

## THERE'S ROOM ENOUGH.

## A CANADIAN CHRISTMAS TALE.

IT had snowed incessantly for three days. The fall had at last ceased, but had, as is so commonly the case in Canada, been succeeded by a stormy wind, as bitterly cold as it was violent. The drift had completely covered everything, and the line of fence around Harry Whittaker's farm could not be distinguished by its slight elevation above the common level of the clearance. Every vestige of a path had been obliterated and the snow was piled high against the sides of his house. The stars, however, were now shining brightly, but the wind howled fearfully as it drove the clouds, which the storm left behind, past the moon.

It was Christmas Eve, and Harry sat alone before the log fire, which was blazing upon the hearth. He had but lately returned from a weary drive through the drifted snow to the residence of his nearest neighbour, Mrs. Armstrong. The journey had been attended with much difficulty, but the need was urgent, and braving the biting blast and the dangers of the almost impassable road, he had safely reached his destination, and returned accompanied by his neighbour. Mrs. Armstrong had at once assumed complete control of his establishment, and just as the captain of a ship entering a foreign port obeys the pilot whose foot has barely touched the deck, so was Harry compelled to yield implicit obedience to this good woman.

But what was the occasion which rendered it compulsory upon Harry to yield for the time his authority, and consent to assume a second position in his own house? Come nearer, gentle reader, and I will whisper it in your ears. Harry and his pretty wife, Mary, had been married somewhat more than a year; they had left the old country and their old friends; they had settled in the back woods, and now—a little stranger from baby-land was hourly expected.

Harry had been banished to the outer room of the hut (it boasted two apartments) and Mrs. Armstrong had aroused his indignation by telling him that the best thing he could do would be to "go to sleep," as if in his deep anxiety, sleep were possible. He had, however, resigned himself to fate, and settling himself in dogged obedience on his seat, watched the crackling logs and playful tongues of flame leap upwards to the chimney. At length, in spite of his anxiety, he gradually fell into pleasant meditations on his early life, and on those happy days when he first wooed and won his Mary.

He thought upon their early childhood, when Mary's merry face, as innocent as gay, greeted him at their sports; of their walks to school, and of the afternoons spent in nutting; when, as in duty bound, being the eldest and the biggest, he would climb and press down the branches of the hazels for Mary to gather the ripe clusters. He thought of a period less remote, when Mary was his companion across the pleasant fields to the humble village church, where they worshipped and sang from the same prayer and hymn book. He thought of the young lord of the manor, and his undisguised admiration of Mary's pretty face—those young squires are so audacious and so wicked!—and of his determination to remove her from his impertinence and from all similar temptations to which her unusual beauty and free and cheerful manners exposed her. Then he thought how the death of an aged uncle, who had bequeathed him a few hundred pounds, enabled him to fulfil his determination, to win his gentle Mary, and to overcome the reluctance of her parents to their scheme of emigration, and finally, how he had become a sort of lord of the manor himself—a proprietor of the free soil of Canada.

His thoughts, then, by a species of reaction, dwelt upon the toils he had endured since his arrival in the country; the tedious journeys he had made in search of a suitable place for settlement; the solitude of the backwoods, and the almost entire absence of congenial associates; the tedious nature of the work of clearing land;—the felling of the trees—the severing and

heaping together of the branches and the brushwood—the piling and burning of the logs, all which had to be effected before the humblest crop could be planted, and another lengthened interval had to elapse before the crop could be harvested and made use of. Harry had performed this labour at the time cheerfully and gaily; but his mind had, unawares, fallen into a moody and discontented state, which led him at this moment to look upon the gloomy side of everything; the real cause being the reflection that he had brought his Mary into the lonely wilderness, away from all her friends and relatives, and that now, "in this, her time of trouble," she had none to aid her but a comparative stranger.

While these and similar reflections occupied his mind, the comfortable warmth of the fire and that tendency to slumber, which its seductive heat is so certain to induce in those who, like Harry, are fresh from the cold outer air, nearly betrayed him more than once into a doze; but he angrily roused himself from an influence, to have yielded to which, he would, under the circumstances, have considered a disgrace.

His reveries were interrupted by a murmuring sound, as if of whispering voices, and looking up, he beheld with exceeding astonishment, seated on the large logs, which he had rolled to the hearth in readiness for the fire, a group of about a dozen baby boys and girls, in size mere minims, but sturdy or graceful in appearance. When they saw that they had attracted his attention, they rose up, bowed, and shouted in concert,

"Father! father! father!"

"You are pretty creatures," said Harry to them, "and if you came one by one, I should be delighted to own you; but little ones, this is a hard country to gain a living in, and this is my first year in it. I am hale and hearty, and I love my wholesome labour, but as yet I have cleared only a few acres of land, and my barn and corn-bins have but little in them. If I were to call you mine, I should like to keep you sleek and warm, but by what possible exertion can my poor Mary and I provide food and clothing for so many of you?"

