

## UNCLE LISHA'S SHOP.

FROM FOREST AND STREAM.

The prophet of the almanac had written along the June calendar, "Now, perhaps a spell of weather," and his prognostication was being verified. For two days the rain had come down from the leaden sky, now in drenching showers, now in drizzles, slanting to the earth before the gusty northeast wind, and still it came down. A robin in the apple tree where his mate shingled their nest with her half-spread wings only left off "singing for rain" to preen his wet feathers, and then began his broken song, cheerful enough but for its import to seem unsuited to its accompaniment, the splash of the rain, the doleful sighing of the wind, and the sullen roar of the swollen streams. The beaten down blossoms that whitened the ground beneath the apple trees, as if an unseasonable flurry of snow had fallen there, looked unlike blossoms now, but added another dreary feature to the dreary landscape; the little brown house without light or shadow on its walls; the dripping, wind-swayed trees; the sodden fields and woods ghostly behind the gray veil of rain, bounded by the blurred, flat wall of mountains, and roofed by the low sky.

When some of Lisha's friends, troubled by a vague rumor that had floated about the valley, visited the shop that day, they found it was as cheerless inside as out, chilly, damp and fireless, and unoccupied by its owner, whose apron lay upon the shoe bench. Sam Lovel, seated himself there, and when presently Lisha entered from the "house part," and he arose to give him his accustomed seat, the old man said, "Keep your settin', Samwill; I haint workin' none to-day," and after pottering in an aimless way among his stock and tools, set about lighting a fire. After repeated clearing of his throat, wherein the words seemed to stick, he said as he whittled the kindling, "Wal, boys, where ye goin' to loaf evenin's next winter?"

"Why, right here, of course, Uncle Lisher," said Sam, "you haint goin' to turn us aoudoor be ye?"

"No, I haint a goin' to turn you aoudoor, I'm a goin' to turn myself aoudoor. The fact o' the business is, Jerushy 'n' I has 'baout made up our minds to go aout West an' live 'long wif' George."

"Wal, we heard some such talk," Sam said, "but we didn't scaseely b'lieve the was nothin' on it, only talk, the 's so much dum foolish gabble goin' nowdays. An'," he added, "I haint heard none a' saounded foolisher 'n' this, to me."

"Wal, naow, ye see," said Lisha, shutting the stove door and after watching the fire a minute, seating himself upon a sap tub, "me 'n' my ol' woman 's a gettin' ol' 'n' ont' the down hill side, 'n' I won't be many year 'fore we can't du nothin'

scaseely on'y set raound, 'n' we haint got nobody to ta' keer on us then on'y aour boy. He's sol' aout in the 'Hio, an' is goin' to Westconstant to live, a gret ways furdur 'n' the 'Hio, tew, three States beyond it, I b'lieve. 'Taint a State yit, I guess We-constant haint, but on'y a terry-tory. Seems 'ough we couldn't stan' it 'a bey him no furdur off 'n' what he is naow, an' so ye see, we've concluded to go an' live 'long wif' him. He's ben a teasin' on us tu this ever so long, but I kinder hated tu, for I'm sorter growed in here, 'n' I hate tu naow, but I guess it's the best way."

"Wal, I guess 'taint," said Sam, very decidedly. "You hev growed in, both on ye, an' it'll be jalluk pullin' up 'few ol' trees an' settin' on 'em aout agin; 'n' ye won't stan' it no better. No, Uncle Lisher, not a mite better, 'n' two hemlocks took up an' sot no't. It'll be a diffent s'il o' land for ye, diffent breed o' neighbors—'f ye hev any—'n' they say 't that 'ere western country 's 'batter 'n' a pun-cake, 'thaout a maountin er a big hill tu be seen, so 's 't it tires 'a feller's eyesight clean aout a trav'lin' so fur 'thaout noth in' to stop it. 'An' no woods like aour, they say. 'Haow long ye think ye can stan' it 'thaout the smell o' spruce in yer nose, or 'thaout seein' the ol' Hump er 'later Hill, or so much as 'little Hawy's Back a stan'in up agin the sky?"

"Yas, sah, One Lisha, dat so," Antoine put in. "You was be so lonesick you come dead right off, bese of it, An' Jerushy too, you see 'f he an' I!"

"An' if ye don't die," Sam continued, "the dum'd Injins 'll kill ye!"

"Sho!" said Lisha, smiling grimly at Sam. "You're a putty feller, a talkin' 'baout dum'd Injins arter bein' thick 'n' puddin' with 'em for a fortnit, 'n' they rigin' on ye aout wif a canew 't you 'c'n navigate 's a mushrat can his own body. Naow, raly, Samwill," he went on, hopping to change the subject, "when I seen ye gittin' into 't over there 't the Forge Pond, I didn't expect nothin' on'y to see ye git a duckin', 'n' 'f I hadn't a knowed ye c'd swim like a duck, I wouldn't ha' let ye git int' the dum crazy thing."

