

THE CHRISTMAS PIE.

Some poets to raptures delightfully drift,  
And happy young lovers to mating;  
While others to measure exactly write  
The cadences of skating.  
But I will indulge with my falling quill  
My praise to the pie that is golden.  
The circular disk of the square, as you will,  
The host of all pies of the oven.

There's something surrounding the making of  
Pies  
In a farm kitchen wonderfully reaching.  
To the inner delights of a man's paradise,  
Whose apparatus requires no teaching.  
The maid, with her arms that are dimpled and  
white  
Plumped up to her elbows in flour;  
The scent of the shimmering spices delight-  
ful,  
Or, is it the maid gives the power?

The table is spread and the dishes are laid,  
The napkins and other things needful  
Surrounding the king of the feast all arrayed,—  
The turkey, the centre-piece headful.  
Then grace it is said, and the farmer his chair  
Pushes back and commences the carrying;  
The feast then begins, and a satisfied air  
Reigns above those who lately were starving.

The pie with its coat that was creamy and  
sweet,  
That condiment of the maid's cooking,  
Is brought from the depths of the kitchen's re-  
troat.  
To greet every sense long a-booking.  
But the best piece of pie is the evening slice,  
Eaten there in the light that is mellow.  
When you break the wish-bone with the  
maiden so nice  
Who nestles 'gainst you, her best fellow.  
—New Moon.

Brave Young Douglas.

BY LINDA BELL COLSON.

BEFORE a rude log shanty, built in a small irregular clearing in the yet untilled forest of fifty years ago, a boy stood watching a slight opening in the trees opposite. He could discern a short procession moving slowly along the narrow path. The boy's name was Douglas Macrae. His sister, Janet, a slim girl of fifteen, and two years his senior, stood in the doorway, crying silently.

It was hot with the fierce sultry heat of a Canadian August. The pine trees fringing the clearing gave out a strong resinous smell. The sparse patches of cultivated land had scarcely a vestige of green left. Drops of perspiration trickled down the copper-hued faces of the four Indians who led the procession, carrying on their shoulders a roughly-made coffin. As they emerged from the forest and came into the full glare of the clearing, Douglas bared his head; his face was set and strained. The coffin contained the body of his uncle, David Macrae, who had died on his own farm, two miles away, but twenty hours before, his last wish being that he should be buried in the little graveyard at Keene, where already a rude headstone bore the name of his wife. The intense heat made it necessary that no time should be lost in carrying out the dead man's wish. Douglas' father and a few neighboring settlers walked slowly behind the Indians. One of these latter, called Peter Crow, was a tall, muscular Mohawk, with a low, brutal expression of face. He was noted in the Indian settlement near for his enormous physical strength, his fierce, un governable temper, and his fatal fondness for the firewater of the white man.

The Indians carried the coffin stolidly. As the procession crossed the path in front of the shanty, Mr. Macrae called out to the children that he would return before night fall. Soon the little band disappeared under the pine trees, and was lost to Douglas's view. There was still a walk of two miles through the forest before they could reach Rice Lake, where the Indians would have to lay their insensible burden in a canoe to paddle across to Keene, where, in the wild cemetery, a newly-made grave awaited their coming.

Douglas went into the shanty, and, throwing himself down on a rough couch which served at night as a bed, burst out crying. He had loved his uncle dearly, and his death was a great loss to him, greater than any he had known since the early death of his mother.

Some twelve months before this August day the children's father, meeting with reverses in business, had left his native city, Edinburgh, and, with his two little ones, had come out to Canada. He was a man of considerable force of character, upright and honorable, but cold and harsh in manner, and his motherless children had long since learned that they need look to him for neither sympathy nor love. To his son he was especially severe, almost to cruelty. Douglas was a slight, delicately built boy, with a long thin face, and a pair of singularly beautiful grey eyes, inherited from his mother. Mr. Macrae, a strong man himself, despised his son's physical delicacy, and unjustly characterized the boy as a weakling and a coward. Douglas was passionately fond of music, and already played the flute with unusual ability. But this only served to increase his father's contempt for what he regarded as effeminacy in the boy, and so music was to Douglas a forbidden pleasure. The life of a farmer, Mr. Macrae told his son, would, he hoped, "make a man of him."

On their arrival in Canada, Mr. Macrae had taken his children to his brother David, near whom he proposed to settle. Then had followed for Douglas and Janet some weeks of unalloyed pleasure. Their uncle and aunt were childless, and they took at once to their hearts the "pauvre withouters bairns," as the children revelled in their new freedom, and in the affection so lavishly bestowed on them, Douglas was a different boy in this bright, loving atmosphere, and David Macrae could not understand the lack of interest his brother displayed in the, to him, highly-gifted lad.

