

*All Good
Old Tunes*

"Happy Day", "Coronation", "Sawley", "French", "Martyrdom", "Dunfermline", "St. Bernard", "Consolation"—all good old tunes sung by us from time to time with becoming fervour and devotion.

Devoted as I am to a proper appreciation of the service, especially the sermon, my attention is distracted by exterior things. For it is early autumn, and the window in front of me is open. Through it, from our elevation, I can see the village lying in Sabbath quietness, even somnolent, with apples mellowing on the ground and tomatoes ripening on garden fence and window sill. Presently old Charlie, the agnostic, rises from his accustomed snooze under the apple-trees and walks slowly into the house. Geordie McLaughlin is leaning over the sty, estimating the growth of his hog since last Sunday. He is not given to churchgoing; he prefers to read *The Huron Expositor* or the latest almanac. Now he is talking over the fence to Mrs. Butler, who was Mary Pigeon, and whose baby cried her out of church this morning. Their kitchen gardens adjoin each other, and it is interesting for them, as it should be interesting for everybody, to see the cucumbers forming, the citrons growing, the onions seeding, and the lettuce, all of it that hasn't yet gone to seed, still sending out crisp, curling leaves that make a wonderful background for slices of spring-cooled tomatoes and pickled beets. Sparrows chirp in the trees, and in the beaver meadow great flocks of blackbirds alight and whistle. In one of the back lanes Miss Pringle's Jersey, Mrs. Johnston's brindle, and the miller's red heifer are cropping grass where it grows most succulent in the fence corners, and the doctor's bay mare is renewing its hoofs in the pasture lot down by the mill. A scene of homely quality. And as I behold it, framed by the open window and stretched out before me in the autumn sunlight, I turn perhaps with reluctance to the singing of the closing hymn, which after all must reveal an uncertain measure of artificiality. But I forgot these things in the arch naïveté of Susie's smile, and I am reminded of life's belated beneficence as I see Henry Perkins, when all heads are supposed to be bowed during the pronouncement of the benediction, covertly squeezing Miss Pringle's hand, when, later on, I come suddenly upon these two erstwhile lovers talking confidentially, after long years of estrangement, yet rapt and unsuspecting, down by the garden gate, under the silver maple.

*Under the
Silver Maple*