

The first eager look we anywhere direct is toward the fence, whereby the family horse should be hitched, and where on former similar occasions, we have been accustomed to find our father standing awaiting our arrival. They are not there; at least hardly recognizable in the unfamiliar rig we do see, and the dark-haired, swarthy young man beside it. "We have no one to meet us," has just been our regretful observation, when the young man aforesaid approaches smilingly and inquires if we recognize him. "Why, Alb—rt!" It is our youngest brother, whom we least expected to see. Memory holds the long-cherished image; imagination supplies no material wherewith to recompose it; but, in the meantime, the plastic years are busy, and the youth we parted with is transformed into the sturdy man we find. There are hurried enquiries, and there is a certain fluttered arrangement of ourselves in the carriage, and then we are riding up through Hantsport village and out into the country.

The streets have not so changed as to alter their general character, since the years when this was part of a romantic youth's roaming ground. Yet among the familiar residences—well embowered, snug and cleanly—there are new ones here and there; and others are so reconstructed as to be identified only by the sites they occupy. We look vainly for a glimpse down its sloping garden-path, to the old B—kw—th home, among its plum and apple trees; with its brook behind and its grassy lawn before it. If it be still there, buildings more recent obscure it from the view of the passer on the street. This was our house of dream in Hantsport.

Where is the sturdy old master of the "Burmah," whom every one respected, the much-ried and long-enduring man, whose physique resembled a stick of well-seasoned oak built into his good ship, and whose life was a careful boy's copy-book, kept clear of blots? And where is the highly-gifted, but less impeccable son, W—m; my romancer of the sea, with his hearty ha! ha! followed by a chuckling, purring, long-drawn underlaugh, and his "Foh-kee and Fan-qui," and "Running Down the Trades"? And where the mercurial, delicately-moulded wife, whose tastes were kindred and literary and in whose brief life sorrows were not few? Where are "the snows of yesteryear"?

One summer afternoon—it might have been in the week past—we sat in that front room, with the door open into the garden, talking with our host of poetry, criticism, travels, and especially his life in the east, which was always to us a fascinating subject of discourse. He was obese, dressed in a sort of white blouse, in easy East Indian style, and sat with memorials of his voyages about him, and pictures of his vessels on the walls, paintings by oriental artists, as plentiful there as are poets in America. Suddenly we heard the latch of the gate click. Be—kw—th looked out and exclaimed—"Joe Howe!" Sure enough, the old man was coming slowly down the path, cane in hand; and the brightest arm chair was made ready near the door to receive the great man's bulk, which was, in his age, not inconsiderable. After greetings he seated himself, wiped his face, for he was perspiring freely, and laid his hat upon the floor beside his chair. We have little memory of the subject matter of the conversation, save that it ran somewhat upon old political times and the worthies who

bore a part in colonial struggles; men who were in Howe's opinion, as compared to to-day's figures, of a heroic stature.\* We have in our memory a very vivid picture of the old man as he leaned forward in his chair, resting both hands on the top of his staff, and shifted his position occasionally, while he talked. A little later in the afternoon we listened to a brief address at the railway station, the last we were ever to hear from his lips.

When last we passed through this village, we came face to face with Dr. Silas Rand, the missionary, and collector of Micmac lore, then a venerable presence. Alas! he, too, is gone from the home we know so well, and where he wrought so worthily, and, for a time, so obscurely. Little we knew, in our commonplace ways, what manner of man he was, and of what extraordinary ability. Some man, of a tithe of his breadth and power, will come, all tricked out in spangles of style, and with the material he has discovered achieve a glittering reputation. But the man who labored to elevate a fading race, and who has preserved their language and literature, cannot be wholly forgotten in the years to come.

As we ascend the gradual slope to our South Mountain home, and the familiar house is almost in sight, our hearts beat a trifle quicker.

"The parted bosom clings to wonted home,  
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth."