To Douglas the crowning proof of his uncle's kindness was the gift of a famous pistol. It was an old horse-pistol, historically valuable as having once belonged to Prince Charles Edward, the Pretender, but which had been for many years in David Macrae's possession. It was a beautiful and curious firearm—a flintlock with a smooth bore, the stock profusely inlaid with silver and terminating in a silver knob. Douglas spent long hours cleaning and polishing his treasure, and was triumphant when, to Janet's terror and dismay, he fired his first shot.

The summer was well over when Mr. Macrae finally decided on the purchase of a large tract of land near Rice Lake

than his brother's farm. It was a bad season of the year to begin farming, but Mr. Macrae was obstinate in refusing his brother's offer of hospitality for the winter.

Though Douglas and Janet longed ardently to be allowed to remain where they were, they stood in too much awe of their father to make known their wish; and so, on a chill November day, with drearily-falling rain, the first logs of the new home were laid.

It was a wretched beginning to a wretched winter. The inclement season commenced early and was unusually severe. The thermometer sank for days at a stretch to far below zero. Heavy snowstorms raged frequently. The log shanty proved but a poor shelter from the searching winds. Janet and Douglas in their insufficient clothing suffered miserably from the cold. Their provisions gave out, and long before the winter was half over they were reduced to a diet of "rusty" pork and frozen potatoes. Their sole drink, except water obtained from melting snow, was a tasteless pink infusion made from the wild tea bush, a low, scrubby shrub, which grow in profusion in the neighborhood.

What Mr. Macrae thought of the hardships they were forced to endure his children never knew; he bore everything uncomplainingly, and expected them to do likewise. To Douglas, whose health suffered from the lack of proper nourishment, he was even harsher than usual, and many a time the lad smarted under the injustice. His beloved flute lay silent among his few treasures. In his worst moments of suffering he stole often to look at it, to press his lips to it in an agony of passionate regret that he must for ever renounce his dream of becoming a great musician.

One night there was no fresh water in the house, and Mr. Macrae sent Douglas out for some snow to melt. In order to insure its being thoroughly clean, the lad had to seek it at some little distance from the house. The tall pine-trees threw a black shadow across the snow. As he stooped to scoop some up in a tin dish, an owl perched high on a tree uttered an unearthly hoot. It was an unknown sound to the Scotch lad, weird and uncanny in the still night air, and filled him with a dread terror of he knew not what. With a stifled cry he dropped his dish of snow and fled back to the house his fear of the unknown exceeding even the fear he felt of his father.

"You young coward—afraid of a noise. Return at once and fetch me that snow." Mr. Macrae looked threateningly at a stout switch he kept conveniently near.

The boy hesitatingly opened the door; Janet, casting an appealing glance at her father, made a move to accompany him. Mr. Macrae commanded her to sit still, and Douglas, slowly and silently, went out into the darkness and the presence of that unknown evil. His heart beat painfully, it was almost audible in the silence of the winter's night. His teeth chattered, his boyish face was drawn and pinched, he seemed to feel around him a thousand ghostly forms each uttering that strange gruesome cry. He accomplished his task, but he never forgot in all his after life what he endured in doing so.

Slowly the miseries of the winter passed, and at length there came the sudden bursting into life of the glorious Canadian spring. It was a welcome change to Douglas, for, though he still had many irksome duties to perform, the savage beauty of his spring-clad home enchanted him.

Early in the summer his aunt had died, and now his uncle was taken from him—his uncle, whose warm sympathy had cheered him, whose kindly interest had roused all that was best and highest in his nature; and, as the sad procession passed from his sight amid the pine-trees he felt that he had lost his truest earthly friend.

But the first bitterness of grief overcome, and relieved by the passionate outburst of tears with which he had thrown himself down, Douglas arose. He recalled the precious gift of the dead, the Charles Edward pistol. Lovingly he took it out, fingering it affectionately, and as he did so, stories of its history told him by his uncle, came to his mind, and his boyish ardour kindled. Carefully he loaded the old weapon, and had just reset the flint in the lock when his sister entered. Laying his pistol down on the shelf, he proceeded to help her in the preparation of their evening meal.

Presently he had to go to the newly-made well for water. As he bent down to lower the bucket the sound of a distant whoop startled him, and he sprang to his feet; the cry was repeated, and again and again it woke the echoes of the forest, each time evidently nearer. Gazing intently in the direction whence it came, he descried the form of an Indian walking along the path from the lake towards the clearing, and waving his arms wildly while he gave vent to a series of savage yells. Douglas turned and rushed across the little space to the house, where he found Janet standing in terror at the door.

