

loose, a great shaggy coat of buffalo hide, gauntlets of brown calf skin and top boots of soft kip, with high heels and patent leather fronts. And although his farm adjoined the village and the stones of his house showed gray beyond the beaver meadow, through the apple orchard, only half a mile distant, he never came afoot, but always drove a black blood stallion hitched to a red cutter and engirdled by a chime of bells that even with their warning notes gave out a measure of delight. And as he drew up at the post-office, threw the buffalo robe over the dashboard and stepped out with the reins still in his hands, he looked like a picture from a fairy book. And if he actually was not Santa Claus or King Cole or some wild rover of seas, he must have descended from his own illustrious namesake. For Christopher Drake, notwithstanding his pitance of opportunity, lived in a world of colour and action and romance. He was not just the average old countryman determined to go afarming. Not Christopher Drake. For he had an imagination that took him all over the world, serving him much better than his gouty feet, and making it possible for him to work out his own salvation even in the face of an arrogant disposition, a slender education and a squeamish community. And although he moved amongst settlers from Scotland, Ireland and his own England, and listened to several differing accents, he still retained his broad Devonshire twang, uttering words which in strange ears sounded as if begotten of a foreign tongue.

"Wa'ar be gwine?" he would ask if the village boys happened to wander into his orchard in harvest apple time. "Ah doan min' a vew apples, but doan sgin the bark off wi' they bare feet o' yourn."

And whenever anyone inquired as to the health of Mrs. Drake he always answered, "'Er's a little better'n 'er 'ath abin, I tzank 'ee."

Mrs. Drake was a woman of conspicuous resignation. She was resigned to everything, even to one of her husband's proudest possessions—a Peruvian parrot. This brilliant bird Christopher had taught to pronounce profane words, for no other reason than to amuse himself and harrow the tender feelings of his pious wife. In the midst of grace at table (in this respect Christopher had not departed from the ways of his fathers) the parrot oftentimes would exclaim, to Christopher's huge delight, "Oh, 'ell! damn 'er eyes, Polly wants a cracker." To a woman of Mrs. Drake's natural piety and sensitiveness, the effect of these exclamations was relieved only

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*Mrs. Drake
was Naturally Pious*