"O, wal," said Sam, impatiently, "my Injuns is tame. I guess 't you'll find aout 't them painted, turkey feathered cusses aout West is a diffent breed o' cats, with their 'warwhoop in' an' screechin', an' skelpin' ol' folks an' babies, 'n' the Lord knows what the devil's own work they haint up tu."

"Sammywell's argyments is good," said Solon Briggs. "The haint nothin' more sartiber 'n' that old, an' ancient indyviddy wills hedort to continer' to remain in the natyve land 'at they was borned in."

"Good nirth an' seas!" the old man roared, "what's the use o' yer talkin'? I tell ye I'm a goin'! I don't live a week arter I git there! Haint I tougher 'n' a elum gnarl? Haint I fit your Injins gran' there o' Plattsburg? I c'n stan' the tuck-

it, I guess! I c'n fight Injins agin, I guess! H'mph! ye talk 's if I was a ten yer ol' boy, or a skeery little gal!" and then lowering his voice to a kindlier tone, I hate to go, 's I said afore. I allus luffed to hev my neighbors 'raound me, 'n' I've h d good uns, an' got 'em yit, an' I hate drefly to leave 'em, 'n' hate to leave the ol' place 'n' everything. But blood 's thicker 'n' water, 'n' I wanter seemy boy, the on'y chick or child his mother 'n' I's got, 'n' cend my days with him! An' his mother y'arns arter him more 'n' I du, an'—wal, we've a goin', an' the 'ba' no tew ways 'baout it, ner no use a' talkin'. I've sol' aout tu Joel Bartlett, an' we've drawed writin'—an' that's the long an' short on't."

"Wal," said Sam, "if you're sot on it, 'n' everything 's all cut an' dried, the haint no use a' talkin'. But I sh'd think 't you might ha' said suthin' to some on us 'fore ye went so fur. 'I would ha' been frientlier. I swe r I wish 't the dum'd torment 't invented that ere cursed western country hedn't never ben borned! A breakin' up families an' puttin' notions inter ol' folks' heads, blast him!" and said no more, but sat staring out at the gloomy landscape that, seen through the green and wrinkled panes of the long window, looked gloomier and more dismal than ever.

They spoke no more of Lisha's intended departure, and after a few feeble attempts at conversation, sat down and smoked in silence till the day grew darker with the coming on of evening, and then the visitors departed.

Toward the end of summer Lisha and his wife were ready to begin their journey, and after the kindly fashion of those days, some of their neighbors accompanied them to the place where they were to embark in the canal boat that would take them the length of "Clinton's big ditch" on their way. Pelatiah drove the lumber wagon whereon was piled the "house-el stuff" reserved from the "vanderw," then came a little conveyance, driven by Sam Lovel, and carrying Lisha and Jerusha, Joe Hill and his wife, Solon Briggs and Antoine, and a day's provisions for the party. They jolted over the rough road and through the little hamlet that the forge and store and tavern gave life to, and then taking the road along the bank of the n. by little river, the old people turned their backs upon the green wall of the mountains and entered on their long journey westward. Lisha was as cheerful as could be expected when his heart was heavy with the sorrow of leaving his old home, and he was suffering the discomfort of his high-collared, tight sleeved best coat and the weight of his bell crowned hat. He pointed out the farm where the first settler of Danvis had "pitched," the hill where Pelatiah's grandfather killed a panther, discoursed of the changes that had come since he

