

IN THE GARDEN OF CHARITY

on a dwarfed pine or a slender, white-limbed birch-tree; while at intervals a stunted maple heralded the approach of autumn by putting forth a red leaf like a flower. As far as the vision could reach there was nothing but this richly colored desolation. As Wise Willum Boutilier used to say:

“God didn’t mean this bit of shore for no one but the sea-gulls and the pa’ttridges. The human crittur must seek his bread upon the waters when alive; and when he’s dead he can’t get earth enough to cover him.”

And yet Wise Willum, with the rest of his kith and kin, could never have supported life elsewhere. It was not that they cared consciously for their stretch of granite hill-side; but they belonged to it, and it to them. Its meagre nourishment was sufficient for their meagre needs. Like sea-birds, they asked of the dry land nothing but a nesting-place, when wind or weather drove them “in-shore.” Even then they built their houses close to the water’s edge, so that between one phase of their existence and the other the transition might be as slight as possible.

Looking down from Charity Pennland’s garden one could see the village of Fisher’s Grant nestling, like Clovelly, in a great cleft of the rocky shore. At a distance its white cottages resembled the scriptural swine, running violently down a steep place to where the Atlantic thrust a long, blue, fiordlike finger between