

## The Land of the Maple.

BY W. WYF SMITH.

HAIL to the merry maple,  
And the hills where the maple grows;  
The hills that hold no tyrants,  
And the hills that fear no foes,  
Where the green grain grows and the sun  
foretells  
The harvest soon to be:—  
I would not give that Maple Land  
For all the lands I see.

Hail to the merry maple  
And the feast and the fireside chair!  
Where hearts were warm as embers,  
And the stranger welcomed there;  
Where the white-winged waft of the feathery  
snow  
Made all seem bright within;  
O I would not give that maple fire  
For all cold Wealth could win.

Hail to the merry maple  
And the flag where the maple flies,  
And still unstained and glorious  
May it bless Canadian eyes!  
And the march men make, with that flag  
above,  
Be such as heroes show;—  
O, I would not give that maple flag  
For all the flags I know!

## A BOY'S FRIENDSHIP.

A Story of Boy Life in England.

## CHAPTER V.

A FOOLISH SON IS THE HEAVINESS OF HIS MOTHER.



**TROUBLE** tries everybody. It is like the strong wave which carries a man out of his depth, and makes him clutch at anything to keep himself up. But if he has a good life-belt on there is little cause for fear—he will not sink, because he is held up.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the "able to save" to the uttermost was Frank's comfort now, and that of his mother too, for he had told her all about his trouble. With that loving sympathy which is natural to a mother, she had kissed the boy, and cheered him up. Mrs. Darrell had known too much of the deep waters of trial not to know where to go for strength and guidance at a time like the present.

Kneeling together in their little parlour that night, Frank and his mother carried their care to the un-failing Saviour, who ever proves a Rock of Ages, sure and steadfast, to all who shelter in him.

As the boy laid his head on his pillow, all the irritation against the false George Christie, which had for a time vexed his mind, had passed like a shadow, and the sunny sense of freely forgiving for Christ's sake closed his eyes in happy and peaceful slumber.

The light of the morning summoned him to fresh trials of faith.

Captain Starkie sat in his library in no enviable mood. He was not a harsh man naturally, but his temper had been greatly tried. One of his favourite hounds had been poisoned by some unknown enemy, and was

found lying in the shrubbery at the back of the hall by one of the stablemen that very morning. His letters by post, too, were not very cheering; some of his friends from London had written to say they could not visit him as arranged; and a short business-like note informed him that a ship, of which he was part owner, had gone to the bottom. "Altogether a pretty state of things," he said to himself, with his eyes on the carpet; "everything seems to be going wrong, enough to vex a saint—and I am afraid that name would hardly fit me just now."

He got up and walked to and fro about the room, pulling his heavy moustache, and pushing his iron-grey locks from his forehead. His eyes unluckily fell upon Frank's fishing-rod lying in the corner.

"Ah! by the way that reminds me. I'll put a stop to this trespassing and fish poaching, or my name's not Tom Starkie. The young rascals!"

A knock came to the door.

"Come in!" shouted the Captain.

"If you please, sir, there's young Master Darrell waiting to see you, sir."

"Send him up, boy, send him up!"

And the boy in buttons seemed amazingly glad to close the door again, and make his way down the staircase three steps at a time. Arriving at last on the mat, this young gentleman volunteered a piece of advice to the visitor.

"The governor's a bit rough this morning, Master Frank. If I was you I'd make your business as short as you can, and keep a clear path towards the door if anything happens."

"I'm afraid, Jimmy, my visit will be a disagreeable one for us both."

"Then I pity you, that's all. But I tell you what, I'll leave the course clear for you if you want to get out in a hurry, and you needn't be afraid of coming down the staircase two or three at a time, especially as that mat's wonderfully soft at the bottom."

Frank smiled, and thanked the lad; and then, with the colour fast flying from his face, and a prayer in his heart, he passed into the presence of Captain Starkie.

"Come in, and shut that door after you, boy. I don't want everybody to hear what we say."

"I understand, sir, you wish to see me."

"I should think so. 'Pon my word, when I think what a good character you have always had in the village, and how different you are to the boys about you, I can't for the life of me make out why you should be so foolish."

"I have done nothing, sir, that I should be ashamed of."

