

THE TURNING POINT

CHAPTER I.

A SKY of continuous grey made the snow look whiter by contrast. It lay packed in wintry depth around the bluffs that stretched along the northwest quarter section that was known as Robinson's farm. Old Robinson sometimes felt as though he were Robinson Crusoe, so far as loneliness was concerned. The isolation of a prairie farm is never felt so much as in the winter, when the snow makes the land one of white and dreary silence.

The poplars that skirted the farm stood like solemn sentinels; their frozen branches cracking and grinding together as the northeast wind blew loose snow from the neighboring prairie and stubble land, and packed it in deep drifts around them.

On a slight elevation above the said stubble waste was the Robinsons' house—a typical settler's home of the Northwest. Huge poles jointed into each other at the corners supported the straw-thatched roof. There was no chimney of brick or stone—that could have been too expensive. A stove-pipe