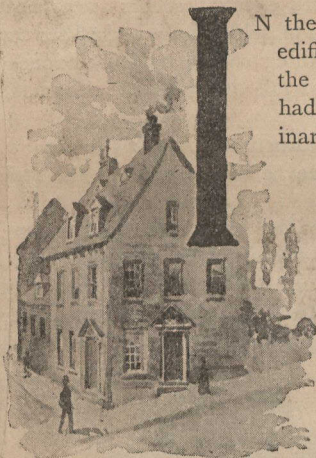


FOR THE CANADIAN QUEEN.

TRIED AND TRUE.



IN the top storey of a quaint high edifice, in a well-known street in the city of Quebec, Carl Brooks had his "den." It was not an inartistic room, but was certainly not luxurious, and the owner of it, who was working hard at an article which he was preparing for an American magazine, seemed poor.

He is worth more than a passing notice. Tall, handsome, finely built. His hair of that indefinite color, which no one can describe, being neither light nor dark, brown nor red, is tossed carelessly back from

his broad brow. But it is the eyes which attract you most,—eyes, which if once you look into them you cannot help wishing to look into again. Rather large, and of a bright blue-gray, but it is the expression, not the size or color, which gives them their wonderful power. You see a human soul in them; you say, "Here is a man who has had sufficient sadness in his life to be able to sympathize with his fellow-men in their afflictions."

He *was* poor so far as outward circumstances were concerned, but if you had asked him if he were happy, he would have answered with a decided "Yes." For had he not his profession, and was not Laura Neville, his betrothed, the dearest and best girl in the world.

His was the most unselfish life imaginable. The needs, sorrows and joys of the poorest of those around him were matters of interest to him. He had been brought up by an aunt, who had died, and whose money had gone to a cousin in the Old Country, and Carl, besides his own small earnings, had only a very small capital inherited from his mother.

Immediately opposite to him, lived Miss Pemberton, a lady of rather uncertain temper, but who had a very comfortable home.

Laura, Carl's betrothed, and her brother Frank were the children of a sister of Mrs. Pemberton's and, having been left orphans at a very early age, had been adopted by this lady. Charles was now independent of his aunt, but, having a very strong attachment for his sister, he still made his home with them. Laura had been Carl's friend from childhood.

The old lady imagined herself to be an invalid, and was very exacting, and Laura had a dull life, which, however, would have been much duller had it not been for her brother Frank and Carl. Carl had one day been sent by his aunt to deliver a message to Mrs. Pemberton and had seen Laura for the first time. She was then quite a child. The two were attracted from the first, and they had been friends and companions ever since. They had made each other presents on their birthdays, and many a happy day did the three, Frank, Carl and Laura spend together.

The day on which our story opens was a very happy one to Carl. It was just a year since he had been engaged to Laura, and the day before she had shyly told him that Mrs. Pemberton had consented to her being married about the first of the year. The old lady had been very reluctant to give her consent as Laura had been very useful to her, and, indeed,

Laura had begun to fear that she never would give her consent. And the poor girl hardly knew what was her duty. Her love for Carl was great, but the feeling that her aunt needed her, prevented her from looking forward to her marriage with unmixed joy. With Mrs. Pemberton, no one could quite take Laura's place. However, help came.

A friend of the old lady's died leaving an orphan daughter wholly unprovided for, and she offered the girl a home. So Laura seemed free to accept the man she loved so well.

"Is it not fortunate that auntie took this girl," Laura said to her lover, that evening as they went out on the lawn at Mrs. Pemberton's. Laura seated herself on a low seat and Carl leaned against a tree looking down on her. The evening was chilly and she had thrown a soft white shawl around her, and her face, as Carl gazed at her, was so full of light and joy, that she seemed almost too fair for earth. Through the open windows of the drawing-room they could see Mrs. Pemberton asleep, and hear the strains of the violin which Frank was playing. The young man was not in a happy frame of mind that evening, and the sad strains which he was playing rather jarred upon Laura; the music seemed in marked contrast to the happiness of the moment.

"Dear Laura," said Carl, breaking the silence. "When are we to begin our new life together? You are free now to do as you please, are you not?"

"Soon, Carl, I hope, if aunt will give her permission."

Carl was silent for some moments. Frank's music was affecting him strangely, and he stood watching the coming of the twilight. The sky changed from its brilliant color to dusky gold, and then to gray. Through the open window he saw a servant bring her mistress's shawl and throw it over her shoulders.

"We shall be poor, Laura, are you afraid of that? You have had all the comforts of life hitherto, and——"

"Dear Carl, we are young, and I have no fear. We love each other.

They were silent again, quiet and happy. They had loved each other all their lives, and belonged to each other. That was all. Carl loved beauty, as every one does, but he had never seen a face that was to him what Laura's was, though there were others far more perfect. He loved all that was noble and good, and she was both. She had borne her life with her exacting aunt uncomplainingly, trying to shield her faults from all. And she loved Carl passionately, and her heart was loyal and true. The idea of marrying any one else, never occurred to her. She felt she was his, and his alone.

"Laura, do come in, the evening is altogether too chilly for you to stay out any longer."

The girl started. She had been in a land of dreams, and her aunt's voice, rather harsh, brought her back to reality.

They went in and found the old lady complaining that she felt very chilly.

"Shall I ring?" asked Carl.

"No. Laura, you may go and tell Mary to see that a fire is made in the grate, and you need not come back till I send for you."

"Laura obeyed, her face flushing slightly, for she guessed her aunt intended to speak to Carl about their marriage.

"Will you sit down," said Mrs. Pemberton, as Carl stood by the mantel, looking very handsome and calm.