

## 第三章 一名休伦族律师

### Chapter 3 A Huron Lawyer



九月三日上午九点，十七岁的里奥奈尔·雷兹提古希坐在蒙特利尔本色古集市尼克律师的办公室，在一张纸上写着一些不规则的句子。

里奥奈尔无父无母，尼克先生就像他的父母，现在其他职员都出去了，他写完最后一行，署上自己的名字。这时，尼克先生进来问他在做什么，他赶忙把纸往吸墨盒下藏，被尼克抢先拿了过去。

律师看到纸上好多空白处都没写字，埋怨他浪费了那么多纸。当听说写的是诗，准备寄给诗人联合会时，便告诉他，雇他不是让他在诗人座谈会上出名的。

尼克问起诗的主题是不是赞美律师的。当知道了主题是磷火时，感到很奇怪。这时，邮差敲门了。

律师看了邮差带来的信后告诉里奥奈尔，一个小时后去拉瓦，如果在路上碰到磷火，他可以向磷火致敬。

五十岁的尼克为人和善、思想敏锐，有着印第安四大种族之一的休伦血统。他的一个远房表兄是印第安部落的首领，非常富有。尼克律师一直保持中立，人人都尊重他，有事都愿意请他解决。

他和职员坐上了两匹马拉的“老爷车”，这种车可载六人。他和里奥奈尔坐在后排。走到环形大道时又上来一个人，和他们打了招呼后，坐在了里奥奈尔的前面。上车的年轻人二十九岁左右，身材瘦削，坚毅的目光中透着男子汉的气质，穿着当地产的料子服装，年轻人一上车就陷入了沉思。

律师看年轻人无意聊天，便又调侃起了里奥奈尔的磷火并让他念一下，



里奥奈尔在纸上写着什么

并征得了刚上来的乘客的同意。里奥奈尔便念了起来，他的诗对磷火又是赞美，又是描写和比喻，两位听众都夸他写得好。

这时，有人拦车，律师看到是瑞普，和他打招呼。而车上的陌生乘客似乎在极力控制自己对瑞普的厌恶。瑞普到这里是抓大名鼎鼎的让·桑依的，但他连人影子也没看到。律师说，让·桑依不是容易被抓到的，陌生乘客说：“就像是磷火”，律师先生感到这个比喻很恰当。

坐了一段，瑞普下车了，律师和乘客又谈起了让·桑依，表示真不希望他被抓住，否则，对法裔加拿大人将是损失。乘客表示，让·桑依不会被轻易抓到的。里奥奈尔插嘴说道：“瑞普早晚要臭名远扬的。”律师制止住了他，说自己对政治不感兴趣，于是又谈起了诗，诗人将结尾念了出来，表达出了他对磷火的向往，愿自己熔入到磷火中，与它同生共死。陌生乘客对他的诗给予了高度评价，里奥奈尔也沉浸在陌生乘客的赞扬之中。

十一点钟，他们到了河的北部又上了汽船，过河后，他们互相告别。陌生人去了拉瓦，尼克先生二人去了岛的东部。

*I*t was not without good reason that the Governor and his advisers had been conferring regarding the measures to be taken for the repression of the Reformists. A formidable insurrection of the French Canadians was indeed about to take place.

But if Lord Gosford and his staff had good reason to be concerned, nothing seemed to trouble a certain young fellow, who, on the morning of 3rd September, was supposed to be ‘engrossing’ in the office of Mr. Nick, in Bon Secours market-place, Montreal. ‘Engrossing’ is not quite the word, perhaps, to apply to the absorbing occupation in which the clerk, Lionel Restigouche, was then employed at nine in the morning. A column of irregular lines, neatly written, extended down a fine sheet of bluish paper, which in no way resembled the parchment of a deed. At times, when Lionel’s hand stopped while an idea took shape, his eyes looked listlessly out of the half-opened window towards the Nelson column in Jacques Cartier Place. Then his expression would liven up, and his pen resume its course, while he gently swayed his head as if beating time to some regular rhythm.

Lionel was barely seventeen. His face, still almost feminine, was French in

type, and had a very pleasant expression; his hair was light and rather long, perhaps, and his eyes were as blue as the water in the Great Lakes. Though he had neither father nor mother, Mr. Nick might be said to be both to him, for the estimable lawyer was as fond of him as if he had been his own son.

