



THE tests of life are to make, not to break us.
—M. D. B. Black.

Winning the Wilderness

(Continued from last week.)

"NOT yet," Leigh answered. "We make every acre help to feed more acres. It's an uphill pull. It's my war with Spain, you know. But I'm doing something with these little daubs of mine. I have sold a few pieces. The price wasn't large, but it was something to put against a hungry interest account. Some day I want to paint—" she hesitated.

"What?" Thaine asked.

Leigh was bending over her brushes and paints, and did not look up as she said, with an effort at indifference: "Oh, the Purple Notches. It is so beautiful over there."

Thaine bit his lips to hold back the words, and Leigh went on:

"Dr. Carey says Uncle Jim couldn't have held out long at general farming. But the Coburn book was right. The alfalfa is the silent subsoiler, and when the whole quarter is seeded we'll pull that mortgage up by the roots, all right."

She looked up with shining eyes, and Thaine took both of her hands in his, saying:

"I must tell you goodbye now. Mother will know I am here and will be dragging the lake for me. This isn't like other goodbyes. Of course, I may come back a Brigadier General and make you very proud of me, or I might not come at all, but I won't say that. Oh, Leigh, Leigh, may I tell you once more how dear you are to me? Will you promise again to send me the same message you sent to Prince Quippli when you want me to come back?"

"I will," Leigh replied in a low voice, and for that moment the grove became for them a holy sanctuary, wherein their words were sacred vows.

When Thaine reached home again, Dr. Carey was just leaving, and the way was prepared for the purpose of his own coming, as he had hoped it would be.

"I've a call to make across the river. I'll be back in time to take you up to catch the train. There's a feast of a breakfast waiting in there for you. I know, for I had my share of it. Goodbye for an hour or two."

The doctor waved his hand to Thaine and drove away.

"So the wanderlust and spirit of adventure in the Aydelot blood got you after all," Asher Aydelot said as he looked across the breakfast table at his son. "It seems such a little while ago that I was a boy in Ohio, a foolish fifteen-year-old, crazy to see and be into what I've wished so often since that I could forget."

"But you don't object, Father?" Thaine asked eagerly.

Asher did not reply at once. A rush of boyhood memories flooded his mind, and as he looked at Virginia he recalled how his mother had looked at him on the day he left home to

join the Third Ohio regiment nearly forty years ago. And then he remembered the moonlit night and his mother's blessing when he told of his longing for the open West, where opportunity hunts the man.

"No, Thaine," he answered gently at last. "All I ask is that you try to foresee what is coming in hardship and responsibility. Young men go to war for adventure mostly. The army life may make a hero of you, not by brevet, nor always by official record, but a hero nevertheless in bravery where courage is needed, and in a sense of



A Summer Resort Right at Their Door.

These attractive picnic grounds are on the farm of Mr. A. E. Phillips, Prince Edward Co., Ont. It overlooks the Bay of Quinte and is a spot that is appreciated by many. The Women's Institute hold their annual gathering there every summer and a large number of the community make frequent use of it to hold picnics. It is only about 20 rods from the house and is therefore very convenient to Mr. Phillips and his family. Are there not places such as this on other Canadian farms which might be utilized to advantage?

duty done. Or it can make a low-grade scoundrel of you almost before you know it, if you do not put yourself on guard duty over yourself twenty-four hours out of every twenty-four. War means real hardship. And this war foreshadows big events. It may lead you to Cuba or to the Orient. Our Asiatic squadron is ordered from Hong Kong. Dr. Carey tells me it is going to meet the Spanish navy in the Philippines. I thought I feared the West when I came here as a scout and later a settler, and drove the frontier back with my rifle and my hoe. Is it possible your frontier is further west, ward still? Even across the Pacific Ocean, where another kind of wilderness lies?"

Into Asher's clear gray eyes, that for all the years of his life had the vision of the wide, pathless prairie, there was a vision now of the big things which the twentieth century must cope. The work of a generation younger than his own.

