

## The Gibson Mansion

### Head Quarters

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### The Nashwaak

The Nashwaak--where Mister Gibson carries on his milling operations--cannot be called a beautiful piece of country; the landscape is not naturally attractive; it is not exactly the spot where any one, with an eye for the picturesque, would by choice fix upon as a place of residence. Nature there is rather rough, unkempt, and forlorn, yet the country has elements of beauty in its features, in its woods, in its steam flowing by high banks and winding down the flats. But that particular spot in the Nashwaak is an improvable place, and it fell into the right hand when Mister Gibson got possession of the Mills and the lands around. The Nashwaak has felt the impress of **his energy**, and it has been awakened into new life. He cannot alter the great features of the landscape around him, but he can modify them to a certain extent, and create beauty and sightliness where there was formerly deformity and desolation. Already he has done a great deal, but he has still further improvements in view. The old wind and weather blackened shanties, irregularly planted, are either pulled down or doomed to early destruction. He has placed a handsome school house on a height; on the bank of the river he has built himself a splendid house, a row of neat, well-finished cottages for people connected with his establishment, and a large handsome store; and on the further and high bank of the stream, he has begun to construct a row of nine commodious cottages (three of which are already nearly finished) for his millmen and work-people. All these improvements have been effected in the course of two or three years; in one or two more, when all the old tenements are cleared away, and the finish is put to the house now in progress and the grounds about it, and order is fairly brought out of irregularity, the place will be hardly recognizable as the Nashwaak of former days.

It is wonderful what one man of energy, means, and liberality--who loves order and has an eye for the beautiful--can do. . . . [illegible] beautify the face of the country, but he can alter the character of the people, by infusing into them a hopeful and energetic spirit.

Already Mister Gibson has made himself and the Nashwaak famous in the province, and his establishment is certainly now of the few lions in this part of the country. Visitors, while they will appreciate what Mister Gibson has done in the way of building school houses and cottages, will be most struck by the very elegant villa he has caused to be built for his own residence. **It is rather a bit of a surprise to meet such a mansion in such a place.** Mostly every one, we should think, has a wish to build a house for himself, or at any rate, has an idea in his head of what he considers the beau ideal of a mansion (though many, when they have an opportunity to give effect to their idea, make queer work of it). House building, then, may be considered a matter of general interest, and on that ground, we may be excused for attempting to give a rough description of Mister Gibson's house on the Nashwaak. It may be premised that Mister Gibson, in carrying out his idea, has spared no expense, and has given the architect, builder, painter and decorator, *carte blanche*. The architect is Mr. Stead of Saint John, and the builder Mr. Butler of St. Stephen.

The house stands on a somewhat elevated site, its back to the woods, and facing and looking down on the mill and stream, and over against the high but broken bank (along which will extend the row of millmen's cottages). This bank Mister Gibson intends, we hear, to sod down, and when that is done, there will be a very pretty prospect in front. The house is built on a very strong and solid foundation, and is approached by a short flight of ribbed free stone steps. The underground arrangements are admirable--the cellars might hold stores for a citadel. The large furnace is placed in the centre, and from it the house will be warmed by hot air pipes, making summer weather in the depth of winter.

The house is built in a composite order of architecture--but with a prevailing Gothic tone--in a villa style--a style which gives great scope to the fancy of the architect. Mr. Stead has produced a very elegant, well-proportioned building, and though there is a great deal of ornamentation about it, it does not look fanciful or bizarre. It is painted a fine brownish color--warm and comfortable--so much more pleasant to the eye than gayish white and green. The back premises and stables--all connected--being of a somewhat lighter hue. But the outside of the house, handsome as it is, hardly prepares one for the extreme lightness, airiness, and elegance of the interior, on which Mr. James Stewart of Saint John has lavished all his skill as an ornamental painter. The visitor, ascending the steps, passes through a short vestibule, with tessellated pavement (on each side of this vestibule there are doors leading on the verandah, that goes round the house) and enters the hall. Fortunately, the architect has not, in his desire to give size to the rooms, abridged the proportions of what is so essential to a handsome dwelling--a spacious hall. It is of fair proportions, and its effect airy and light. The ground of the wall is a beautiful bluish green hue, relieved and set off by lines and figures of brighter tints. The casements in the further end of the hall are Gothic arched with stained glass, representing flowers. To the centre of the hall, from the extreme height of the interior, light comes through the fine circular stained glass window, shining down the well hole, made by the geometrical staircase. The effect is very fine. On the left of the hall is the drawing room, 40 by 19 feet, not yet finished in the painting. ON it Mr. Stewart is lavishing all the resources of his skill and palette. It is divided in the centre by a pillared arch, giving the effect of two rooms in one. On the right, entering the hall, is the parlor, a handsome square room, the walls of which, divided into panellings, are of light tints, giving it an airy appearance. Towards the back is the dining room, the walls of which are of somewhat subdued hue, but with a very rich and loaded ceiling. Behind the dining room, with which it communicates--a large store-room, however intervening--by sliding panels--is a commodious and moderately appointed kitchen, with wash houses, etc. On the second, the bed-chamber floor, running to the front, there is a very handsome gothic hall, entered through an arch supported on pilasters (in the niches made by which there will be placed sculptured figures) and lighted by a gothic stained glass window. The rooms on this floor are all of a very handsome size, and the panellings, cornice work, and gothic centre pieces, finished and painted elaborately in varied and diverse colors and tints. Towards the rear is the library and smoking room, whose walls of of the subdued hues that befit such a sanctuary. We need go no further. The house to the attic is finished with equal care, though not with equal elaborateness. It is furnished with all the modern appliances--marble basins, with hot and cold water baths, laboratories, etc. The water to supply these is brought from a fine spring, half a mile up in the woods, through galvanized pipes laid in a trough. The grounds about are now in somewhat a rough condition, but the ornamentation of these is to be carried out as thoroughly as that of the house itself, and when finished, we hear, will include a fount and fishpond. Altogether this villa in the woods is a most elaborate dwelling, and we question if there is such another in the neighborhood of any of the larger cities in the provinces.