Lionel was alone in the office. There was nobody with him, not any of the other clerks, who were out on business, not even a client, although Mr. Nick's office was one of the busiest in the town. And Lionel, feeling sure he would not be interrupted, was taking his ease, and he had just signed his name with a wonderful flourish below the last line on his page, when he heard himself spoken to:

‘What are you doing there, my boy?’

It was Mr. Nick, who had entered without Lionel's noticing him, so absorbed had he been in his unofficial work.

Lionel's first movement was to slip the paper in question under the blotting-pad, but the notary snatched away the suspicious document before the clerk could stop him.

‘What is this, Lionel?’ he asked. ‘An agreement? An engrossment? A copy of a contract?’

‘ Mr. Nick, believe me ...’

The notary had put on his spectacles, and, his brows knitted, he scanned the page in astonishment. ‘What is this?’ he exclaimed. ‘Lines all unequal! Margin all down one side! Margin on the other! So much good ink wasted, so much good paper wasted by these useless margins !’

‘Mr. Nick,’ answered Lionel, blushing to the ears, ‘ that came to me — by chance...’

‘What came to you— by chance?’

‘ The verses.’

‘The verses! You write your drafts in verse, do you? Is not prose enough for you to draught a deed in?’

‘That isn't a deed, if you please.’

‘What is it, then?’

‘It's a piece of poetry I've composed for the meeting of the Lyre-Amicale.’

‘The Lyre-Amicale!’ exclaimed the notary. ‘ Do you imagine, Lionel, that

it was for you to figure at the meeting of the Lyre-Amicale, or any other Parnassian conversazione, that I took you into my office? Was it for you to abandon yourself to these versifying gymnastics that I made you my clerk? Would it not have been better for you to spend your time canoeing on the St. Lawrence, or showing off your dandyism along the paths of Mont Royal or the Saint Hélène Park! Indeed! A poet in a notary's office! A clerk's head with a halo round it! Why, it's enough to frighten clients away!

'Please don't be angry, Mr. Nick,' Lionel spoke in a piteous tone. 'If you only knew how our melodious French language lends itself to verse! It lends itself so nobly to rhythm, cadence, and harmony. Our poets ...'

'Our poets do not fulfil the important functions of clerk that I know of. They are not paid — to say nothing of board and lodging— six dollars a month, and by me! They do not have to draw up contracts or wills, and they can Pindarize as much as they like !'

'Mr. Nick— this time...'

'Yes, this time you hoped to become the laureate of the Lyre-Amicale?'

'I did so foolishly presume ...'

'And may I ask what is the subject of this effusion? Probably some dithyrambic evocation to Tabellionope, the muse of the Perfect Lawyer!'

'No,' Lionel made a gesture of protest.

'Then what do you call your rhymes?'

'Will-o'-the-wisp.'

'Will-o'-the-wisp!' exclaimed Mr. Nick. 'Do you address verses to Will-o'-the-wisps?'

And probably the notary would have held forth on jinns, elves, brownies, goblins, water-sprites, and all the poetic figures of Scandinavian mythology, when the postman knocked at the door and appeared on the threshold.

'Ah! is that you, my friend?' said Mr. Nick. 'I took you for a will-o'-the-wisp.'

'A will-o'-the-wisp, Mr. Nick?' asked the postman. 'Do I look like one?'

'No; you look more like a postman who's brought me a letter.'

'Here it is, Mr. Nick.'

‘ Thank you !’

The postman retired just as, having caught sight of the handwriting, the lawyer at once opened the letter.

Lionel picked up his sheet of paper and put it in his pocket.

Mr. Nick read the letter very carefully; then he put it back in the envelope and looked at the postmark. The postmark was that of St. Charles, a small village in Verchères County, and the date was that of the previous day, 2nd September. After a minute’s thought, the lawyer returned to his philippic against the poets.

‘Ah, you worship the muses, Lionel? Well, as a punishment, you will accompany me to Laval, and you’ll have time on the road to hammer out your verses.’

‘Hammer them out, Mr. Nick?’

‘We must be off in an hour, and if we meet any will-o’-the-wisps, you can do the polite to them.’

With that the lawyer when into his private office, while Lionel prepared for the journey, which he did not find unpleasing. Perhaps he might succeed in giving his employer more accurate ideas about poetry in general and on the sons of Apollo — even when they’re lawyer’s clerks.

