down a steep descent, while she proceeded towards a precipice almost perpendicular, and, seizing a projecting rock, flung herself—as it appeared to us—over. We followed the path indicated until we had descended, as well as I was able to judge, about five hundred feet, winding to and fro, and excessively steep—so much so indeed that we feared sometimes we should topple down headlong, nor stop until we plunged into the Tamar, which washed the base of the mountain. The path at length took a sudden turn and led us beneath a tier of perpendicular rocks; we proceeded in this direction about an hundred rods, when our course was suddenly arrested by a rock which completely blocked up the path. We looked up, we looked down, we looked on either side; no egress was visible but by the way in which we had come. In front and on our left arose a perpendicular rock, while on our right were another tier of rocks below us as perpendicular as those above. We began to feel rather uncomfortable, and were about to retrace our steps, supposing we had missed our road, when we were accosted in the same shrill voice which had so unexpectedly interrupted us on the Moor, with, "Wont you walk up?" Our eyes followed the sound, and we perceived the witch leering at us with a hideous grin from an aperture in the rock about thirty feet above our heads. My mind almost misgave me, and were it not for the cool determination of Lucy I should have returned without a further interview; but after making us dance attendance a minute or two the beldam directed us to approach the precipice and walk around the rock which obstructed the passage. I attempted to obey her directions, but instantly perceived it to be impossible, as the rock before us was a continuation of the tier below, not the smallest shelf or crevice being visible between them. But while I gazed the end of a plank appeared beyond a projecting angle—further

and further it came, until it was but a good stride distant. "Lift on the girls," said a voice, "and then come on yourself." I did so, and the next minute we all stood on the end of a plank which bent beneath our weight, and which, for all we knew to the contrary, might have been set there as a trap for us, for nothing would have been easier than to raise the other end, when we must have been pitched down a steep declivity of several hundred feet in depth. We stepped cautiously along the plank, and soon found ourselves in a narrow opening in the rock, capable of admitting but one at a time; a flight of steps hewn out of the solid rock was now before us; these we ascended, when we found ourselves in the dwelling of the celebrated Witch of Brentor, and in her presence.

"And so, miss Lucy, you did not fear coming here! Ha, ha, ha; most of the girls in the country of your age would not come here for the weight of this rock in gold!"

"And yet," said I, "if your character was divested of these idle fears of the peasantry, and the mystery—I should rather say romance—of you're living here in solitude, we should probably find it but little different from the rest of mankind."

"So you think I can neither forget events nor know ought of the past but what is made known to me by being an eye-witness, or by the ordinary means of communication?" Then assuming a sternness of voice and manner she said, "I'll teach you better, sir, before you leave this place: come and look out at this aperture—you see the southern coast of Cornwall. Now tell me were you not enraptured with the view when you first cast your sight upon this lovely landscape on reaching the summit of the mountain? Did you not think it was a glorious sight, and did you not bow your face to your horse's neck and thank God for casting your lot in this land of happiness? So; you are convinced now that I have knowledge of that which I neither see, hear, nor am told of,—that blanched cheek tells me so! But I will tell you more: at the very moment you were returning thanks to God for the happiness before you, many farmers were mourning the loss of their crops by the blight;—a boat had just upset in the bay yonder in which were three men, a married man, father of a large and helpless family, and two young men, the old man was also a worshipper of God, while the other two were wild and vicious, setting his commands at naught; yet the old man was drowned, and his bereaved widow and fatherless children are now weeping over his corpse, but the two young men were saved! Do you perceive yonder Church spire rearing its modest head from among the groves of yonder peaceful valley? That valley is at this moment in a state of commotion, the parishioners having quarrelled with the land-steward who attempted to rise their rents, and a scene of violence is now in the act of being perpetrated on a farm where the steward has gone, accompanied by constables, to restrain! You are gazing again on the fishermen? they are busy all along the coast, for the catch of pilchards is great, but as their profits increase, so the avarice of the owners expand, and they now refuse to sell any fish to the peasantry at fair prices as heretofore, but contemplate saving them all for foreign markets; the result will be that a large portion of them will spoil before they are taken care of, and will be hauled out into the fields for manure, but there will be no more fish caught on the coast for ten years to come!" See you yonder light clouds arising from the sea? They portend wet harvest weather, such as has not been known in England for several years past, and the wheat which escapes the blight, after having been cut, shall be so thoroughly saturated with rain as to grow until the whole shock sticks together! See you——"

"Enough! enough!" I exclaimed, "for God's sake say no more!"

"Ha, ha, ha! where now is the picture of happiness thou wert so grateful for! But come; now to the business which brought you here.—Lucy Hicks, I can give you no comfort—Tresilian and you were not created for each other—a nearer neighbour of your father's seeks your hand—ay, and will ultimately obtain it too, notwithstanding your scornful looks at the allusion!—and wherefore should he not? He is not a highway robber nor a mur——"

"Stop!" shrieked Lucy, stopping the old hag's mouth with her hand, "thou canst not—thou durst not say this of Tresilian!"

"Durst not, minion! did ever the Witch of Brentor shrink from speaking the truth? But thou wilt soon know—once more shalt thou see him at liberty, and the next time loaded with irons, a convicted criminal!—I have said it!"

