

A Tale of Acadia.

Almost hidden 'neath the branches of some tall and stately trees,
Bending low and swaying wildly in the stormy autumn breeze,
Stood a pretty English cottage, ivy wreathed and painted white,
Resting sometimes in the shadows, sometimes shining in the light.
All without was dark and gloomy, boisterous wind and driving rain,
Beating like some angry demon 'gainst the library window pane;
But within that pretty cottage there was naught of chill or gloom,
Firelight dancing o'er the bookshelves, easy chairs and plants in bloom.
Seated low before the firelight, dreamy eyes and thoughtful brow,
Sat a lady gently rocking in the pleasant ruddy glow.
Presently the door was opened, brown eyes spied the slender form,
Drew a low seat near her mother's, vanished thoughts of wind and storm.
"Mother, dear, 'tis just the hour for the tale you promised me
Of your school days at Acadia in that land beyond the sea,
Ere you sailed from Nova Scotia for our own dear English shores.
Open now your memory's casket, give me of its bounteous stores.
"Yes, my darling," said the mother, "I'll recall those happy days,
'Tho' some clouds as well as sunshine will reward my backward gaze;
And the pictures have been hanging for so long on memory's wall,
That some parts are dim and faded, loth to come at memory's call;
Yet a few scenes stand out strongly, scarcely dimmed by time's swift flight,
Scenes of rarest shades of beauty, shadows mingling with the light.
Still I see the spacious building standing high upon the hill
Overlooking Minas Basin, fed by river and by rill.
Thro' the windows looking northward stretching far as eye can see,
Hill and valley, dale and woodland, rivers flowing o'er the lea;
To the north across the water Blomidon rears its stately head.
Misty home of fabled Glooscap, sombre guardian of the dead;
Farther still and scarce distinguished from the water's azure hue
Lies another chain of mountains softly blending blue with blue;
Winding eastward thro' the valley like a tiny silver thread
Flows the river of Cornwallis with its banks of deepest red,
Over which each slender sapling stoops to catch its mirrored face,
While the branches rustle softly as tho' conscious of their grace.
Just below the Seminary lies the pretty thriving town,
On its shady streets paraded College cap and flowing gown.
For a little to the westward of our Seminary home
Acadia College raises proudly to the skies her rounded dome.
Still again another picture, full of clouds and shadows grey,
'Tis a modest country farm-house in that land so far away.
In that home an only daughter budding into womanhood,
In her eyes a nameless longing, in her mind a thirst for food.
Yes, my child, the great desire of my girlish heart had been
Of a thorough education, dreamed of o'er and o'er again.
But as yet a dream 'twas only, times were hard and I must wait;
Perhaps sometime if I were patient I might enter learning's gate.
Ah! if then I'd only trusted in my Father's tender care
He would lighten every trial, would my every burden bear.
But as yet the light of heaven had not shone upon my way.
So I struggled blindly onward more unhappy every day,
When at length there came a letter in a pretty unknown hand,
Stating that a course of study at Acadia had been planned,
And that it would cost me nothing, that I must at once prepare
For a journey up to Wolfville, to the Seminary there.
Ah! dear child, how happy was I on that bright September day,
As the train sped swiftly onward bearing hearts both sad and gay.
Thus began my course of study, lasting through four happy years,
Years so full of joy and sunshine, tho' with smiles oft mingled tears.
In my course at dear Acadia God's hand led me all the way,
Long before I joined his people on that happy, blissful day,
When the dear old white haired pastor laid me 'neath the rippling stream,
Flowing thro' the fertile valley beautiful as any dream.
Week by week I gained in knowledge, day by day my interest grew,
Always learning something useful, something wonderful and new;
Diving deep into the mysteries of Virgil's active mind,
Scanning numerous knotty problems, some solution there to find,
Living in the page of history England's story o'er again,
Striving hard to write an essay with both intellect and pen;
When in music too I revelled, finding in it great delight,
Practised scales and exercises, as a battle I must fight,
Ere I gained the power to interpret the great dreams of master minds,
Hear the rolling of the tempest and the sighing of the winds;
Many pleasant, happy hours in the studio I spent,
Bending o'er a piece of canvas on some picture deep intent,