An excellent man was Mr. Nick, and much appreciated for the accuracy of his judgment and the value of his advice. He was then about fifty; his engaging expression, his large smiling face surrounded by a cluster of curly hair which had once been very black, but was now turning grey; his quick, cheerful eyes, his splendid teeth, his laughing lips, his pleasant manners, all went to form a very sympathetic personality. One further detail: under Mr. Nick’s welltanned skin it could be seen that Indian blood flowed in his veins.

This was so, and the lawyer did not seek to hide it. He was descended from the old natives of the country, those who possessed the soil before any Europeans had crossed the ocean to conquer it. There had been many marriages between the French and the Indians, and some leading Frenchmen even became the chiefs of Indian tribes.

Nick by descent was a Huron; that is to say, he came from one of the four chief families of the Indian race. Although he could have borne the resounding

name of Nicholas Sagamore, he was always known as Mr. Nick, and he was quite content with this.

His race was not extinct. One of his innumerable cousins was chief of the Redskins, and reigned over a Huron tribe in the north of Laprairie county, west of Montreal.

There is nothing strange about this in Canada. Quebec can boast many a worthy citizen whose birthright it is to brandish the tomahawk, and shout the war—cry of an Iroquois tribe. Happily, Mr. Nick did not belong to those perfidious Indians who have sided with the oppressors. No! Descended from the Hurons, who almost always supported the French, he had nothing to blush for. And Lionel, too, was proud of his master, the undoubted descendant of the great chiefs of North America, and he only waited for an opportunity to celebrate his deeds in verse.

At Montreal Mr. Nick, neither a French-Canadian nor an Anglo-American, had always preserved a prudent neutrality between the two political parties. And, as everybody respected him, everybody had recourse to his services. Any hereditary tendencies he might have, seemed to have undergone a complete change. Never had the warlike dreams of his face revived in him. He was only a lawyer — a perfect lawyer— placid and conciliating. And he seemed to have no desire to perpetuate the name of the Sagamores, for he had never taken a wife, and never thought of taking one.

Mr. Nick was preparing to leave the office in company with his second clerk. He would only be away a few hours, and his old servant Dolly would keep dinner waiting for him.

Montreal has become a great city. In its west lies the English quarter and that of the Scots, known locally as the ‘short petticoats’; in the east is the French quarter. The two races are the less inclined to mingle as nearly all the trade is in the hands of merchants of British origin, and this was even more true in 1837. That magnificent waterway, the St. Lawrence, assured the town’s prosperity, putting it in communication not only with the rest of Canada, but also with Europe.

Mr. Nick was very well off. But he was one of the old school of lawyers,

whose horizon is bounded by the four walls of their office, and who justify their claim to keep records by watching night and day over the contracts, minutes, and family papers confided to their care. So the descendant of the Sagamores lived in the old house on the Bon Secours marketplace; and it was thence that, on the morning of 3rd September, he set out with his second clerk to find a vehicle for his journey.

The vehicle he hailed was one of those two-horse affairs which the Canadians call ‘buggies.’ They are a kind of coach, hung on springs, as comfortable as possible, but very strong, and suited to the hardness of the roads. They can hold half-a-dozen travellers.

‘Eh! Mr. Nick!’ exclaimed the driver of the buggy, as he caught sight of the lawyer, who was always greeted with this cordial exclamation.

‘I myself, along with my clerk!’ Mr. Nick replied with his habitual good-humour.

‘Are you all right, Mr. Nick?’

‘Yes, Tom, and you ought to try and be as well as I am. You wouldn’t ruin yourself with physic ...’

‘Nor with physicians,’ added Tom.

‘When do we start?’ asked Mr. Nick.

‘Now.’

‘Anyone going with us?’

‘No one. yet,’ Tom replied, ‘but someone may turn up at the last moment.’

‘I hope so! I hope so, Tom! I like to talk as I travel, and when you want to talk I’ve noticed that it’s as well not to be alone.’

Mr. Nick’s wishes were apparently not to be satisfied this time. The horses were harnessed and Tom cracked his whip, but no traveller appeared.

The lawyer took the end seat, and Lionel sat down beside him; Tom gave a last look round, up and down the road, and then he mounted the box, gathered up the reins, whistled to his horses, and the noisy affair began to move, just as some passers-by, who knew Nick— and who did not know him, the worthy man? – wished him a pleasant journey, to which he replied by a wave with his hand.

