

KISSED HIS MOTHER.

BY EDEN E. REXFORD.

HE sat on the porch in the sunshine,
As I went down the street—
A woman whose hair was silver,
But whose face was blossom-sweet,
Making me think of a garden,
Where in spite of the frost and snow
Of bleak November weather,
Late, fragrant lilies blow.

I heard a footstep behind me,
And the sound of a merry laugh,
And I knew the heart it came from,
Would be like a comforting staff
In the time and hour of trouble—
Hopeful, and brave, and strong;
One of the hearts to lean on
When we think that things go wrong.

I turned at the click of the gate-latch,
And met his manly look;
A face like his gives me pleasure,
Like the page of a pleasant book.
It told of a steadfast purpose,
Of a brave and daring will—
A face with a promise in it
That God grant the years fulfil.

He went up the pathway singing;
I saw the woman's eyes
Grow bright with a wordless welcome,
As sunshine warms the skies.
"Back again, sweetheart mother!"
He cried, and bent to kiss
The loving face that was lifted
For what some mothers miss.

That boy will do to depend on,
I hold that this is true—
From lads in love with their mothers
Our bravest heroes grew.
Earth's grandest hearts have been loving
Hearts.
Since time and earth began!
And the boy who kissed his mother,
Is every inch a man.

—*Youth's Companion.*

A TRIP TO ISLAND LAKE.

BY THE REV. E. LANGFORD,

Missionary of the Methodist Church of Canada at
Oxford House.

[We have pleasure in presenting the following article written in response to our request by a faithful missionary of our church in the Great North Land. — Ed.]

II.

DAYLIGHT comes early in this country; weary limbs, a short night, and a sound sleep, leave us to imagine there was no darkness while we slept. In June and July we have only about two hours' darkness each night. Should the nights be clear, at this season, we can see the light of the sun all along the northern horizon, and I think ordinary print could be read during the darkest hour. At York Factory (Hudson Bay) ordinary print can be read in the house all night by the light of the sun. Those people, of the other provinces, who work from daylight till dark, would find no time to sleep here.

Our third day's paddling is more pleasant, having only one short portage to make. Should the weather prove unfavourable we are obliged to go ashore and wait till it calms, as the lakes are too large for our "frail bark when the wind blows hard." We cross two fine lakes and down a short river, and in the evening reach "Manitou Lake" (Lake of the Great Spirit). This is a large body of clear water, abounding with fish of various kinds, particularly whitefish and red trout, the latter of which are of an immense size. The Indians tell strange stories about the great fish that have been caught in this lake. I began to

think on one occasion that they were ferocious as well as large; for an Indian, who speaks a little English, said to me, "Oh! one big trout killed my father;" he wanted to say my father killed a large trout. In trying to speak Cree I have made worse mistakes than this Indian, but in what way I shall not take time to say just now. There being but few islands in this lake the water surface is very great, and it is not safe to travel over in canoes, hence we prefer taking the route I am trying to describe, and only cross a small part of it.

From this lake we begin to ascend a large river, which is almost a continuous succession of rapids, till we reach Beaver Hill Lake. The first rapid compelled us to make a portage of about two miles. In referring to my diary I find I wrote as follows: "June 24, 1880. While the men are carrying the canoe across the portage I am waiting and trying to occupy my time by taking a few notes. It rained considerable last night and a little this morning; the bush is wet, and I feel as if I had been drawn out of the river * * * but the men are here and we must push on."

From this point the men "tracked" the canoe to the head of the rapids, that is, they waded through the rapids close to the shore, keeping a firm hold of the willows, limbs of trees, &c., as a support against the rushing water. In the meantime I made my way through the woods as best I could. We are again obliged to camp early in order to dry our clothes; but we have reached Beaver Hill Lake, and are camping opposite "Oo-pa-sa-kwa-pe-se-mo-win" (Winking Point). This point got its name from the following circumstance: It appears that many years ago, the pagan Indians held a feast and dance here. During the evening the old conjuror stated that whoever would continue dancing without ceasing till morning would live for many years and become a great person. Many tried to accomplish the feat, but one after another kept failing and retiring, till but one woman was seen on the dancing circle. Towards morning some of those who had been sleeping awoke and found the woman still dancing; her motions, however, were almost lifeless; her eyes were closed, as if trying to sleep, and those observing her cried out, "oh! oh! dancing with her eyes shut." From that time to the present that place has received the name "Winking Point."

Not far from the lake we see the Beaver House Hills rising high above the surrounding forest. The Indians tell strange tales about these hills and this lake, "We-che-ka-chak" (or Noah) according to the Indian legends roamed these forests, and paddled his canoe over these waters, when all kinds of fur-bearing animals were of an immense size, hence these hills were beaver houses. Just as we entered the lake I was shown a small island on one side of which is a crevice in the rock, through which surface water running gives it a darkish colour, resembling blood somewhat. Here they say this great Indian killed and skinned one of those great beavers. Further on I was shown a large round rock deep in the lake, only part of it seen above the surface of the water. This stone they say (and they say it seriously) "We-che-ka-chak" hurled at

the beaver, but only wounding him he was not captured till he reached the island above mentioned. This is sufficient at present about the Indians' great man of the past. In this region, and in many other places, bush fires have destroyed most of the evergreen trees, giving them a barren, bleached appearance.