As I worked beneath the guidance of a teacher's skillful hand,
On a scene of simple beauty, or a landscape wild and grand.
Then the girls, what dear companions did we find among them all,
Sauntering in school-girl fashion arm in arm along the hall,
And what pleasure we experienced in measuring mind with mind,
Who should be the first in solving some solution hard to find.
One dear girl among the others was my true unswerving friend,
Often for a cosy hour to the reading room we'd wend;
There we pondered over questions that in school-girl life arise,
In that hour when earth is silent and the fading twilight dies.
From those hours of sweet communion noble thoughts and actions grew.
Each was strengthened by the other all life's battles to renew.
So our friendship grew and deepened as each school day passed away,
As in spring the sun gains power as it rises day by day.
And the teachers, wise and patient, skillfully leading us along,
Thro' the paths of art and science 'mid the busy, happy throng,
Ploughing up the soil of dull mind ready for the fertile seed,
Filling with new aspirations, with new consciousness of need,
Finding in some stupid scholar sparks of genius hid from sight,
Fanning them by love and kindness to a clear and shining light,
Drawing out the latent powers, waking up the sleepy mind,
Fitting us for life's duties with an interest true and kind.
So the years passed swiftly onward; they were happy, busy years,
Tho' the loss of both dear parents cost me sad and lonely tears.
In those years of earnest study still one name I had not learned,
For that knowledge more than ever then my aching heart had yearned.
Oft at night I lay and wondered what that name unknown could be,
And amid my dreams and fancies some sweet face I seemed to see.
One more picture I see clearly hanging still on memory's wall,
Just above the lengthening shadows where the sunbeams longest fall,
'Tis a scene of light and beauty, eager faces, music's strain,
Girlish voices singing softly to a low and sweet refrain,
Skillful fingers flying swiftly o'er the white and glistening keys,
Rendering parts now bright and sparkling, now like zephyrs in the trees.
Just in front were seven maidens, clad in robes of softest white,
Standing just upon life's threshold on their graduation night.
Presently all was over, the last essay had been read,
Each received her roll of parchment, and the parting words were said,
Then the parents sought their daughters from among the white robed band.
I alone was sad and silent, yearning for a vanquished hand.
As my thoughts flew swiftly backward, tears unbidden filled my eyes,
When my hand was greatly taken, and I looked up in surprise.
There before me was my dream face, loving glances met my own,
Silvery hair waved o'er the forehead, in the voice a tender tone,
'I congratulate you, Elsie, on your great success tonight.
So you see I know your name dear, tho' perhaps I have no right
To come suddenly upon you ere I have explained it all,
But I know tonight you tired, in the morning I will call
And relate my little story, so till then good-night my dear,'
And she left me, sad no longer, vanished every truant tear.
The next morning, bright and early saw us seated side by side
In a cosy alcove window, looking o'er the landscape wide.
'Elsie, dear, four years last evening my own Elsie went to rest,
As the sun was slowly sinking in the lovely, golden west.
She had passed her sixteenth birthday and had planned with eager heart
For a thorough course of study, both in literature and art,
When that dread disease, consumption, took her bright young life away.
Took from mine its golden sunshine, leaving naught but shadows gray.
In her last long lingering illness, she made known the wish to me
Of her loving, noble nature, bearing pain so patiently.
'Twas that I should find a maiden with a longing deep and true
For a thorough course of study, and that I should put her through
Some good seat of education, paying all expenses there,
One whose parents were not able to take in them any share.
Well, dear Elsie, when my bud had gone on high to bloom with God,
Roy, my son, thought best to take me for a little trip abroad.
We were then in dear old England; so a few weeks from that day
Saw us safe in Nova Scotia, near a pretty sunny bay.
Elsie's wish was ever with me, so I asked our Father's aid
To help me find one worthy for this blessing to be laid.
Well, one day as I was walking down a pretty country road,
With the air so sweet and fragrant from the grass just newly mowed,
There I met a country lassie, in the depths of whose brown eyes

