

gratitude to him that was beyond payment. Their greeting was no more cordial than it should have been under the circumstances, and neither one noticed the frown with which Dan observed them.

Michael paused but a moment at the gate, and then went on to his own tiny cottage, next door, where a twelve-year-old daughter had been his house-keeper and sole companion for half her industrious life. In the evening the two men sat out upon Michael's little porch with their can of beer, and for an hour or so Dan was more his old self than he had been for many, many days; but on the following morning he did not go to work. "It" had finally "got" him, and further pretense was out of the question.



ONE OF THE HANDSOME COTTAGES AT THE MUSKOKA COTTAGE SANATORIUM, THE GIFT OF LATE THOMAS MCCORMICK, OF LONDON, ONT.

II

WHAT the Lennons would have done without the stalwart friendship of Michael Dyer in this juncture it would be pitiable to conjecture; but with his simple stanchness the road was made easy. The pay of a roller is good, and Michael's purse was open to Dan throughout his long illness, while Nellie Dyer was scarcely second in her ministrations. She loved Dan's wife with that pathetic attachment of the motherless, and she was like a sister to the three small Lennon children, washing and dressing and feeding and taking care of them while Mrs. Lennon looked after her husband, who grew more peevish and fretful as time wore on, leaving him paler and more emaciated with each passing day.

In the evening, Michael always stopped in as soon as he came from work, to gossip with Dan about what had gone on that day in the mills; and both Dan and his wife grew to look for his coming as the most cheerful moment in their day, though often, after he had gone, and while the light of this cheering visit was still in his wife's eyes, Dan would lie in frowning silence.

It was one evening near the end, when his wife and Michael were standing together at his bedside, that the long-pent-up rebellion broke from Dan's lips.

"Strong and healthy, both of you," he complained bitterly, "and you're waiting; just waiting for me to get out of the way!" It was unjust; it was cruel! It was not

like Dan's self to have had that thought, much less to have voiced it; but he was warped and twisted all out of his normal mind by the wasting malady that had fastened upon him. Startled, the two standing figures glanced involuntarily into each other's eyes in affright, then turned hastily away as if they had been guilty. They were not. If in the secret recesses of their hearts they had felt an attraction each for the other that might have been freed by this tragedy which must necessarily bind them closer together, they had not known of it; and if any hint had crept into their understanding they would have recoiled from it in secret terror, for simple steadfastness was part and parcel of the lives of both of them.

Not one of the three realized this more acutely than Dan himself as soon as the words had passed his lips. Begging their forgiveness, in his weakness he turned his face to the wall and wept. They forgave him in all pity, but the words had been said; they could not forget them, and the shadow of them still lay between the two when they stood above Dan's grave—lay between them, the more when, later on, they came to realize that Dan had foreseen the truth even before they themselves could have known it. The blow was more cruel than ever, for they needed each other, these two, aside from what of love might have come to them, for Michael's daughter should have had a mother and the Lennon children a provider.

The problem for Fanny Lennon became a serious one at once. The eldest of her children was but ten, and she had no way to earn for them but by plain sewing, which was scarce and poorly paid. She could not accept of Michael's charity now, even in her direst extremities, and the knowledge of it cut him like a knife. That he should be