The buggy went away uphill, towards Mont Royal. The lawyer looked to right and left with as much care as the driver, but for a different reason. Nobody seemed to be that morning going to the north of the island for him to have a chat with.

The vehicle had reached the circular promenade, and the horses were breaking into a trot, when a man waved the driver to stop. He sat down on the seat in front of Lionel, having first greeted Mr. Nick and his clerk. The buggy went off at a gentle trot, and a few minutes later was out of sight of the galvanized iron roofs of the houses of the town, which were shining in the sun like so many silvered mirrors.

The lawyer had seen the newcomer enter the vehicle with the most lively satisfaction. Now he could talk for the twelve miles that separated Montreal from the upper branch of the St. Lawrence. But the traveller seemed in no mood to indulge in polite conversation. He had glanced at Mr. Nick and Lionel, and then settled down in a corner, and, with his eyes half closed, he seemed to be absorbed in his reflections.

He was a young man, about twenty-nine years of age. With his slight figure, his energetic face, his resolute look, his manly features, his high forehead, and his dark hair, he was a typical French-Canadian. What was he? Where did he come from? Mr. Nick, who knew everybody, did not know him, and had never seen him before. Looked at closely, the young man seemed to have passed through much trouble, and to have been educated in the school of misfortune.

That the unknown belonged to the party agitating for national independence was obvious even from his dress, which was almost that of a backwoodsman. The cap he wore was a blue bonnet; buttoned across his chest was a sort of cape; and his trousers were of some coarse grey stuff, with a red sash round his waist. All the material was of local origin; the exclusive use of such material was in itself a political protest, as it excluded manufactured products imported from England. It was one of the thousand ways of defying the home authorities, and it was not without precedent — the Boston Tea-party.

Mr. Nick, however, as a neutral, wore trousers of Canadian make, and an

overcoat of cloth imported from England. But, in the patriotic clothing worn by Lionel there was not as much as a thread woven beyond the Atlantic.

The buggy rolled along over the rough road of Montreal Island, and long did the journey seem to Mr. Nick, who was naturally so loquacious. But, as the young man did not seem disposed to begin, Mr. Nick turned on Lionel in the hope that their travelling companion would end by joining in the conversation.

‘Well, Lionel,’ began he, ‘and how about this will-o’-the-wisp?’

‘The will-o’-the-wisp?’ asked the clerk.

‘Yes! I’ve got tired of looking for it, and so far I haven’t seen it.’

‘There’s too much daylight, perhaps,’ Lionel kept up the joke.

‘Perhaps if we sang the old song—

‘Come along cheerily, goblin queer! Come along cheerily, neighbour dear!’

But no — the goblin won’t answer. By-the-bye, Lionel, you know how to get away from the blandishments of will-o’-the-wisp?’

‘Certainly, Mr. Nick. All you have to do is to ask them what day of the month Christmas is; and, as they don’t know, you have time to escape while they’re thinking out an answer.’

‘I see you know the traditions. Well, until one of that sort gets in our way, suppose we say something about the one you’ve got in your pocket?’

Lionel blushed slightly.

‘You really want me to?’

‘Yes, my boy! It will pass a quarter of an hour or so.’

Then the lawyer turned to the other passenger —

‘You don’t object to a little verse, sir?’

‘Not at all,’ the passenger assured him.

‘It’s a piece of poetry that my clerk has composed for the meeting of the Lyre—Amicale. These fellows fight shy of nothing! Come on, my young poet, present your piece — as the gunners say!’

Lionel was only too pleased to have a listener who might be more indulgent than Mr. Nick. So he produced his paper and began to read: ‘THE WILL-O’-THE-WISP’ ‘A wayward flame that none can reach, That doth its nightly guard deceive, And in the darkening hours of eve, Nor on the wave, nor

on the beach. A trace behind doth leave. 'A flame so quick to fade and flee, In purple oft, and oft in white! To solve this mystery of light, The will-o'-the-wisp pursued must be And captured in its flight.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Nick; 'captured, and put in a cage! Go on, Lionel' — 'Is it a phantom from afar? Is it the hydrogen of the mire? Would that its origin were higher! Comes it not from a distant star? Algol, or Vega of the Lyre?'

'That's for you to say, my boy!' Mr. Nick nodded. 'That's your business!'

