

an axe close by to break the ice in order to procure the water.

At 3 p. m. we arrived at our destination, the home of a Mr. McDonald, another of my trustees. He, however, not having received my letter, did not know that I was coming to his place, but expected that I was to go to Mr. Smith's where arrangements had been made for me to board. Hearing, however, from the former teacher to be sure to go to the McDonald's, they had expected me to come to them soon. Owing to this general belief, Mr. McDonald, having occasion to visit Mr. Smith about six o'clock that Sunday evening, found the house full of men cursing, swearing, smoking, chewing and indulging in coarse talk, waiting for me to come down stairs, as Mrs. Smith led them to believe that I was resting; and they were furious at 10 o'clock when they discovered the deception.

The former teacher who boarded for three weeks out of the two months of her sojourn there, used to stay at school as long as possible, then go home to tea, and after that, wander up and down the bank of the creek with the dog until dark, and then retire to her room, there to cry herself to sleep. She said she had worked in the slums of Toronto but had never entered a home so filthy or wretched as this one, for mice and other vermin infested the place. The heat too at that time of year was great, and the only means of light or air for the upstairs was a hole in the wall which, during a storm or cold weather, was covered with a board, thus throwing the place in total darkness. Her general opinion of the family was, they were all dogs, and Rover (the collie) was the best dog among them, but even he told lies for how could he do otherwise when he was never taught any better. Part of this information I learned from a letter she wrote me, but the worst was found out later.

Doubtless you will be surprised at my going after receiving so unfavorable a description, but I was quite ignorant of the true state of affairs, and was very anxious to find out by experience what a missionary had to put up with.

Chapter 2.

MY SURROUNDINGS.

Mr. McDonald's home was a log house eighteen feet by twenty-one feet, the whole downstairs consisting of one room which answered the purpose of parlor, dining-room, sitting-room, and in the winter of kitchen. A shed built at the south served as summer kitchen. Out of this living-room was the stair-case which stands almost perpendicularly, and one is compelled when descending to walk sideways or come down at the rate of seventy miles an hour. The boards of the floor in this living-room parted company, which had its "advantages" when one was sweeping, as the dust went through to the cellar below on the potatoes. There were four windows—two on the north side and one on the east and west sides which made the room nice and bright.

The furniture consisted of a home-made sideboard that stood under the staircase, a large table by the west window, a small medicine cupboard by the east window, a bench upon which the water pails were placed, under the south window. To the north was a home-made sofa (some boards nailed together and scantily covered with black lustre, not very comfortable to say the least) and under the other window was a sewing machine that was very very seldom in use. In the winter the cooking stove was added to the furniture list, and, of course, there were chairs,—about half a dozen kitchen ones as well as a rocking chair belonging to the mistress of the house, and her special property. The ceiling was the floor of the rooms above with the supporting beams showing. The walls were papered with rough brown paper which they told me was felt paper. The floor and wood-work were painted, and altogether the outward appearance spoke of cleanliness—the cardinal virtue in that region.

The up-stairs was divided into three compartments,—the first contained one window facing the west just at the head of the stairs. In this room were two beds, one being surrounded by a couple of sheets hung on wires, to form as it

were two rooms. Beside the home-made beds was a table covered with a cloth and this was adorned with a few photographs and many cards which looked quite artistic.

At the east end of the house were the other two rooms 7½ by 9 feet, one containing a bed, chair and box, while the one allotted to me was honored with a tiny washstand—all these things home-made, and on this was a small enamel hand basin and a milk jug to serve as water pitcher. The end of the bed and this stand under the window took up the whole width of the room, and, with a small trunk added at one end, this den was just big enough to afford me standing room with little to spare. Some nails in the wall served to hang clothes upon, and the logs I used to put my photos on. The roof, of course, slanted down within about 1½ feet of the floor, but was whitewashed as also were the walls. The partition between the rooms was merely thin boards prepared with rough brown paper to cover up the cracks as well as for appearance sake. This partition was not even, in some places being about a yard or more from the top or ceiling, so that all communication in either room could be heard in the next, as, indeed, it could down stairs as well. The door was an opening in the partition over which was hung a sheet nailed up that was a foot from reaching the floor.

