

CHAPTER III.

I found, upon arrival at Owen Sound, that the making of acquaintances is one of the things which determines a boy's life. I had been carefully cautioned against bad company, and I had also been carefully cautioned with the thought of the improvement of my mind. My application to books was good; I loved reading; I discovered that through reading, knowledge came which gave power; knowledge came which relieved from difficulty; knowledge came which assisted in society; knowledge came for general efficiency and success in life. I went here and there as boys sometimes do; was invited here and there as boys frequently are invited, but I found no place for spending time in unprofitable exercise. In the third year of my apprenticeship, I went with my employer to complete a good farm dwelling in the Township of Derby, some four miles from Owen Sound. We went out on Monday morning and returned on Saturday night. The owner was a man of extensive means, large holdings, a granary full of grain, some eight hundred bushels which I saw. This was immediately at the close of the Russian War. He had been offered \$2.25 per bushel for the wheat previously, but it had risen and risen until he thought it would hold up, and he kept from selling until it trickled down, down, down until he accepted eighty cents per bushel for the wheat which he could have sold for \$2.25. He wanted a little more. That brought forcibly to my mind a motto given me by one of Owen Sound's successful merchants and wheat buyers, a Mr. McLean. On being questioned as to what he attributed his success, his answer was "the moment I am offered a fair or reasonable profit on goods, I let them go, no matter what the apparent rise may be in the market, and I have followed the principal so closely, that I have lost little or nothing on my purchases from that to the present. I consider it the success of business life to sell on close margins and pass on."