Lionel went on reading: 'To me, the soft and furtive breath Of sylph, or elf, or sprite, it seems, .As lightly float its fitful gleams, Whenslowly wakes the plain beneath The morning's golden beams. 'Is it the glimmer of the lamp Borne by the spectre, who would rest On the roof-ridge where the wine is press'd, When through the night-air chill and damp The moon floats manifest? 'Is it the spirit of a fay, That seeking, half concealed, What peace a wicked world can yield, Doth, like a gleaner, limp away, Finding but nothing in the field?' 'Perfect!' said Mr. Nick. 'Are you at the end of your descriptive comparisons?' Oh! No, Mr. Nick,' said the clerk.

And he continued: 'Is it the image of a form That all acknowledge fair Distorted by the troubled air? Or the last flash of the dying storm Traced by its lingering glare? 'Did it from the path escape, Traced by a falling meteorite That in its swift Icarian flight Was luminous, had weight, and shape, And vanish'd in the night? 'Still on its path shoots radiance forth; And pale reflections cling, And rays of mystery fling, Like the auroras of the north Light as a night-moth's wing!'

'What do you think of all this troubadourish jingle?' Nick asked his fellow-passenger.

'I think,' the stranger replied, 'that your clerk has imagination, and I'm curious to know what else he will compare his will-o'-the-wisp to.'

'Go on then, Lionel.'

Lionel had blushed at the young man's compliment, and with a clearer voice he read: 'Doth it glow in that hour of sighs When the living are a-bed, And the fluttering flag is spread, That the Angel of the Darkness flies In the memory of the dead?'

'Brrr!' exclaimed Mr. Nick. 'When night is clothed in her gloomiest robe,

And the given time is nigh, And hush'd is every cry, Is it the signal that the globe Sends upwards to the sky? 'And such a light as on ocean floats And, as the wandering spirits race Along their weary voyage through space, The harbours of the universe denotes And their lone resting-place?'

'Well done, young poet!' the stranger complimented him.

'Yes, not bad! Not at all bad!' said Mr. Nick. 'Where did you find all that, Lionel? That's all, I suppose?'

'No, Mr. Nick.' Lionel went on reading in a still more intense voice: 'But beware, dear maid, if in your eyes The light of love it seems ! Chase it from your dreams! That light to flame will never rise Brightly as it gleams!'

'A trap for the girls, indeed!' said Mr. Nick. 'I should have been much surprised if there had not been a little love in view in these anacreontics! After all, it's the usual thing at your age! What do you think, sir?'

'Quite so,' said the stranger; 'and I fancy that...'

The stranger stopped in the middle of the sentence at the sight of a group of men at the side of the road, one of whom was hailing the driver to stop.

The horses were pulled up and the men approached the vehicle.

'Mr. Nick, I believe !' said one of the men, lifting his hat.

'And Mr. Rip!' and the lawyer added in an undertone: 'We must mind what we're up to!'

Luckily neither Mr. Nick, nor his clerk, nor the detective had noticed the change in the stranger's face when Rip's name was mentioned. He grew pale, with the paleness not of fear, but of that inspired by some unsurmountable horror. He would obviously have liked to hurl himself on the man. But, turning away his head, he managed to control himself.

'Are you off to Laval, Mr. Lawyer?' asked Rip.

'As you see, Mr. Rip. Business will keep me there only an hour or two, and I hope to be back at Montreal this evening.'

'That's your business !'

'And what are you doing with your men?' asked Mr. Nick. 'Always in ambush at the expense of the government. Are you going to capture some of those scoundrels? There are plenty of them, for they multiply like weeds. It would be much better for them to turn honest men...'

‘That’s so. but they haven’t got the vocation for it.’

‘The vocation! You’re always joking, Mr. Rip! Are you on the track of some criminal?’

‘Criminal to some; hero to others. It all depends on the point of view.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘The presence in the island has been reported of the famous Jean-Sans-Nom...’

‘Ah! The famous Jean-Sans-Nom! Yes! The patriots have made him into a hero, and not without good reason! But her Gracious Majesty does not seem to be of the same opinion, or Gilbert Argall wouldn’t have put you on his track.’

‘That is so.’

‘And you say they’ve seen this mysterious agitator in Montreal Island?’

‘They say they’ve done so,’ said Rip. ‘But I’m beginning to doubt it.’

‘Well, if he ever did come here, he’s almost sure to have got away by this time,’ Mr. Nick replied. ‘He doesn’t stay very long in one place. Jean-Sans-Nora won’t be easy to get hold of.’