"Oh, Douglas," she cried, "it is Peter Crow, he must be drunk—what shall we do?"

Janet was right. It was Peter Crow. The whisky, which fifty years ago was usually supplied with a free hand on such an occasion as a funeral, had proved too much for the savage. By the time the procession had reached the lake Peter had been in no condition to be a safe companion in a canoe, and so had been left behind with orders to return to the Indian settlement. Instead of doing so, however, he had retraced his steps to Mr. Macrae's clearing.

Instinctively the children felt that they were in great peril, and that the Indian he had come within a hundred yards or so.

Douglas rapidly closed the door and drew the bar which secured it in a night.

"Do you think he can break it in?" tremblingly asked Janet.

The suggestion brought a new sense of insecurity, and so the children dragged the sleeping-bunk and set it against the door as a barricade, hastily adding the table and chairs; but before they had completed their defence Peter Crow was vociferously demanding admittance.

"Let me in! Let me in! White

man keep whisky. Red man want whisky!"

"We haven't any in the house; you had better go back to the settlement," shouted Douglas.

"One big lie white boy tell. White man always have whisky; white man never drink water. Let me in! Let me in!"

Again he hammered on the door, shrieking like a madman in broken English and in his native tongue, and uttering blood-curdling screams which almost paralysed his listeners.

"Oh, Douglas, he will kill us; hark to that! isn't it awful. Please God, help us, save us." She fell on her knees and hid her tear-stained face in her hands.

"Don't be afraid, Janet; see the sun is setting; surely the door will stand firm until father returns."

As he spoke the noise without suddenly ceased.

"I believe he has gone." Douglas crept stealthily to the little loop-hole of a window and looked out.

The Mohawk was nowhere visible. The pine-tops were covered with the crimson of the fast sinking sun, the sky was flecked with rosy clouds, the freshness of the evening was gradually replacing the sultriness of the day. The whole scene was one of peace. Douglas found it diffi-



THE SHRINE OF ST. NICHOLAS.  
"We are all good children."

cult to realise that the incidents of the last few minutes were not all some hideous dream.

"Oh, Janet, I think he has really gone; but we won't open the door until father gets back."

He turned away from the window, but as he did so a sight met his eyes which sent every drop of blood from his face.

It was the Indian emerging from the shadow of the pine-trees, and carrying a good-sized log. It was not that, however, which so startled the boy; it was his expression. Naturally vindictive and ill-favoured, his face was now distorted with passion until it more nearly resembled the face of a demon than that of a human being. His black hair hung in tangled masses around his neck, his eyes were glaring and bloodshot, his white teeth showed like the fangs of some hungry animal.

Douglas stole away from the window; he dared not tell his sister what he had seen.

Again came the violent hammering on the door, with the fierce whoops. "Red man kill white children, no give whisky. Indian want whisky, whisky always."

The brother and sister within shudderingly listened, their young hearts filled with despair. The glow faded from the sky, the grey twilight gathered, would their father never come?

Then a terrific blow of the log thundered on the door. The frail barrier shivered beneath its force, creaked and gave way. With a howl of triumph Peter rushed into the room. At the awful sight Janet crouched speechless in a corner. Towards her staggered the Indian and seized her by the arm, whirling round her head with a diabolical yell a huge knife. For a moment Douglas stood still in horror, then, like a flash, came the thought of his pistol, and he nerved his heart for action.

A couple of steps to the shelf on which it lay, and it was in his hands, pointed full at the Indian, who at the sound of his movement had turned from Janet to attack the lad. The Indian made a rush, and he fired.

For a second the boy saw through the

smoke a swaying body, and a heavy fall told him the shot had taken effect; then his senses left him.

When he revived, his father was bending over him. "My brave boy, thank God you are safe."

Douglas's heart gave a throb of joy, never before had his father spoken to him in such tones, never caressed him as he was doing now.

"Peter Crow, father, is he dead?" he asked brokenly.

"No, it was only a trifling wound."

And Janet?

"Janet is safe and well; but you must keep quiet, my boy, and you will be better soon."

Douglas sank back; he was too weak yet to do more than wonder if his father had really learned to love him at last!

