



He stood upright and gazed before him into the darkness of the wood, and tried to realize all that this meant to him, to ease the throbbing of his heart; and he tried to speak calmly, and repress the joy that consumed him.

"I understand—not your reason for asking; I do not want that—but what you want me to do. You want to marry me"—he laughed but checked himself—"as soon as possible. Right? If I could marry you to-morrow! But I am afraid it couldn't be done. I don't know, but I will see. Is that all?" He laughed again; but the laugh did not jar upon her, for she understood it.

"You are very good to me," she said. "When you have gone I will write—and explain; will ask for your forgiveness."

"Gone?" he repeated dully. "She looked up at him with faint surprise.

"Yes. You will go after—after we are married. You know that I should ask you that? You did not think that I meant to be a burden to you."

He gazed at her as if he were hypnotized. Her eyes met his solemnly and unabashed in her innocence and purity, and he felt as a man would feel if he had surrendered his reason, his very senses, under some subtle influence too powerful to be resisted.

"I understand," he said, the solemnity of his tone answering the solemnity in her eyes. "When I am gone you will write and explain. 'Yes'—he drew a long breath—"I understand. And give you my promise. You will explain; I will wait."

There was silence for a moment, or two. The soft tones of the Sonata of Schubert's floated out to them. The performed air of the woods stole over them; he felt as if he were in a trance, and yet he knew that the moment was real; that he was to marry Clytie for some mysterious yet sufficient reason. He did not regret, did not resent, this last exaction of hers;

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The surprise was for her, for Mollie laughed still more hysterically.

"You silly little goose!" she exclaimed breathlessly. "Do you think I didn't know that? Why, I knew it before you did. I detected him the night he arrived. I saw him prowling about the churchyard; he had been to his father's grave. He gave himself away fifty, a hundred times. Did ever any fisherman, laborer, working man, look like that? Why, even Percy, though he did not guess the truth, realized that 'Jack Douglas' was a gentleman, and treated him as one. When did you discover it?"

"On the day of the storm, in the boat," said Clytie, in a low voice. "And you cared for him before then," declared Mollie. "I saw how it was with you, dear. And now it is going to be all right!" she went on joyfully. "He has opened up, told you he loves you; you are going to be married, he will come to his 'own' and you and he will reign at dear old Bramley as Sir Wilfred and Lady Carton! Clytie, do you think the servant will be very much alarmed if I scream? Because, if I don't, I'm afraid I shall explode!"

"Hush, Mollie," murmured Clytie soothingly, and stifling a sigh; for the picture Mollie had drawn was but the mockery of her happiness. "He does not know that I have discovered that he is Sir Wilfred. He must not know."

"Why?" demanded Mollie, with reason.

Clytie drew her hand across her brow with a gesture of weariness and doubt. "Don't you see, dear?" she said. "If he knew, he—would not marry me. Mr. Granger told me in his letter, reminding me of the date, that Sir Wilfred had already refused to marry me. Mr. Granger told me this unwillingly, but he was obliged to do so. He wrote vaguely about a paper Sir Wilfred had drawn up, but which Mr. Granger had not in his possession; he said that Sir Wilfred might change his mind; but that I could not rely on that, and that the time had come when he, Mr. Granger, was compelled to tell me how matters stood. You see, Mollie, that Sir Wilfred had renounced the proposed marriage; and I know he would not change his mind. He is too proud to gain Bramley by—by consenting to his father's plan."

"I see," said Mollie slowly and thoughtfully. "And you had to humor him, to—speak. Clytie dear, I know how you feel about it; but I honor you for doing what you have done. Only a brave woman could have done it. And now tell me everything, dear. The marriage—I suppose it must take place soon?" She laughed joyfully. "How delightful it all is! When I try to realize it my head swims!"

"Yes; the marriage must take place soon, before the twenty-third. And it must be—must be a secret one." She felt Mollie draw back and gaze at her in the darkness.

"A secret one!" repeated Mollie, with amazement. "But why, Clytie?"

There was silence for a moment, and Mollie could not see the pallor of the face above her, the quivering of the lips.

"You must not ask me that, Mollie dear," she said almost inaudibly. "There—there are reasons. He is satisfied. And you shall know after—in time."

"Very well," said Mollie, after a moment or two of thought. "Then I must be content to wait. The whole affair is so romantic, so mysterious, that it would be a pity to spoil it by an ordinary wedding. Satisfied, I should think he was! I know him; he's half-mad with delight at getting you on any terms. I never saw, or read of, any man half as much in love as he is. And no wonder. But go on, Clytie; my soul is thirsting for the minutest details. How you can sit there as calm as a boiled egg and as cool as a cucumber, while I'm all of a tremble with excitement!"

"There is no more to tell, Mollie dear," said Clytie. "He is coming to-morrow."