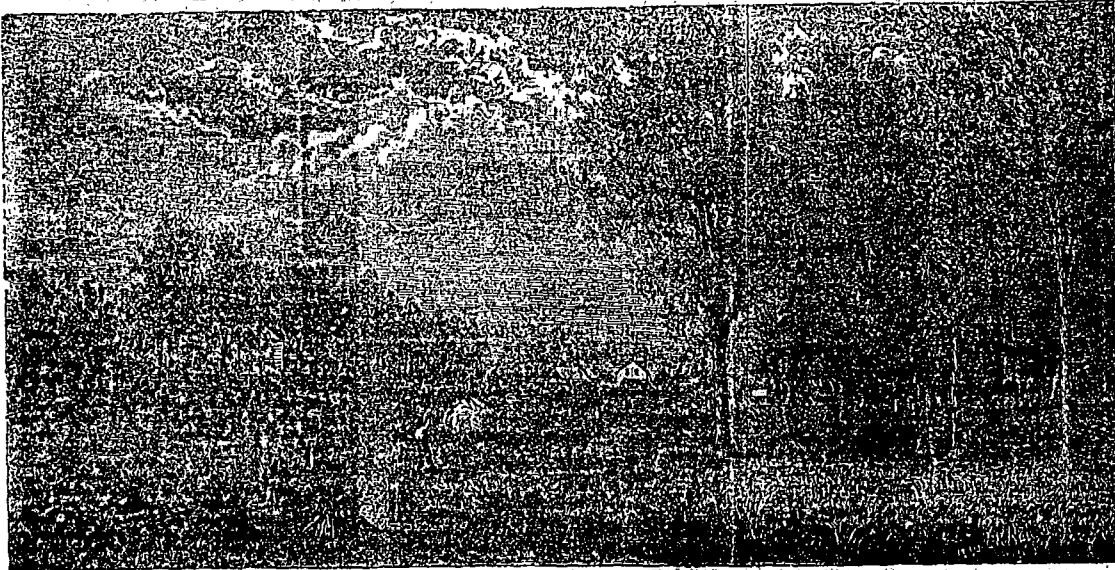
first knew the town, made some strained efforts at joking with Antoine, and talked on and on when he had nothing to say. Aunt Jerusha wept silently in the seclusion of her new gingham sun bonnet, comforting herself with frequent pinches of snuff that afforded her an excuse, for as frequent use of her handkerchief.

At noon they stopped to bait their team and eat their lunch under some wayside trees and then went on. In the middle of the afternoon they entered the little city that marked the end of the first stage of the old people's journey, and the wonders of its few three story, build-ing, its three churches, and the courthouse perched upon the crest of a ledge, in which Lisha told them, "the leegle tur sot on't," so dazed Pelatiah that he nearly missed finding the way to the wharf where the canal packet lay. There, now wonders met his astonished gaze. A rifle shot up stream the river almost as wide as the length of the forge pond, the largest sheet of water he had ever seen till now, foamed and thundered down the precipice forty feet high, and then its vexed waters writhed along a deep, broad reach, past the wharves, where lay the canal boats and the little steamer that was to tow them to the lake and then to Whitehall.

Loathing about these strange, immense craft were the curly or saucy canal boat men, upon whom the young mountaineers looked on with awe, for they were travel-ed men who must have seen nearly all of the great world, having been more than once to the end of the canal and back again, and some, it was said, had even beheld the wonders and glories of that almost fabu ous city by the sea, New York.

"In an airly day," said Lisha, "hows o' the Yorkers built 'em a gris mill on them falls, an' Ethan Allen an' his Green Mountain Boys come an' drove 'em off, an' hove the millstons over the falls, or some says inter a big pothole nigh the top, 'n' 't they're a layin' in the bottom on't naow. Right along here 'ere these 'ere wharfs an' stores be, McDouner's ships was built time o' the last war, ships a gret d'l bigger 'n them capawl boats be, Pelatiah. I worked here a haulin' timber to build 'em on, an' 'twas hurryin' times, I tell ye, with the British threatenin' the hull time. We hauled w'ar a big stick here aouten the woods, for a keel, it was, wif three yoke o' oxen, an' 'at jib the ship carpenters went full chisel, an' in six weeks I b'lieve, it wa'n't no more, from the day 't was cut down the ship was all ready to go int' the water. That's the way they did things in them times. A spell arter that the British come in, their gunboats to destr'y the 'Merican vessels here, but they didn't git no furdur 'n' the mouth o' the crick, for aour folks hed a little fort there, a lieutenant dame o' Cassin commandin' on't, an' they drove the British boats off. They call it Fort Cassin yit, but 'taint nothin' but some banks o' airth, an' wa'n't then. When aour ships got all ready they went off int' the lake, an' bimeby come Plattsburg fight. We all rallied aout an' th' was lots o' Green Mountain Boys in it, me 'mongst the rest on 'em, skeered 'enough, but no notion o' runnin'. We fit an' fir on land, an' the ships fit on the water, till arter a good spell aour ships lick'd their'n, an' then the British we was fightin' run, an' I tell ye the backs o' their 'tarnal red cuts was a dum sight the best lookin' side on 'em, 'f we'd seen yit. That's all the folks fightin' 't ever I done, or ever wan' tu. That 'ere big stum bull din' over yonder, where the flag 's flyin' is the government 'a'ul. The 's muskits an' caanon 'nough in it tu rig out a hull army. 'N' there 't that pussy ol' red nosed feller comin' a horseback 'long the road 's the major 't bosses it. Nothin' to du but draw his pay, fo' five hundred dollars a year, 's a pose, an' drink ol' 'Jamshy sperits an' sweet wine an' loaf 'raound."

With such discourse Lisha entertained his friends till nightfall, when he and Jerusha went to their berth in the packet and they to their inn, excepting An-



HOMESTEAD FARM AT KILDONAN, NEAR WINNIPEG.