Two months later, Mr. Macrae, wearied of a life for which he had neither inclination or ability, disposed of his farm and returned with his children to Scotland, where he decided, for Douglas's sake, to make his home. Between father and son there sprang up a warm enduring love and sympathy, perhaps all the deeper for the long years of repression. The beloved flute was no longer hushed. Under skilled masters, Douglas began a long course of training in music, and after years of patient study and hard work, by which alone success is attainable, he reached an honoured place among the musicians of his day.

sportsman) borrowed the captain's gun to have a shot at four wild ducks that were hovering on the surface of a smooth shallow lagoon within easy range of the steamer. He let fly, and, instead of one of the four birds falling, a fifth suddenly rose up, no one could see whence. Three times more did he fire and each time up jumped another duck, amid roars of laughter from the whole ship's company while the captain said, with a broad grin, that it was a new style of shooting to blow a duck into existence, instead of out of it, with every shot! The miracle was never explained, and we were left to conjecture that the mysterious birds must have been under water till the report of the gun scared them out.

Our first evening beyond the Arctic Circle was a sight never to be forgotten. Slowly, calmly, grandly, the great sun sank towards the black, sailless void of the infinite sea, like a noble soul overwhelmed by unjust misfortune. As he touched the rim of the horizon a cheerless shadow of the grave, gathered like shroud over the voiceless ocean and the desolated shore, giving weird, unearthly shapes to the jutting crags of that iron coast, and making the dreary waste of laden waters look vaster and drearier than ever. Then suddenly, amid the

hush of a silence as deep and solemn as of a newly-created world, the glory of a fresh dayspring broke over sea and sky, and the great resurrection was complete.

But another spectacle was yet in store for us, even more characteristic of the far North than these.

As we steamed slowly out towards the open sea from Tromsø Harbour [our last halting place before Hammerfest itself, "the town at the world's end"] the talk naturally turned upon the famous northern "kraken," that joint octopus which, though now as mythical as its compatriot the Maelstrom was once painted by artists, gravely classified by naturalists, and believed in by the whole world.

"It's a good job," cried one of our party, "that the kraken is an extinct animal; for if (as Bishop Pontoffidan says) its feelers were long enough to reach up the rigging and haul down a sailor from the masthead, it would have plucked us all off this deck as easily as a boy would pick strawberries!"

"I should think so!" said I, "especially as it is said to have simplified the process at times by dragging down the ship and all to the bottom of the sea to be devoured at leisure."

"But is it so certain that the beast is extinct?" asked a voice from behind.

"Sir Walter Scott mentions it as a current belief in 1824; and only a few years ago I read a story in one of the magazines telling how some man saw off the coast of Shetland a creature answering to the description of the kraken, and had even made out the twisting of its feelers through a strong glass."

"It must have been a strong glass of whiskey," then, said the first speaker, with a grin. "Catch me believing that such a brute exists till I've seen it existing!"

"But, on the other hand," I put in, "you must remember what Canon Kingsley tells us: 'Never say positively that a thing does not exist till you have actually seen it not existing.'"

Just then there was a sudden bustle and clamour of voices on the forecast, and then one of the disputants, who had run forward to see what was the matter, came running back in high excitement.

"Hurrah, boys!" he cried; "here's a kraken turned up just as you were talking of it!"

There, sure enough, about a quarter of a mile ahead of us, lay floating a vast, black, glistening mass, very much like the bulging side of an enormous bottle. Though evidently moving very slowly, its mighty bulk shouldered the smooth sea into huge waves at every movement; and judging by the displacement of the water around it, its length must have been considerably more than half that of the steamer itself.

"That's not a kraken," said I, "but its something else that can be quite as dangerous at times—it's a whale."

At that moment, as if to confirm my words, two huge jets of water shot up high into the air from the floating mass, and fell back in a shower of glittering spray.

This sight, however familiar to a few of us, was new to the greater number of those on board, and they crowded eagerly on to the forecastle to look at it. But just then a cry from one of the sailors drew our attention to a second whale that had just risen to the surface on our port beam; and in another moment the captain pointed out a third on the starboard bow.

"These whales seem to be tacticians," said a tall, keen-eyed American, with the scar of a Confederate bullet on his brown cheek; "they're going to outflank us, like the Irish soldier who surrounded his prisoners."

But the Prince of Wales and his courtiers (as the wit of our party called them) hardly seemed to notice our presence.

They at once made for each other, and began a sort of gigantic game of leap-frog, surging up and plunging down till the whole sea was in a foam with their unwieldy gambols, and lashing the water with their fluked tails, until the noise that they made fully bore out Charles Reade's bold comparison of it to a church-tower falling flat upon an acre of boards.

"I suppose they're home for the holidays," said our "funny man," with a grin. "People talk of a school of whales, so it stands to reason that they must have holidays sometimes."

"This would make a good illustration of my favourite text, 'The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like young sheep,'" added the Rev. Evelyn Burnaby, a younger brother of the famous Colonel.