"To arrange about the wedding? Oh, Clytie, isn't it delicious! My fondest, wildest hopes are going to be realized. And they were happy ever afterward. And I'm not forgetting myself. I've shuddered every time I thought of that ridiculous herold and Bramley and of yours of surrendering to that cunning money and going back to Camden town and rental indignance. And now you are going to be the real mistress of Bramley! Lady Carton. How nice it sounds! And, Clytie, what a splendid fellow he is. Such an absolute dear. Really, I think, if you had refused him, I should have proposed to him myself!"

Clytie winced; all unwittingly Mollie had laid her hand upon the recent wound of Clytie's maiden modesty and pride. They talked, more quietly now, for some time; but at last went upstairs. In the light Mollie noticed Clytie's pallor and weakness, but attributed them to excitement; the emotion, she was looking fagged out, dear; and no wonder. But you will be all right now. Thank goodness, there will be a great strong man to look after you, and your long-suffering sister will be relieved of her burdensome task."

It was some time before she left Clytie; and when she had gone Clytie sank on her knees beside the bed, her face hidden on her outstretched arms. (To be continued.)



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## CROP AND TRADE CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE DOMINION

Complete Reports Submitted On Conditions in the Various Provinces of the Dominion at Annual Meeting of the Bank of Montreal Will Be of Special Interest to Mercantile and Farming Communities.

At the Annual Meeting of the Bank of Montreal complete reports were submitted by the Superintendents of the Bank, dealing with trade and farming conditions in the various provinces of the Dominion. These reports cover the particular operations carried out in the various sections of the country and on this account become of very special interest to the mercantile and farming communities desirous of keeping in touch with the important developments that are occurring throughout Canada.

We quote from the different reports as follows:

#### QUEBEC.

The cut of lumber during the past season was not as large as usual. Practically all stocks have been sold and shipped out. Prices were high. Labor conditions show improvement and a larger cut is looked for this winter.

The demand for pulpwood from the United States was uneven, but stocks have been well disposed of and high prices are expected to be maintained.

The paper mills of the Province continue to working to capacity, the demand for newsprint and better qualities of print papers exceeding the supply.

Manufacturing in nearly all lines has been generally satisfactory, although production is still limited by scarcity of skilled labor and raw materials.

Hay and cereal crops were average. Root crops were large, but potatoes suffered from rot. Pasturage was good, and dairy products will show an increase.

With the exception of asbestos, there is little mining done in the Province. Asbestos prices are good and shipments are well maintained.

The fur business has been good, and boot and shoe manufacturers find difficulty in supplying the demand.

Shipbuilding continues active, a number of large steel vessels having been launched from different yards during the year.

The wholesale and retail trade was most satisfactory; collections were good and failures show a decrease.

There have been no exceptional expenditures during the year by the Dominion or Provincial Governments and municipalities have limited disbursements to necessary works. Practically no railroad construction was undertaken.

There is very little speculation in real estate; values and rentals are both high.

General conditions, both in cities and rural districts, are good, with no apparent slackening in trade since the termination of the war. The housing problem is everywhere acute, and those dependent on a fixed income are seriously affected by the abnormal cost of all necessities.

#### ONTARIO.

Manufacturing in Ontario has been limited only by shortage of supplies and disturbances in labor. Government credits for goods sold to Europe have stimulated manufacturing, and domestic demands have been insistent. New industries have been started, and a number of successful manufacturing concerns in the United States have been making enquiries with the intention of locating in Ontario.

Ontario farmers have been steadily bettering their position in recent years, installing modern equipment and improving their modes of living. The past year has been one of fair crops and high prices. A wet spring was followed by an exceptionally dry summer, and grain crops, with the exception of fall wheat, fell below the average. Root crops were good, corn and tomatoes were a record yield; the season was poor for all fruit except grapes. Cheese production showed a falling off. There is a shortage of hogs; sheep raising is on the increase. The cattle situation is somewhat unsettled, owing to the limited amount of feed available for carrying through the winter.

The production of lumber has been seriously reduced owing to shortage of labor. 1919 has been an excellent marketing year, with heavy sales to Great Britain and the United States, and a steady domestic demand for all classes of lumber. Prices have been unusually high, there is no accumulation of stocks on hand, and notwithstanding the scarcity of labor and increased costs of operating, the year has been a successful one. Pulp and paper have been in large and increasing demand, with soaring prices for the latter.

Mining production during the year has been curtailed. The demand for nickel fell off after the Armistice; strikes lessened the silver output. Both these situations are improving and larger production has taken place at the gold mines.

Both wholesalers and retailers report it easy to sell goods. Credits are shortened and bad debts negligible.

Larger expenditures were generally made by municipalities this year in an effort to overtake works postponed during the war.

Population shows a general increase with a tendency to drift to urban and manufacturing centres.

Values in real estate are steadily increasing. So little building took place during the war that there is now a general shortage, particularly in dwelling houses, and in consequence there is much activity in real estate and an improvement in the building trades.

There has been a continued extension in hydro-electric power during the past year, and works at Nipigon and Chippawa as well as at other places less important, will within the next two years add very largely to the available power for manufacturing and other purposes throughout Ontario.

Generally speaking, the year has been one of great activity throughout the Province.