The sturdiest boy stepped forward. He was infantile in form and features, but his face bore on it the stamp of thought, which gave it a strange weird look, as if he were quite aware that he was born into a world where he would have to encounter toil, and face responsibility; and his little body was clothed with flesh so muscular, as to promise to carry him successfully through any troubles which it might be his lot to encounter. He carried a woodman's axe, which he waved over his head, as in low, sweet tones, he sang cheerily—

"I'll wield my good well-temper'd axe,  
I'll fell the forest tree;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For dozens like to me."

A trim and tidy little maiden, with a broom in her hand, followed him, and carolled saucily—

"I'll sweep the room, he dinner cook,  
I'll do up all the chores;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For the like of me in scores."

A ruddy-faced urchin hurried forward after her, clad in a smock-frock and holding a plough, who sang in a somewhat louder tone—

"I'll drive the oxen to the field,  
I'll firmly hold the plough;  
I'll be long before old Canada  
Gets of such as me enow."

Then came as comely a little lass as ever tripped in fairy ring; she had a milk-pail on her arm, and a churn stood near her, as she gaily sang—

"I'll churn the cream, the butter make,  
I'll tend the patient kye;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For hundreds such as I."

A bare-armed brawny urchin, from whose brow the perspiration freely flowed, as he leaned upon an anvil, chaunted the next ditty at the top of his shrill and somewhat cracked voice—

"I'll shoe the horse, the iron weld,  
And swing the hammer free;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For hundreds like to me."

He was succeeded by a laughing spinster, with a distaff and a bundle of wool, whose song was—

"I'll spin the wool, I'll weave the cloth,  
Right merry will I be;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For thousands like to me."

A fellow, with a paper-cap upon his head, with a saw and plane, was next, and this was the burden of his song—

"I'll drive the nails, and plane the board,  
And saw the tough pine tree;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For myriads like to me."

Then came the last of the little maidens, with those truly indispensable female implements, the needle, the scissors and the thread, and like the rest, she came singing—

"I'll stitch the shirt, the coat I'll make,  
I'll chatter cheerily;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For myriads like to me."

They all now lifted up their voices together, and sang in full chorus—

"We'll milk, we'll sow, we'll reap, we'll mow,  
We'll fell the forest tree;  
There's room enough in Canada  
For millions such as we."

As they thus chirruped mirthfully, they struck up a sportive dance to the music of their voices, and leaped, and capered, reeled, whirled and twisted in the most fantastic fashion, while Harry, in mingled wonderment and delight, threw himself back in his chair, laughing merrily. As soon, however, as he could sober himself sufficiently for intelligible speech, he thought an explanation of what all this meant was most desirable, and thus addressed the singing, laughing, dancing urchins:

"You are a funny crew of boys and girls, my fairy children, and I feel quite sure that when you have grown a little bigger, your services will be of priceless value, but, meanwhile, it will be hard work to house you warily, to feed and clothe you comfortably. Still, by Heaven!" he exclaimed aloud, as he sprang upon his feet, and stretched his powerful arms and thighs, "by Heaven! if these four bones can do it, it shall be done."

Wonder upon wonder! While Harry gazed upon the urchins in astonishment, they seem half to vanish in a mist, and then one by one creep closer to the hearth, hover for a moment over the blaze, and then sweep swiftly up the chimney, each as he disappeared doffing his cap to Harry. As Harry rubbed his eyes again and again, as if to rub out the glamour that bewitched them, he heard a shrill though feeble cry behind him, and turning round saw Mrs. Armstrong, with a baby in her arms; she smilingly addressed him, "Why, Harry, have you been asleep? Come, sir, and kiss your wife, and her pretty Christmas gift—A NEW-BORN DAUGHTER."

C. H. S.

**VELOCITY OF ELECTRICITY.**—Of the velocity of the spark discharge some notion may be formed from the brief duration of its light, which cannot illuminate any moving object in two successive positions, however rapid its motion. If a wheel be thrown into rapid rotation on its axis, none of its spokes will be visible in daylight, but if the revolving wheel be illuminated in a darkened room by the discharge of a Leyden jar every part of it will be rendered as distinctly visible as though it were at rest. In a similar manner, the trees, even when agitated by the wind in a violent storm, if illuminated at night by a flash of lightning, appear to be absolutely motionless. By a very ingenious application of this principle, Wheatstone has shown that the duration of the spark is less than the one-millionth part of a second. The apparatus is the same in principle as the revolving wheel. By a modification of the apparatus, Wheatstone was also enabled to measure the velocity with which the discharge of a Leyden jar was transmitted through an insulated copper wire. It was at the rate of 288,000 miles in a second.