



INTERESTING WOMAN OF MANY INTERESTS

By A NOVA SCOTIAN

AT Grand Pre, Nova Scotia, famous as the scene of Longfellow's "Evangeline," and in later years the birth-place of our present Prime Minister, Sir Robert Laird Borden, there lives a wonderfully clever woman, Miss Annie M. Stuart. She is related through both her parents to the Premier, and her home is but a few hundred yards from his early home.

Two brothers, William and Robert Stewart inherited a large and valuable property from their aunt, Miss Nellie Laird, a Scotch lady of great executive ability and unfailing gentleness of heart, which qualities have been transmitted in an abundant measure to her grand niece, the heroine of our sketch. William Stewart lived in the homestead which is now one hundred and thirty years old, and occupied by his son, William, the eldest of a family of eleven sons and one daughter.

The parents were naturally very indulgent to their one little girl, and the big brothers would gladly have enshrined her as a little saint had she been acquiescent, but she preferred riding the horses bare-back with her flying mop of curly hair for a halo. When she was fourteen years of age diphtheria entered the home and four of the brothers were taken. Soon after this her father became involved in financial difficulties through no fault of his own. His final collapse came through indorsing notes for those whom he trusted as friends, but who allowed him to impoverish himself and family to meet their obligations. Mr. Stewart did not long survive this disappointment; thus, at an early age, the daughter came face to face with financial necessity. What remained of the once large farm was bought in at Sheriff's Sale by the brothers.

Miss Stuart was at this time sixteen years old. Her wild spirits and inattentive ways had made her the despair of her teachers, but, nevertheless, she always managed to pass her exams., so now she was in a position to earn her own livelihood by teaching. After a term or two this was not considered advisable as it took her away from her home where her mother's failing health necessitated her presence. She obtained the position of village post-mistress, and she also worked up a little business in stationery and small wares. A few years after this she obtained a position as clerk in the Registry of Deeds Office at Kentville, ten miles from Grand Pre, going thither each morning by railway train and returning at 5 p.m., in this way still maintaining oversight of the dear mother who was her chief care and thought.

A few months after entering this office, the Registrar died, and, pending a new appointment, Miss Stuart was sworn in as deputy-registrar, an error in

spelling changing her name from "Stewart" to "Stuart." When asked, as she often is, why she spells her name differently from her brothers, she laughingly says that every woman wants to change her name at some time in her life, and that was the best she could do.

A new Registrar was in due time appointed; his qualification being his devotion to his party. Two years later he died without having scarcely more than inscribed his autograph in the books of his county. This left the position again vacant, and, as there were so many political aspirants for the office, the fair deputy was left in undisputed possession of the premises and the emoluments for years. And it is to the discredit of the party in whose disposition the office lay that she was never officially appointed Registrar.

After twenty-one years of faithful, efficient service, she was deposed in the most unconventional way. One fine morning a year ago, a gentleman carrying an official looking bag called at the Registry Office and introduced himself as the newly appointed Registrar. Miss Stuart had received no notice of any change. A vestige of respect is left for those responsible, when one considers that they were possibly too well ashamed of the miserable part they were playing to communicate with Miss Stuart at all, and so kept well in the background. If an enemy had done it, it might have been less humiliating, but it was her own familiar friends in whom she trusted. There were rumblings of dissent from all parts of the county, and from members of both political parties, for Miss Stuart is held in high esteem by every man, woman and child in her district. Had it not been for her very decided disapproval a public protest would have been formulated, but her loyalty to her party, stimulated by her sense of personal dignity, forbade it. Her successor, very magnanimously, offered her a clerkship in his employ, which was declined.

Fortunately, Miss Stuart had other interests outside the Registry Office. She had been for years the trusted adviser of many women whose business knowledge was inadequate to their responsibilities. She could convey land, make out mortgages, write wills and had been interested in the stock market for years.