‘Quite a will-o’-the-wisp,’ the stranger smiled at the young clerk.

‘Good! Very good!’ exclaimed Mr. Nick. ‘Lionel, you ought to bow! And, by-the-bye, Mr. Rip, if you meet a will-o’-the-wisp on the road, will you please catch him by the collar, and bring him to my clerk? It will please the wandering flame to hear how he’s been treated by a disciple of Apollo!’

‘Certainly!’ said Rip. ‘If we don’t have to go back to Montreal, where I expect fresh instructions.’

Turning to the stranger, Rip continued:

‘And you’re accompanying Mr. Nick?’

‘As far as Laval,’ the stranger replied.

‘Where I am in a hurry to go, too,’ the lawyer added. ‘Goodbye, Mr. Rip! If I can’t wish you good luck, for the capture of Jean-Sans—Nom would be a sad blow for the patriots, I can at least wish you good morning!’

‘And I can wish you good day, Mr. Nick.’

As the horses resumed their trot, Rip and his men vanished round a turning in the road.

A few minutes afterwards, the notary said to the stranger, who was leaning

back in the corner:

‘I do hope Jean-Sans-Nom won’t let them catch him. They’ve been looking for him so long...’

‘And they will have to go on looking!’ exclaimed Lionel. ‘And that damned Rip will lose his reputation...’

‘Quiet, Lionel! That’s none of our business.’

‘This Jean-Sans-Nom seems used to outwitting the police!’ put in the stranger.

‘Just so, sir. If he’s ever taken, it will be a great loss to the French-Canadians.’

‘He won’t lack comrades, Mr. Nick, and he isn’t a man to let himself be taken.’

‘It doesn’t matter,’ the lawyer replied. ‘I’ve heard it would be a great pity. After all, I don’t take so much interest in politics as Lionel, and it is better not to talk about them.’

‘But,’ continued the young man, ‘we were interrupted when your clerk’s poetical inspiration ...’

‘He’s finished being inspired, I suppose?’

‘No, Mr. Nick!’ Lionel thanked the stranger with a smile.

‘What, not out of breath yet?’ exclaimed the notary. ‘Here’s a will-o’-the-wisp that was a sylph, an elf, a sprite, a spectre, a spirit, a phantom, a flash of lightning, a meteorite, a ray, a flag, a harbour-light, a spark of love, and I don’t know what else! What else can it be?’

‘I should like to know!’ said the stranger.

‘Then go on, Lionel, go on, and get to the end of it, if it has any end!’

Used to Mr. Nick’s pleasantries, Lionel again began to read: ‘Whate’er thou art, whate’er thy name, I would thy hidden projects know And share thy very thoughts: and so, Absorb’d in thee, mysterious flame, With thee would ever go. ‘When settling on the silent trees Your wide wings in the twilight loom; Or, in the graveyard’s darker gloom, Softly call’d by the whispering breeze To guard the marble tomb.’ ‘Sad, sad!’ the lawyer murmured. ‘Or where the seething billows race—The good ship driven on her side And by the tempest fiercely plied— With all a spectre seagull’s grace, About the labouring hull to

glide. 'A closer union could we claim If fate would heed the prayer I lisp, To make us one, my will-o'-the-wisp! To be born with you, my frolicsome flame! To die with you, my will-o'-the-wisp.'

'Ah! that's very good!' said Mr. Nick. 'That's the sort of ending that suits me. You might even sing it,' and he hummed the last few words. 'What do you say, sir?'

'Sir,' said the stranger. 'I hope the poet will accept all my compliments; and maybe win the prize at the meeting of the Lyre-Amicale. Whatever happens, his verses have enabled me to pass a very pleasant time, and never did a journey seem so short!'

Lionel was extremely flattered, and drank down the stranger's praise. And Mr. Nick was not at all displeased at the eulogiums addressed to his clerk.

Meanwhile the buggy had made good progress, and eleven had just struck when they reached the northern branch of the river.

About this time the first steam-boats had already appeared on the St. Lawrence. They were not very powerful or very swift, and they resembled the modern 'tugs' more than anything else.

In a few minutes the boat took Mr. Nick, his clerk and their fellow-passenger across the middle branch of the river, whose greenish waters were still mingling with the blackish waters of the Ottawa.

There they parted company, after many compliments and much hand-shaking. Then, while the stranger walked straight into Laval, Mr. Nick and Lionel turned off away from the town, towards the east of the island.