

PREFACE.

Yoho is an island in one of the small northern lakes of Ontario, only to be found depicted on local charts and unmentioned, so far as I know, in any gazetteer. Yet it has a certain quiet celebrity of its own which it is far from being my desire to make public. Life on the island is a return to first principles, a child life in the best and wisest sense. Children form a large element in its limited population and in that of the adjoining islands. Those who are no longer children in years, even to grandsires and granddames, are still such in heart, and find their chief happiness in the children's joys. The first day of the week is there the holy of the Lord and honourable, but it is also a delight. At the hour appointed for morning service, cottages and tents send forth their occupants while, in all directions, from neighbouring islets and from settlers' clearings upon the mainland, boats large and small bring their quota of worshippers into the quiet harbour. The chapel in which they meet is one of nature's building, a pleasant hollow among mossy rocks and boulders, overshadowed by spreading maples and hemlocks. Saucy squirrels have been known to gambol and chatter among the branches over the preacher's head, stray bees and beetles to cause a temporary flutter in the choir, and the silly chuckle or mournful wail of the loon to excite the indignation of the otherwise well-behaved dogs. But generally all nature is in harmony with the spirit of the day and helpful to devotion. The children are there expectant. They are waiting for the new story, a story they can remem-