"Well, that depends on what you think right and wrong. For my part, boy, I say trespassing on other people's property is rascally, and fishing in the preserved streams without permission is simply thievish."

"So do I, sir; but I am not guilty of doing either, I can assure you."

"Nonsense, boy. Why, here's your rod, with your name cut fair and clean on it."

Frank took up the treasured rod, and, as he spoke, began to rub off the mud which clung to it.

"I do not deny that this is my rod, Captain Starkie; but how it got into the Church Meadows I know no more than you do."

The Captain paused to look Frank straight in the face, but those blue eyes never flinched. The conscience void of offence is always sure to steady a boy or man under suspicion.

"Frank Darrell, I have never had occasion to suspect you before, and I ask you, solemnly, do you or do you not know anything about this business?"

"On my honour, as God sees me and hears my word, Captain, I know nothing at all beyond what Grimston has told me."

"That will do. One word more and you can go, boy. As I acquit you of all blame, I shall expect you to do all you can to help me to catch that young scoundrel Christie, who, if I mistake not, meant to make you suffer for his mean conduct."

With these words the Captain let Frank out, and he, stepping down the stairs with a light and thankful heart, nearly fell over the sympathetic Jimmy, who was waiting his return.

When he once more got into the fields he gave glory to God, and out of the fulness of his heart, sang the praises of his Lord:—

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green: he leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.

"My soul he doth restore again;  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteousness,  
Even for his own name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk through death's dark  
vale,  
Yet will I fear no ill:  
For thou art with me; and thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.

"My table thou hast furnished  
In presence of my foes;  
My head thou dost with oil anoint,  
And my cup overflows.

"Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me:  
And in God's house for evermore  
My dwelling-place shall be."

Days passed, and there were no signs of the missing culprit. It soon became weeks, and still no sign, and things did not look very bright in the Squire's house.

It seemed at first such a trivial thing for his son George to run away for, especially as the Captain, in an after-thought of kindness, had promised that the thrashing given by the gamekeeper should be deemed a sufficient punishment. But, unhappily, as time went on, evidence of other misdoings caused the brow of the Squire to darken, and finally he vowed

that the lad should never cross his threshold again.

It was the old story: the stealing of the rod and his poaching in the Church Meadows was not his first offence. For some time he had deceived his father in many ways, and now the cheque-book showed that money had recently been abstracted from the bank by the forgery of his name, and with this, no doubt, George had made his escape.

"The young villain! This is all the return I am to get for the money I've spent on his education, and all I have done for him!"

"Nay, don't be too hard on the boy, John; he may come back yet, and beg your forgiveness."

It was George's mother speaking, with tears in her eyes, to the indignant man.

"Then I shall show him the door, and tell him to pay his debts before he comes to me."

"Oh, don't be so unmerciful! Is he not our son—our flesh and blood?"

"Yes! And that makes me so wild about it. Here I've kept my head up all these years, and borne a name that any man would be glad to have. Now it is to be dragged in the dirt by this young scapegrace."

The poor woman saw it was useless to argue the matter; her husband was one of those self-righteous people who think a great deal more of their reputation and their feelings than what God must think of the evil-doer.

"Well, well, John, we have all of us something to be sorry for and much to be forgiven; and for my part I shall try, with my boy above all others, to ask God to forgive my trespasses, as I forgive the poor lad that has trespassed against me."

Against this position there was, of course, nothing to be said. The Squire would have liked, in his heart of hearts, to have patted her cheek, and said he was sorry for what he had said, and would follow her good example; but his pride would not let him, and, taking up his hat, he walked from the room without saying a word.

And George's mother, very heavy-hearted and anxious, watched her husband striding down the highway, and hoped in her heart that if ever her boy did come back it would be to meet her first, for she felt sure that he would only be driven away again if his father met him in such a spirit.

In her prayers George was never forgotten. Many a time when no one saw but God, she knelt in her bedroom, and begged, with falling tears, that guidance might be given to the erring steps of her child.

"Should she ever see him again," rang in her heart like a muffled bell as she went about her daily duties, and the empty-handed days passed without any news, or the sound of his footfall on the gravel path, for which she waited in vain.

(To be continued.)