Lay a well of hopeless longing, which some hidden spring supplies.
As I passed the thought came quickly,—here is one whom God has sent,
And, to find if I thought rightly, to a neighboring friend I went.
There I learned your heart's desire, one that I could gratify,
So I wrote that little letter just before we said good-bye,
For my son's vacation ended, and we needs must sail that day,
So, when you received it later, we were many miles away.
Thro' these years I've watched your progress, even with a mother's eye,
For the sake of that dear daughter who so early went on high.
When I learned of your bereavement, both your parents dying, dear,
I resolved I would adopt you, if the way should be made clear.
Now, your course of study over, I have come to take you home.
Will you come with me dear Elsie, will you be my very own?
Ah, dear child, that was the dearest, sweetest moment of my life.
Only when a few years later I became Roy's happy wife,
There is not more to tell dear. When the time of parting came,
When our school-girl ties were severed, hearts were filled with grief and pain.
Ah! how hard it was to part with that true, noble, earnest friend,—
Even now, we write each other; such a friendship knows no end.
She, dear girl, with her dear husband, toils on "India's coral strand,
Bearing Christ's own blessed tidings, to that long-benighted land.
Twenty years have glided swiftly, bringing more of joy than pain,
Tho' the chords of life sound deeper, with perhaps a minor strain.
But, my dear, the storm is over. See, the evening bright and fair
And the lengthening rays of sunset fall across your nut-brown hair.
Hark! I hear your father's foot-steps coming up the garden walk,
He'll be weary with these hours spent among his little flock.
At that moment grandma entered, with her simple, queenly grace,
Time had scarcely left a shadow on her sweet and peaceful face.
In her eyes shone love and kindness, snow-white hair now crowned her head,
Just behind her came the father, with his firm and manly tread.
As they gathered round the fireside, in the cheerful, ruddy glow,
They recalled, with quiet pleasure, many scenes of long ago.
And as evening shadows, deepening, veil the last faint light of day,
We will gently draw the curtain and steal silently away.
Wolfville, N. S. —MABEL V. JONES.

The Atmosphere One Carries.

Nature's forces carry their atmosphere. The sun gushes forth light unquenchable; coals throw off heat; violets are larger in influence than bulk; pomegranates and spices crowd the house with sweet odors. Man also has his atmosphere. He is a force-bearer and a force-producer. He journeys forward, exhaling influences. Thinking of the evil emanating from a bad man, Bunyan made Apollyon's nostrils emit flames. Edward Everett insists that Daniel Webster's eyes, during his greatest speech, literally emitted sparks. If light is in man, he shines; if darkness rules, he shades; if his heart glows with love, he warms; if frozen with selfishness, he chills; if corrupt, he poisons; if pure-hearted, he cleanses. The soul, like the sun, has its atmosphere, and is over against its fellows, for light, warmth and transformation. This mysterious bundle of forces called man, moving through society, exhaling blessings or blightings, gets its meaning from the capacity of others to receive its influences. Standing at the centre of the universe, a thousand forces come rushing in to report themselves to the sensitive soul-centre. There is a nerve in man that runs out to every room and realm in the universe. Man dwells in a glass dome; to him the world lies open on every side. Each man stands at the centre of a great network of voluntary influence for good. Rivers, winds, forces of fire and stream are impotent compared to those energies of mind and heart that make men equal to transforming whole communities and even nations.—D. N. Hillis.

The choice for or against God, is one which can not be held in reserve. The call is to immediate decision; "Choose you this day." Here is where multitudes fail, and lose the blessing of life. They admit the importance of religion. They are free to say that the service of God is better than the service of the devil. They know that there is danger in delay and that the duties and the blessings of the service of God belong to the present time; but when brought to the point, and urged to follow Jesus, they answer, "Well, I'll think about it."

The Popular Science News says that "if, after eating pure food, fresh, out-door air is breathed, the blood will show a large increase in red corpuscles, but by drinking stimulants, the red disks are decreased in serious proportions."