

waited. "How do you expect an old fellow like me to keep up with that gait? I'll warrant you weren't so spry in the courting days."

Before we separated, somewhere past the Half-way House, he let me first build a bed of boughs—deep and springy, and odorous—in the bottom of the wagon, and then he arranged the feather bed on that and I put the little tent over it and laid my girl down, propped up with pillows so that she might miss nothing of the scenes for which she had longed as we passed by.

"It's the darling girl she is!" he said, kissing her roundly on the mouth, "and it's the lucky dog you are, Alan, ye spalpeen! Well, give my love to your mother and father.—Nora and I'll be down at New Year's, if we have to come on snow-shoes."

At the Village the Doctor and his wife and daughter—and some of the others, too—came out to bid us welcome; but at the Corners not a soul appeared, except Hank's father, who came bustling out of his store with his quiet smile.

"Where's everybody?" I asked, somewhat puzzled. "The place seems to be deserted."

"Why, they're all off on a picnic," he replied.

But when we had gone up the road a bit, there were they all—all that were left of them. They came out from the trees, and stood in the road, and waved their hands to us.

"Why, there are Jimmy and Hannah!" I exclaimed, as we drew nearer.

For there the two dear souls were, smiling from ear to ear; and there were father and mother, and Tom Thomson and his wife, and Mistress Jones and her "toppler," and Dimple, and Ned Burns, and Mickey Feeley, and all the other boys and girls, big and little, of the whole neighborhood. . . . At the very last moment someone sprang out from the undergrowth, and there was Dicky boy himself, proudly beamed upon by his mother, and anxious to have a talk with me to tell me all the "noos."