"Don't forget two things, Thaine, when you are fairly started in this

campaign. First, that wars do not last forever. They jar the frontier line back by leaps, but after war is over the good old prairie soil is waiting still for you—acres and acres yet unredeemed. And secondly, while you are a soldier don't waste energy with memories. Fight when you wear a uniform, and dream and remember when the guns are cold. You have my blessing, Thaine, only remember the blessing of Moses to Asher of old, 'As your day so will your strength be.' But you must have your mother's approval too."

Thaine looked lovingly at his mother, and the picture of her face lighted by eyes full of mother love staid with him through all the months that followed. And all the old family pride of the Thaines of Virginia, all the old sense of control and daring was in her tone as she answered:

"You have come to a man's estate. You must choose for yourself. But big as the world is, it is too little for mothers to be lost in. You cannot find a frontier so far that a mother's love has not outrun you to it. Go out and win."

"You are a Trojan, mother. I hope I'll always be worthy of your love, wherever I am," her son murmured.

Two hours later, when Dr. Carey stopped for Thaine, Virginia Aydelot came down to his buggy. Her face was very white and her eyes were shining with heroic resolve to be brave to the last.

ning to start to California in a few days. I may be home for several months. I'll tell you goodbye now, for I may not be down this way again before I go."

Virginia remembered afterward the doctor's strong handshake and the steady gaze of his dark eyes and the pathos of his voice as he bade her good-bye. But she did not note these then, for at that moment Thaine came down the walk with his father, and in the sorrow of parting with her son she had no mind for other things.

Dreary rains filled up the first days of May. At Camp Leedy, where the Kansas volunteers mobilized on the old Fair Ground on the outskirts of Topeka, Thaine Aydelot sat under the shelter of his tent watching the water pouring down the canvas walls of other tents and overflowing the deep ruts that cut the grassy sod with long muddy gashes. Camp Leedy was made up mostly of muddy gashes crossed by streams of semi-liquid mud supposed to be roses. Thaine sat on a pile of sodden straw. His clothing was muddy, his feet were wet, and the chill of the cold rain made him shiver.

"Noble warfare, this!" he said to himself. "Asher Aydelot knew his bearing when he told me that war was no ways like peace. I wonder what's going on right now down at the Sunflower Ranch. The Thaine family that old spillway draw from the lake down in the woods. It's nearly time for the water lilies to bloom, too."

The memory of the May night two years before with Leigh Shirley, all pink and white and sweet and modest, came surging across his mind as a heavy dash of rain deluged the tent walls about him.

"Look here, Private Thaine Aydelot, Twentieth Kansas Volunteers, if you are going to be a soldier stop that memory business right here, except to remember what Private Asher Aydelot, of the Third Ohio Infantry, told you about guard duty twenty-six hours out of twenty-four. Helgh ho!"

Thaine ended with a sigh, then he shut his teeth grating and stared at the unceasing downpour with unseeing eyes.

A noisy demonstration in the camp roused him, and in a minute more young Todd Stewart lay stretched at full length in the mud before his tent.

"Welcome to our city, whose beauties have overcome others also," Thaine said, as he helped Todd to rise from the mud.

"Well, you look good to me, whether I do to you or not," Todd declared, as he scraped at the muddy plaster on his clothing.

"Enter!" Thaine exclaimed dramatically, holding back the tent flaps. "I hope you are not wounded."

Todd limped inside and sat down on the wet straw.

"No, my company just got to camp. I was so crazy to see anybody from the short grass country that I made a slide your way too swiftly. I don't mind these clothes, for I'll be getting my soldier's togs in a minute anyhow, but I did twist that ankle in my zeal. Where's your uniform?" Todd asked, staring at Thaine's clothes.

"With yours, still. Make a minute of it when you get it, will you?" Thaine replied. "Our common Uncle wants soldiers. He has no time to give to their clothes. A ragged shirt or naked breast will stop a Spanish bullet as well as a khaki suit."

"Do you mean to say you haven't your soldier uniform yet?" Todd broke in.

"A few of us have, but most of us haven't. They cost something," Thaine said with a shiver, for the May afternoon was chilly.

"Then I'll not stay here and risk my precious life for a government so darned thin and stingy."

Todd sprang up with the words, but

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