

the briny deep, he asked us to admit, this continent was a howling wilderness. It was as nature had left it. But see what a change man had wrought! The work of man was greater than nature's because man had improved on nature, and so on and so forth.

*A Howling
Wilderness*

Fred Freeman, who had been pathmaster for two seasons and was thinking of running for council, led the negative. He, too, took North America for instance, and he admitted that when our forefathers crossed the briny deep this continent was a howling wilderness. But that is about all he did admit. He held that if nature had not provided for man, man would have had nothing to work on. And so on and so on.

Betty Butson came next with an attempt to reclaim for the affirmative any ground that might have been lost in North America. Obviously, she was much flustered, owing no doubt to her consciousness of the fact that Psyche knots were as yet not properly appreciated thereabouts. But she started right out with an attack on North America, and became so vehement in her declarations and shook her head so vigorously that the Psyche knot began to untwist. One strand stood straight up behind, giving Betty a most defiant air, and as she traversed North America her hair gradually fell apart. The audience began to laugh, and as Betty did not know the cause she became very much excited and actually went all the way from Nova Scotia to British Columbia in one desperate leap.

My turn was coming next, and in my exuberance I whispered to Susie Taylor, who sat beside me and on whom I looked with much tenderness, that if I couldn't get off North America I'd get off the platform. And, as it happened, Betty, just at that very moment did get off, her hair having tumbled down in absolute disorder, and I got on.

I turned and faced the audience. Perhaps, hardened and unsympathetic reader, you too, in the course of your conquered career, have spoken in public. Perhaps you know what it is to have the mind become blank, even for ever so brief a space of time, to see the heads of the audience bobbing confusedly in front; in fine to lose control of your nerves and your tongue and to be glad to blurt out anything, just so long as it is something. I blurted out the very thing that had caused my derision.

"All right," I said, "take North America for instance. I admit that when our forefathers crossed the briny deep this continent was a howling wilderness."

*I, too, took
North
America*