

## Going to School.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

I SEE the little children creeping, creeping,

Down the long hill-side to the village school,  
With slow, reluctant feet, and almost weeping,  
To end glad summer with the sterner rule  
Of tasks and hours, and waste October weather,  
Pent up in irksome study all together.

I see the little children running, running,  
When school is over, to resume their fun,  
Or in the late sweet warmth of daylight, sunning  
Their little discontents away, each one.  
"How nice to be grown up," so they are saying,  
"And not to study, but be always playing!"

Ah, foolish little children! if you knew it,  
Grown folks must study, just as children do;  
Must be punctual at school, or else they rue it,  
And learn a harder lesson yet than you.  
Early they set to work, and toil all day;  
The school lets out too late for any play.

Their school-room is the world, and life the muster;  
A stern, harsh muster by, and hard to please,  
Some of the mightier children study faster  
Than can the others who are dull; and these,  
When they've recited, if they stand the test,  
The Master suffers to go home and rest.

But all must learn a lesson soon or later,  
And all must answer at the great review;  
Until at length the last discouraged waiter  
Has done his task, and read the lesson through;  
And, with swollen eyes and weary head,  
At last is told he may his home to bed.

So, little children, when you feel like crying  
That you are forced to learn to read and write,  
Think of the harder lessons lying  
In the dim future which you deem so bright.  
Grown folks must study, even 'gainst their will;  
Be very glad that you are children still.

## THE KING'S MESSENGER;

OR,

## LAWRENCE TEMPLE'S PROBATION.

(A STORY OF CANADIAN LIFE.)

BY THE EDITOR.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE FOREST FIRE—FIGHTING THE FLAMES.

This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,  
That first he wrought and afterwards he taught.  
Out of the Gospel he the wordes caught.

As Lawrence sailed homeward on the lake in the soft light of a September day, he became aware of a pungent odour in the air, and soon after of a dense smoke, drifting from the land. He thought nothing of it, however; but next morning Mr. Perkins remarked:

"The fire's a-gettin' nearer. I wish the wind 'ud change—been burnin' in the woods north there better'n a week."

All day the smoke grew denser—darkening the sun and irritating the eyes. During the night the flames could be seen leaping from tree to tree in the forest that encircled the little clearing, and running rapidly along the ground in the dry brush-wood. The tall pines could be seen burning like giant's torches in the darkness, and then toppling over with a crash, scattering the sparks in a brilliant shower, far and wide, to extend the work of destruction. Great tongues of flame hissed and crackled like fiery serpents enfolding their prey.

No human effort could avail aught to withstand or avert this fiery plague. Only the good providence of God, by sending rain or turning the wind, could stay its progress. The next day was intensely hot. The earth seemed as iron, and the heavens as brass.

All in a hot and copper sky  
The bloody sun at noon  
Richt up above the trees did stand  
No bigger than the moon.

It seemed like the torments that followed the trumpet of the fifth angel in the Apocalypse: "There arose a smoke out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

On came the flames—roaring like a hurricane. The heat became unendurable—the smoke almost stifling. The cattle fled to the streams, and stood in the deepest pools, sniffing the heated air. The water became gradually warm as it flowed over the heated rock and through the burning woods; and the fish that were in it floated on the surface in a dead or dying state. Fences were torn down, and broad spaces of earth were turned up by the plough, to break the progress of the deluge of fire—before which stacks of hay and straw were licked up like tinder.

Many of the villagers stored their little valuables, and as much of their grain as they could, in the underground roothouses, and banked them up with earth. Many had abandoned everything, and fled to the islands. Lawrence, with most of the men, remained to fight the flames till the last moment. When compelled to fly, they sought the shore, where they had moored a boat, as a means of escape at the last moment. But, O horror! the lapping of the waves and the fierce wind created by the fire, had loosened the boat—but insecurely fastened—and it was rapidly drifting away. All hope of escape seemed cut off. The men were about to plunge into the water, as preferring death by drowning to death by fire.

"Let us die like brave men, if die we must," said Lawrence, "trusting in God. He will be with us, as he was with his servants in the fiery furnace."

"Father," cried Tom Perkins, a boy of thirteen, "I know a cave where we can hide."

"Quick, my son! Show us the way," was the eager reply.