The owners of this house consisted of the father—a fine-looking man, rather below medium height, rather stout, with small keen blue eyes (all the settlers have keen sight, owing, no doubt, to their occupation of hunting) a small moustache and fair complexion. His wife, on the other hand, was a tall masculine-looking woman with a very ruddy complexion, small keen blue eyes, and very sharp features. It was readily perceived that she was born to rule, and being so powerful herself she despised weakness of any kind, and woe betide the small fry if they won a cuff or a kick from her, as her hand was anything but a light one; but although she had a sharp tongue, she also had a very warm heart, and in time of sickness hers was always a ready hand if a somewhat rough one. The eldest son, Norman, of 15 years, his mother's favorite, resembled his mother in temper, being very ready with his tongue and quick to act. The other son, Henry, of 14 years, was a merry mischief-loving boy with laughing blue eyes, who was more like his father in disposition, being slow to act but fierce. It took a good deal to arouse his anger, but the flame of passion once kindled was not easily quenched. The youngest child, Annie, was a girl of 13, and about her really nothing good can be said but that she had a pretty face, for she was indolent, slovenly and unprincipled. All the children were about the same size, although in a short time Annie had out-stripped the boys. This, then, is a passing description of the family with whom I had cast my lot for a school year.

Our home was situated on a knoll, and as far as eye could reach nothing but forest was to be seen, except in one place where the forest fire had swept the woodland away with its devouring flames and this brute, as it is called, is covered with burnt stumps and scrubby little bushes, with here and there a gaunt old trunk that had withstood the ravages of the fire. A very desolate place indeed is the brute. The hills prevented one from seeing very far. Between the house and the road was an old log shanty, where the McDonald's had lived until some four years before my sojourn there. To the west side of the house at the foot of the hill ran the water of the "Wissa Wassa" (which means "here and there") creek and wound around through the woods. About a quarter of a mile east was the little frame school-house, and the same distance in the other direction this Mr. Smith lived, just opposite to ours a family by the name of Cameron.

Each farmer was given 200 acres of land by the Government, and although the McDonald family had been there for 15 years they had only 30 acres cleared—the most of any settler in that section, so from this you may form some idea of the amount of bush land. The "cleared" land was full of stumps, which made cultivation rather difficult.

Chapter 3.

THE SCHOOL.

The school-house, as before stated, was a frame one painted a soft grey, situated on the half acre of land that Mr. McDonald had given for that purpose, and made from boards from his woods and partly built by him, he having given fifteen days' work on it, so from this it will be seen that education was appreciated by some at all events.

There were four windows, two to the east and two facing the west. The desks numbered twelve, six on each side, and were, of course, home-made, likewise the teacher's desk; two small chairs and two rough benches with the box-stove comprised the furnishings, the benches being for the congregation when service was held. The number of scholars on the roll was 24, and most of them were very clever, industrious and well-behaved children. The tiny ones came in the summer, while the older ones came in the winter. Altogether there were nine classes from the junior first to the entrance class, this being the preparatory one for the collegiate institute or high school.

Never having taught before nor even attended Model (as teachers were scarce) I had to choose my own methods, and teach to the best of my ability. Each class was given a time-table so the scholars soon knew what subject followed another, and as the lessons for the entrance class consisted of English and Canadian history, arithmetic and mensuration, grammar and rhetoric, composition, literature, physical and geological geography, writing, drawing, agriculture, and physiology, their periods were necessarily shorter than those of the other classes. As may be imagined it took a good deal of thought to study out each day's lessons for each class, especially as the attendance was very irregular, which necessitated constant reviews. The consequence was I became not only a talking machine (pretty easy for me) but a walking one too. This, however, did not take place until after Christmas, as the highest class was only the second.

My chief object was to win the children's affections, and thus rule by love and not by fear. To do this I endeavored to make school life pleasant for them as well as instructive. On Friday mornings we would have examinations covering the week's work, while the first classes were delighted to hear a story read or told to them after their work was done, as the school had to be quiet for the writers. This class also had a half-hour recess, morning and afternoon, whereas the other scholars only had half that time.