But the captain looked anxious and troubled, as well he might. There could be no safety for us while in such close proximity to these moving mountains, every plunge of which made the steamer rock to and fro like a child's toy; and any chance collision with them, even in sport, would smash our ship like an egg-shell.

"Lead the bow-gun, quick!" roared Captain Hansen. "We've no bull, unluckily, but the report may be enough to scare 'em."

He was obeyed, and not a moment too soon; for hardly was the gun slewed round and the powder handed up when the largest of the whales turned and came right at us followed by the other two.

The captain himself sprang to the wheel, and the gunner rammed and primed for bare life, while we all held our breath; for the shock of that mighty mass, driven against us like a battering-ram, would suffice to send us all to the bottom at one blow.

But, just as the foremost whale seemed about to crash into us, round flew the wheel, the ship veered to starboard, and the monster shot harmlessly past, almost capsizing us with the "wash" of its wake. At that moment bang went the gun, and happily the sharp, sudden report sufficed to scare the three leviathans; for the whale, with all its giant bulk and strength, is as easily startled as its cousin the elephant. Down sank the three fluked tails into the unknown depths below, while we, recovering with some difficulty from the tremendous roll of their plunge, glided swiftly away from that perilous spot into the open sea beyond.

AN EXILE'S WISH.

BY A. B. MCKERNAN.

Take me back to mother Ireland,  
Far across the ocean's breast,  
For of all the lands 'neath heaven  
She's the one I love the best.  
For me look once more on my island,  
On her flashing lakes and hills,  
On her quiet sunlit valleys,  
And her breezy, emerald hills.

Let my eyes behold her mountains,  
Her deep ravines and dells,  
Her ancient forts and round towers,  
Abbeys, shrines and holy wells,  
The dear old white-washed school-house,  
The orchard and the moor,  
And the little lost sheep's cleft,  
Where I knelt at Sunday's Mass.

Then, oh! Fate, do thou restore me  
Back again to scenes of youth,  
And the hearts and eyes a-beaming  
There with friendship, love and truth;  
For my life has lost its sunshine  
Here beyond the ocean's foam,  
And I'm daily, nightly longing  
For a glimpse of boyhood's home.

Forverly I pray each morning,  
That when I'm called to go  
For the heart-aches, toils and troubles  
Of this vale of tears and woes,  
Or this vale of sighs and sobs,  
That beneath the skies of Erin,  
In the heart of green Tyrone,  
I will be in death's dark slumber,  
In a grave with shamrocks strewn.

Happy Though Rejected.

Perdido—"What a cheerful way you must have of refusing a man. You seem to send them away supremely happy."

Beatrice—"I tell them that the report that I am a great heiress is a mistake."

LITTLE BOY (at table)—Pa, give me some bread." Father—"My son, you must remember that older folks have the preference." Little Boy—"I don't want any preference; I want a roll."

A MAN advertises for "a competent person to undertake the sale of a new medicine," and adds that "it will be found profitable for the undertaker."

YUNG MAN: "Will you give assent to my marriage with your daughter, sir?" Old Man (firmly)—"No, sir; not a cent."

AT PLAY WITH THREE WHALES.  
AN ADVENTURE IN THE POLAR SEA.  
BY DAVID KER.  
"Author of 'A Coral Prison,' 'Ilderim the Afghan,' etc."

WE were a merry party on board of the little steamer that was carrying us up to the lonely waste of waters lying between the North Cape and Spitzbergen, on a fine summer day eight weeks long; for we had already passed the limit of perpetual daylight, and were now well into that puzzling region where Lord Dufferin's pet rooster flew overboard and drowned himself in despair, evidently thinking that a world where the sun had ceased to rise and set as he ought to do was no place for a respectable rooster to live in.

We had already had our full share of adventures. We had fraternized with dwarfish, highly-flavoured Lapps, admired their bright-eyed reindeer, and examined with some curiosity a tattered Lapp translation of the life of Moody, the evangelist, which one of them proudly produced from his deerskin pouch. We had wondered at the presence of mosquitoes in countless swarms far to the north of Iceland, and had found to our no small chagrin, on passing the spot where the terrible "Maelstrom" whirlpool ought to have been, that that famous vortex "which doth suck down, as it were a straw or a leaf, the largest whales that be in the ocean," existed only in the vivid fancy of mediæval chroniclers.

One of our striking local experiences was that, while lying at anchor off the low straggling point of Vœringer Ness, nearly midway between Trondhjem and Tromsø, a passenger from the Southern and Tyrol (who was by way of being a great