As a young girl her first earnings were devoted to paying off the mortgages on her father's property. After the mother's death a cousin came to live with her, and never were two women happier in each other's friendship than are they. The cousin is the housekeeper and the home-maker, a confidential, sympathetic other-half, and Miss Stuart ascribes much of her success to her happy home life. A few years ago she built a handsome new residence for herself, from which is dispensed a beautiful hospitality, leaving "Basil Terrace," the old homestead in her brother's charge. From this centre she conducts a flourishing brokerage business. She has had flattering inducements offered her from firms in the large centres, but she prefers life in the lovely village of Grand Pre, overlooking the broad dike lands, Blomidon beyond, and the turbulent tide of the Basin of Minas. More material interests also anchor her here. She owns two large orchards, both with modern residences, a seaside cottage, and a few years ago, a school house and a Presbyterian Church formed a part of her real estate.

The history of that old Presbyterian Church, a story in itself, is too long to tell here. But she is the mainspring of this church, and, in addition, is the director of the choir in the parent church at Wolfville, four miles distant. She has a rich contralto voice and is also a violinist of some merit.

Miss Stuart superintends her orchards and farming interests personally, and it is a very active supervision. Her workmen treat her with greatest respect and deference, as her opinions on drainage, fertilizers, sprays and the apple problem, generally are quite as reliable as her judgment of the Stock market.

Miss Stuart's interests are not bounded by her personal horizon. She is president of the Women's Institute, an active member of the Agricultural Society, has been for two or three years Road Surveyor in her own district, and during the season when road repairing is in progress, she is seen every day driving around, advising and superintending the men; and it is granted on all sides that she gets more and better work done than any of her

predecessors. Her interest in good roads is a somewhat personal one, as she drives her own automobile. She has recently been appointed a member of the School Board, and in the good time coming it will surprise no one, unless it be herself, if she is sent to our local legislature to represent our county.

Miss Stuart's office consists of a roll-top desk in the corner of the front hall of her home. The only masculine thing about her is the wild confusion of its contents and her abhorrence of any feminine interference in that vicinity. And now my story's over. Like one of Will Carleton's, "much of it never breathed the air before." Maritime people, as a rule, are too much inclined to hide their lights under bushels. The world does not hear of them until Ontario, the West, or one of the United States discovers that some Bluenose body is in a fair way to achieve greatness, and in an appreciative way they decoy them to themselves. It was feared a year ago that we were to lose Miss Stuart, but we are thankful that we have her still. From this narrative it might reasonably be supposed that she is a lady advanced in life. She has not reached the half century mark by a number of years. She is healthy and happy; the sunshine of her smile is an inspiration to many a tired heart, and it is not by smiles alone that she helps, as many can testify. Many daughters have done "virtuously," but she is one that "excels."

SHINING MILESTONES IN HER CAREER

By EDITH G. BAYNE

WHEN her friends learned, the other day, that Miss Annie R. Gray, for the past four years Assistant-Secretary of the Ottawa Young Women's Christian Association, had been appointed General Secretary in the Capital, remarkably little surprise was expressed. They who had known her longest always felt that she was predestined for a high office. Yet probably never in the annals of Association work in Canada has so youthful a leader been chosen to preside over the welfare of such a very important branch of this, the biggest women's organization in the world.

But it is youth that the world demands—youth with its high ideals, its keen enthusiasms, its warm sympathies, and these have always been the most outstanding qualities of this clear-eyed young woman who is at the helm in the "Y" at Ottawa. The members of the Board are to be commended for their discernment in selecting her for this arduous and responsible post. She will not disappoint them.

Miss Gray's career has been marked by a succession of shining milestones. She is a native of Montreal, but has spent the greater part of her life in Pembroke, Ontario—a thriving town on the upper Ottawa, noted for its lumbering industries, its Petawawa blueberries, its Scotch Presbyterians, its excellent fishing, and a certain far-from-the-madding-crowd atmosphere better felt than described. Even in her early school days she had a way of gathering in honours with the utmost ease, and it's hardly necessary to say that when she left High School it was with

honour matriculation. She proceeded to McGill University, from which she graduated with first-class honours and the degree of B.Sc.—a distinction known to but few women in Canada. At Royal Victoria College she was prize essayist of the Delta Sigma Literary Society.

Always a studious girl, with a great deal of quiet strength of character, a girl in whom any appeal in the nature of social service found a ready champion,

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