A knock was now heard below, and, commanding us to tarry where we were until her return, she descended. I was standing near the aperture, and looking down perceived the grave-digger; at the same time I heard the words "not now." I then cast a hasty glance around the room; it was an oblong, about eight feet wide and twelve long, terminated at the other end by a curtain drawn across its entire breadth. Curiosity once more got the better of prudence, and stepping up to the curtain I hastily drew it outside. To my utter astonishment there lay the dead body of a man, perfectly naked, and apparently just laid out for the purpose of interment. A rude coffin stood by its side, but the most remarkable circumstance was that the body was swollen and discoloured like the corpses I have seen of those who have been drowned, and a small wound was visible in his breast, from whence oozed the crimson fluid, mixed as it appeared to be with water!—it was evident the deceased had died a violent death. Quick as lightning a thought struck me—it was the robber whom Miriam had killed in self-defence! All this was the work of a moment, and fortunately the girls, although they saw me draw aside the curtain, did not see the corpse, or they would have betrayed themselves. Before the return of the witch I had regained my former position. We soon took our leave, and never did I feel more pleasure than an interview was over. We found our horses where we had left them, descended the rugged side of the mountain, and returned to my brother's house.

[END OF THE FIFTH CHAPTER.]

*This remarkable incident actually occurred.—Ed.

Written for the Loyalist.

REVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS OF NEW BRUNSWICK, 1844.

(Continued.)

No. 41, THE FISHERY ACT.

When towards the close of the last session, it was found that a majority of the House would support the report of the Select Committee on Fisheries, and that they would also lend their aid in carrying through a Bill founded upon that report, we exclaimed "Rip Van Winkle is awake!" so firmly had the idea fastened itself on our mind that the legislature of New Brunswick had been heretofore asleep, or they would never have allowed the Americans to enter our waters and monopolize the fishing trade which from local and other causes is the legitimate right of our fishermen. By the apathy of the Province this trade, which has been a profitable one, has been wrested from us by our keen-sighted neighbours; although, there must be something radically wrong about this. The fish are on our coast—we can fit out vessels as cheap as the Americans—we can man them as cheap as they can, and victual them at nearly the same rates. There could be no reason, then, why they should monopolize the trade unless from their superior industry, superior skill, or some stimulating cause. We do not think our fishermen will be willing to acknowledge the existence of either of the two causes first named; their monopoly, then, can only have grown out of the circumstance that they received a bounty from their Government for fitting out, and catching a certain quantity of fish, while no such encouragement was held out to fishermen in this Province. We hope, therefore, that this act will stimulate our fishermen to action, and that ere long we shall see the Americans driven off our waters—not by our vessels of war, but because they will be unable to compete with our own fishermen.

There are other branches of trade immediately connected with this. So successfully have the Americans carried it on that they have opened an extensive trade with Buenos Ayres, and other South American Ports, where they sell their fish and purchase for a return-freight green hides. In consequence of this hides are sold in the United States at very reduced rates, and this Province inundated with the shoes manufactured from them and smuggled in here, to the manifest injury of our tanners and shoemakers.

Taking this view of the case we consider this one of the most beneficial measures which was brought before the House during the session. But alas! even this could not become a law without containing a most egregious blunder, as will be seen by the following extract:—

And be it enacted, That there shall be granted on all decked Vessels of the burthen of ten tons and upwards, according to the measurement for tonnage under the Act of the Imperial Parliament made and passed in the fifth and sixth years of the Reign of King William the Fourth, owned and registered in this Province, and employed in the Deep Sea or Shore Fisheries for a period of not less than four months, at any time between the first day of April and the first day of December following, (no Vessel being entitled to more than one Bounty in each year) a Bounty according to the following scale, that is to say:—

Vessels of ten tons and not exceeding fifty tons, ten shillings;

Vessels exceeding fifty tons and up to one hundred tons, twelve shillings and six pence for each and every ton thereof.

Thus it will be seen that while a vessel of fifty-one tons burthen is entitled to a bounty of £31 17s 6d, a vessel of fifty tons is only entitled to receive ten shillings! However, this blunder—for the like of which a school-boy would be flogged—will no doubt be amended another year, and the damage will not be of a very serious nature. At present the act is unlimited in its duration; we hope something will be done at the next session to insure its duration for a certain number of years, for so eddicted are our legislators to undo one session what was done the preceding year, that we fear few persons will embark in this or any other trade, subject to the whims or caprice of the Assembly.

THE INSOLVENT DEBTOR'S BILL.

This Bill (which passed with a suspending clause, i. e. it is referred to Her Majesty for Her approval) is intended to legalize commutations of insolvents with their creditors. We have already expressed our opinion of bankrupt laws in general, but this Bill is the best—the least objectionable—of any we have ever seen. It provides that any insolvent may petition the Master of the Rolls to order that a meeting of his creditors be called. This order is to be transmitted to the Clerk of the Peace for the County wherein the debtor resides, who must call the meeting. The debtor lays a state of his affairs before them, and if 3-5ths of his creditors are satisfied with his conduct and agree to the conditions he offers them, he is discharged.

We repeat that this is an excellent bill in its nature, and reflects much credit on Mr. A. S. Street who brought it forward, and in the minds of those who believe that bankrupt laws are beneficial and necessary we should imagine this bill must supersede the necessity for any other.

No. 47 is a bill for the disposal of certain portions of the Indian Reserves. This Bill also passed with a suspending clause, but as it has not yet been published in the Royal Gazette, we shall defer any notice of it until Her Majesty's decision is known.