"This way—up the stream a bit—near that cedar root. The bears used to live in it." And he pointed out a concealed entrance, through which they crawled into a small grotto, caused by a dislocation of the strata.

"God hath opened for us a cleft in the rock. He will keep us as in the hollow of his hand," said Lawrence, with a feeling of religious exaltation he had never felt in moments of safety.

On came the flames—roaring louder and louder. The crackling of fagots and falling of trees were like the rattle of musketry and firing of cannon in a battle. The smoke and heat penetrated the grotto. They were almost perishing with thirst.

"I hear the trickling of water," said Lawrence. "I will try to find it. Lie low on your faces, so as not to inhale the smoke. Here is the water," he cried, as he found it. "Now, wet your handkerchiefs, and tie them over your heads," he said, as he did the same himself, and they all found the greatest relief therefrom.

At last the fiery wave seemed to have passed away. They crawled forth from their refuge to view the desolation the fire had wrought. The ground was still hot and smoking, many of the trees were still burning, and everything was scathed and seared and blackened with the flames. Perkins' house was burned; but his barn, which he prized more, was, with its contents, spared—saved by the adjacent clearing and fallow.

By a special providence—as it seemed to these simple-minded men, unversed in the sceptical objections to the efficacy of prayer—the wind had veered so as to blow the flames away from the village. This they devoutly attributed to their prayers in the cave. That night a copious rain fell, and farther danger was averted.

Mr. Perkins' neighbours made a "bee" to help him rebuild his house, and turned out in full force on that important occasion. Lawrence, a fine athletic specimen of muscular Christianity, turned to with a will, and swung his axe and rolled his logs with the best of them, as "to the manner born." He won thereby the profound respect of several of the young men, who were more impressed with his prowess with the axe than by his eloquence in the pulpit.

Soon a larger and a better house than the one destroyed was erected, so that, Hopini said, "the fire wuz a sort o' blessin' in disguise." He "feared he wuz a-takin' better keer o' his crops and beasts than of his wife an' chil'en, so the Lord jes' gin 'im a hint to make them kind o' comfortable too."

Lawrence was very anxious to have a church built at Centreville, the head of the circuit, for the purpose of holding quarterly-meetings and the like, as well as to accommodate the growing congregation. Some of the wise men of the village gravely shook their heads, and said it was impossible after the fire. But the zealous young preacher was determined to try. He therefore went round with his subscription-book for contributions. These were mostly in "kind," or in labour.

Squire Hill gave a lot in the village, which did not count for much, as land was plenty; and real estate, even on the front street of Centreville, was not worth much more than that three miles distant. But he promised, moreover, all the nails, glass, and putty required, which counted for a great deal, as these articles were not so plentiful as land in Muskoka.

Hopini Perkins gave all the pine wanted for the frame, as a "thank-offerin'" to the Lord, for sparing his barn and crops, and a liberal subscription besides. His brother Phinehas, who owned a sawmill on the creek, gave all the sawn lumber required.

Father Hawkins could not give anything else, so he promised to make the shingles during the winter. The village painter promised to do the painting if the materials were provided, which was soon done by subscription.

A grand "bee" was accordingly made to get out the material. Axemen felled the tallest and straightest trees for sills, frame, plates, joists, rafters, purlines, and all the appurtenances thereof.

"It reminded him," said Father Hawkins, "of Hiram and his workmen getting out the timbers for the house of God at Jerusalem." Teams of oxen and horses dragged them to the site of the building. Others drew stone for the foundation, sand for the plaster, and boards to enclose the building.

Lawrence was the moving spirit of all these activities—the wheel within the wheel—the mainspring of the whole. He it was who drew the plan, got out the estimates, made all the calculations, and was a whole building committee in himself. Nor was he content with directing. He worked with the strongest and most diligent. He mortised sills and plates, and tenoned studs and beams. And another great "bee" was made for putting together and raising the frame.

It was like magic. In the morning the ground was strewn with beams and timbers—the *disjecta membra* of a house; in the evening, they were all in their places, and the complete skeleton of the building stood erect in its gaunt proportions, the admiration of not only the village, but the entire country-side. Almost, thought Lawrence, might be applied the words of Milton, descriptive of a structure of far other character:

"Amen out of the earth a fabric huge  
Rose like an exhalation."