We have already learned that all the family are at home, having arrived successfully during the past week, till we were the latest stragglers in. Now the fold door can be shut, when all the flock are there. We turn to our companion and ask her if this indeed is home. There is an old town by the sea, in a sister province, that for her sake we have felt to be "congenial earth;" for our sake shall not this be home to her—lonely, and remote as it may seem? When we turn aside from the great roaring world to this quiet scene, we recognize the pertinence of Longfellow's "distant, secluded, still." The seclusion is quite complete, and there is a Sabbath stillness the year long. The child of dreams that may hereafter be nourished here is likely to find it as favorable to long musing as did we; for now it seems a deeper solitude than in our period of childhood.

We surmount the home-hill. A prospect thus conformable to the largest and most generous expectation, and satisfactory to the most comprehensive eye. Yonder, Blomidon protrudes into the Basin of Minas; and here, below us, Avon (or Piziquid), debouches into it between an escarpment of dark-red banks; while beyond the scissors-like points of Cheverie, the blue shores of Cumberland lift and glow, with the Five Islands, and

"many another delitable sight."

But what wins our eyes like this little hamlet below us, we are in a moment to enter:—

\* An interview with Howe, at Government House, Halifax, shortly before his death, as described at the close of Campbell's History of Nova Scotia, gives some similar conversation: "He seemed delighted in recalling the scenes of former days in the House of Assembly. His eye was clear and his intellect bright." Of S.G.W. Archibald he said: "Yes, he was an able man—a man of commanding presence, and had a voice as clear as a bell." He described John Young Agricola as less ready in debate, but capable of working up his subject, and of power in delivery. "These were the men!" Howe exclaimed; but he showing signs of excitement, and in his weak state they being fearful of disquieting him, his visitors withdrew.

"Our father's home, our place of birth  
Where our glad childhood grew;"  
and the neighboring habitations. As we enter the village, eyes and faces full of kindly recognition appear at the windows and doors; till, before we have reached the gate of home, our two sisters come hastening to meet us, our father stands waiting to welcome us as we alight, and our mother is standing at the door. Why need we say more?

Surcease from care; let woe and pain depart;  
'Tis joy, when lip meets lip, and heart meets heart;

Peace, after turmoil; rest from wand'ring,  
when

We meet at home again.

Say not that they are absent, whom we knew,  
Who loved us well, and who to us were true;  
Talk not of that far distant, silent shore,—  
We all are here once more.

We all are here; their forms we cannot see;  
Yet let us hold, as dear reality,  
That they who other realms than ours may  
room,  
Have all, with us, come home.

This is our father's house—this scene so fair;  
Yet Faith hath said—our Father's house is  
there:

Then Heaven and Earth, be ye one blissful  
seat,  
Till we at home may meet!

O gracious and congenial souls! to-day  
Let us put care and sorrow far away;  
Let this content, and fill us with delight—  
We all are home to-night.

As we sit at supper, another brother makes his smiling appearance, who has been absent all day, coasting about Cornwallis, Canning and the North Mountain on his wheel. He is full of the day's adventures, and of meetings and greetings and hailings of old friends; he is also redolent of ozone and woody odors; and his fluent and pointed speech is the outcome of a more wholesome stimulant than wine. Our rider congratulates himself upon having no need of a hostler; upon being able to leave his unsweated and unwearied steed at the door, and find it in an hour, as free and serviceable as when he mounted it in the morning.

With the next morning, being unable to ride the wheel, we climb to the summit of the hill, that we may see the familiar scene in its first glow and freshness, as we have seen it so many times. We cross the pasture where laurel once abounded more than now, and sweet-smelling mints, and where mulley swung her bell when we came home behind her in the summer evenings. An indication of the changes that occur in a landscape within a single life-time, is found in the partial obliteration of the wood we were once accustomed to visit and the drying up of a swamp that intervened between our father's house and the hill-top. The prospect from this place I have attempted in some earlier descriptive verses:

Back to the scenes, the friends I knew,  
In that sweet season of delight  
When skies put on a holier hue,  
And suns arise with gladder light;—  
Back to the grove that crown'd the hill,  
Where Music dwelt the livelong day.

Fair spot! where Fancy first awoke,  
And touch'd with hand divinely bold,  
Transforming all by magic stroke  
My infant eyes did first behold!  
Ah, in that glow, what joy was mine,  
Neath morn or midnight's splendid sky!