In the afternoon we would take up the answers to these examination questions, and, having recess somewhat earlier than on other days, the girls would form a sewing class, where I tried to teach them hemming and other plain sewing as well as mending and darning. As two of the girls wanted to learn to crochet, their brothers made them wooden hooks, and with some bits of wool they quickly learned the art. Sometimes as a little treat the tiny girls would do some of my cork-work. In this way they made aprons, towels, part of a quilt or, indeed, knitted stockings for themselves. After half an hour teaching I would read to them, during which time, however, they were at liberty to ask my assistance with their needlework. The boys also enjoyed this hour, and all would listen most attentively. The first book was a story of adventure, but the girls did not care much for this, so we read "Sketches From Life" (a story or rather a number of stories on the Ten Commandments and verses in the Bible, written by a friend of mine), "Mildred's Boys and Girls," and "Eric" (a beautiful school story), etc., which much interested them.

The children were very fond of singing and many were the songs they learned, the favorite of the boys being "The British Grenadiers," the girls had different tastes liking such as "The Sea-Shell's Whisper," "Will and the Bee," but, sad to relate, none were very fond of patriotic songs unless it was "Soldiers of the Queen." One of the worst punishments for the school was that singing should be crossed off the list of periods for the day. The reason for

patriotic music not being so much appreciated may be explained from the fact that the big girls in the highest class were English girls who positively refused to sing Canadian songs except upon rare occasions, and the small children were rather shy of singing them very well alone as the youngest of these girls used to laugh at and tease them afterwards and do what I would this spirit generally prevailed. It was not to be wondered at as their fathers termed all Canadians "bl-owmin' bl-owk-heads." Sad to relate, the people in that district who performed the meanest, most underhanded tricks and gave the teachers most of their trouble were the English, and, of course, their children.

Composition was a most interesting period for them too. One day they would have a long word out of which to make other words, there being great contests to get the most number of words. Another day it would be an autobiography, and it was not very long before they understood the meaning of the word and wrote splendid essays. Then again they would have a story read to them, and rewrite it in their own words. Sometimes they would tell in their own words what they would do with a certain sum of money should they have it, or how to make or do some peculiar things, the happiest day in their lives, a description of their life and the country, what they would like to be and why, etc. As a treat they were allowed to make up a story about anything they liked, and really wrote amusing ghost and fairy stories. One favorite amusement was to discover from observation the habits of the domestic animals or at times be given a flower or piece of wood, etc., and find out by examining it, the beauty. Of course letter-writing was a regular composition, but not much appreciated.

The old-time spelling matches were found most exciting. The captains being chosen by vote, the sides were soon made up one on each side of the school, the words being taken from the first or part-second reader and continued into the second reader, and even the third if any pupil remained standing. It was certainly a downfall to a senior scholar of fifteen when her little sister of eight put her down, although the best speller was a little girl of twelve, to whom it seemed almost impossible, however, to learn arithmetic.

Geography lessons were also interesting, as the scholars would learn a number of definitions which they would illustrate on their slates by drawings and in the next classes memorize the names of countries, counties, country towns, cities, etc., and learn to find them on the map or draw maps and print the names of these on them. When learning these names and how to spell them, each mistake sent the unfortunate scholar down foot, but whoever stood at the head of the class at the end of the lesson received an extra mark.

With writing and drawing they also took particular pains, as they were generally eager to have an "E" on their slates. These marks worked wonders. For every lesson particularly well learned or which showed painstaking on the part of the scholar, even if it were not so very good, always merited a good mark, as well as good conduct, but of course carelessness, laziness, disobedience or talking always forfeited them. At the end of every month the scholars' seats were changed, those having obtained the greatest number of marks for the month sitting in the front seat; and at the end of the term a prize was to be given the scholar who succeeded in obtaining the greatest number of marks; and a young lady friend in Toronto very kindly offered a prize for the best essay written on any subject the pupils chose. These manuscripts were all sent to her to be examined, so that no favoritism could be shown.

You will doubtless notice that the methods used above could not be for the first class, nor indeed were they. This class consisted of six children, ranging from four to ten years and divided into three classes, they having come at different times and, of course, must not be kept back by others. The first of all were learning their letters to both read and write, and as each child would have some letters that were hard for him to