

Tales of the Road

She was an old woman, in the quaint garb of the Mennonite women of the earlier generation, who have never in any sense been Canadianized. She spoke little English, and I, alas, no German, but we had a mutual bond, love of a garden. Up and down the walks we went and looked at fine vegetables, heavily laden currant bushes and raspberry canes, and with many gestures eked out a means of communication. There was an air of mystery about my hostess as we penetrated further into that wonderful garden. Presently we came to a little arbor, and there "sheltered from every wind; except the soft," was a rose tree in full bloom. The real "Rose of Provence" blooming in all the prodigal luxuriance of its native clime. My hostess touched the petals tenderly and then, in spite of protest, cut one perfect rose and handed it to me, with the air of a queen. It was truly a royal gift. She made me understand the many attempts that had ended in failure. She showed me how year after year the shoots had grown more hardy. This was the second year it had bloomed. Love of the beautiful had triumphed over the cold and frost of the great north land. This quiet, patient soul had given to her neighborhood a thing of surpassing beauty and fragrance. Tears were hot under my eyes as we shook hands, and, though she could not understand, I involuntarily repeated "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." How many of us who are native-born have given Canada anything so beautiful or so fragrant as a "Rose of Provence."