Crossing this lake we again enter the river and soon come to what is called "Wa-pa-ka-win Falls." A sad circumstance gave this fall its name. I shall relate it briefly. Two bands of Indians met here and spent some time feasting and drinking whisky. In former years spirituous liquors were given freely to the Indians. On such occasions they invariably fought—and desperate fights were these—fights from which many an Indian carries the mark to the present day. Since the prohibition of liquor, more than twelve years ago, I have not heard of these Indians fighting, and I have made strict enquiry respecting the matter. On this occasion they got drunk as usual and fought. Two men fighting, on a flat rock close to the water at the upper end of the falls, fell and rolled into the water. They were seen floating into and over the first and second rapids still fighting, but were not seen floating over the last rapid for they had gone down, never to rise, till the trumpet of God shall call the nations to his bar. "Wa-pa-ka-win Pa-wis-tik" (floating down falls) still gives a warning voice not to enter its mouth for it will not promise to float us safely down, which to the sober mind is enough. Here we must portage. Revelation, History, past and present, lift their warning voice, saying, beware of strong drink, while the cataract of broken hearts, failing health and fortunes, lost and wailing souls, cry aloud, "Boys and girls, don't come this way, 'make the portage' down life's stream, and go by Calvary!"

I must hasten on for I have already taken up space in this important paper that might be devoted to matters of greater importance to its numerous readers.

Another day brings us to Island Lake. I have already said sufficient about it. I have not the ability to do justice in giving a description of the small part I saw. Suffice it to say no lake outside the province of Keewatin (so far as I have seen or read) has a companion with it for the number of islands or beauty of scenery.

Having spent a few days with the Indians we prepare for our return trip. The first evening we come down the river a few miles. The guide I had last summer had not much experience in running these rapids. Next morning I said, "Well, Edward, how do you feel this morning?" "I didn't sleep much last night," he replied. "Why?" I asked. "I was thinking about the rapids," he said. "Do you think you can manage them?" I asked. "I don't know," he answered, throwing the long black hair from his face and looking down the stream, the sound of the first rapid falling on our ears. Edward is a quiet, easy going man, about 45 years of age, more inquisitive than communicative. When we came to the rapids you would feel like cheering him were you to stand on the shore and watch him floating over these fierce waters—his sharp black eyes seem to come out from their lurking

places, and peer through the various channels as though he saw the course every drop of water was taking—while with a firm grip he commanded his paddle, causing the canoe to respond to his will, and on he darted from rapid to rapid as swift as the Lightning Express train, till he reaches the calm waters below. Here he seems (like Samson when the secret of his strength was gone) to become powerless, and complains of one arm being strained, but in five minutes he is prepared for the next rapid; and on, on we go till we reach Oxford House, the happy home of the missionary and the scene of other toils in the Lord's vineyard.

KISSES OF INTEREST.

A FATHER talking to his careless daughter said: I want to speak to you of your mother. It may be that you have noticed a careworn look upon her face lately. Of course it has not been brought there by any act of yours, still it is your duty to chase it away. I want you to get up to-morrow morning and get breakfast, and when your mother comes and begins to express her surprise, go right up to her and kiss her on the mouth. You can't imagine how it will brighten her dear face. Besides you owe her a kiss or two. Away back when you were a little girl she kissed you when no one else was tempted by your fever-tainted breath and swollen face. You were not as attractive then as you are now. And through those years of childish sunshine and shadows she was always ready to cure by the magic of a mother's kiss the little, dirty, chubby hands whenever they were injured in those first skirmishes with this rough old world. And then the midnight kiss with which she routed so many bad dreams as she leaned above your restless pillow, have all been an interest these long years. Of course she is not so pretty and kissable as you are, but if you had done your share of the work during the last ten years, the contrast would not be so marked. Her face has more wrinkles than yours, far more, and yet if you were sick that face would appear more beautiful than an angel's as it hovered over you, watching every opportunity to minister to your comfort, and every one of those wrinkles would seem to be bright wavelets of sunshine chasing each other over the dear face. She will leave you one of these days. These burdens, if not lifted from her shoulders, will break her down. Those rough, hard hands that have done so many unnecessary things for you, will be crossed upon her lifeless breast. Those neglected lips that gave you your first baby kiss will be forever closed, and those sad, tired eyes will have opened in eternity, and then you will appreciate your mother, but it will be too late.—*Selected.*

A WOODEN gate had been recently painted in a garden. A little grandson, who was playing there, was charged not to open it until dry. His grandma afterward found the marks of his fingers, and told him she was sorry he had disobeyed her. He replied: "Oh, never mind, grandma, when I'm dead and gone you'll be glad to look at those little finger-marks."