

A Striking Illustration from New Ontario

BY MR. A. J. BRACE.

TALL, straight and powerful was my friend Aleck Mac—, a true Scot, manly and well beloved by all who knew him; a hard worker, an intelligent and capable leader. But one failing interfered with the confidence his employers loved to place in their practical and experienced bush and mining man—he was too fond of the "heather dew." This was Aleck's drawback and he knew it. His dear little wife was an earnest Christian woman and dearly loved her husband. He promised her that soon he would swear off, but that was difficult, for he loved his men; he was the hero of the gang always and so often he thought it seemed unmanly not to

mite was dry and heated and it required only this slight concussion to produce the terrible explosion which instantly followed. The loud report brought settlers soon to the spot and they witnessed a horrible scene. The six men were hurled in all directions, four were literally blown to pieces, the two remaining, a French Canadian and Aleck were most horribly mutilated.

Tenderly were they carried to Sudbury, but the French lad expired ere the train reached the station. Aleck, broken, bleeding and unconscious, was carried to the Hospital and for three long weeks, for the most part unconscious, hovered

between life and death. The best medical aid was summoned; his faithful wife, broken-hearted, but quiet, submissive and tearless, sat patiently beside him night and day and lovingly ministered to his wants.

I was one of the first allowed to enter the silent room when the verdict was published that Aleck would probably live. I shall never forget the sight. It has been my sad lot to behold many tragic scenes of mutilation and suffering on the battle grounds of the African veldt, but none equalled this. There lay the massive form of the big and once strong muscular man; he had lost a part of one leg, the right arm, the fingers of the left were badly cut and lacerated, his breast and head were filled with pieces of the dynamite can, the tips of his ears and nose were gone and both eyes were absolutely destroyed.

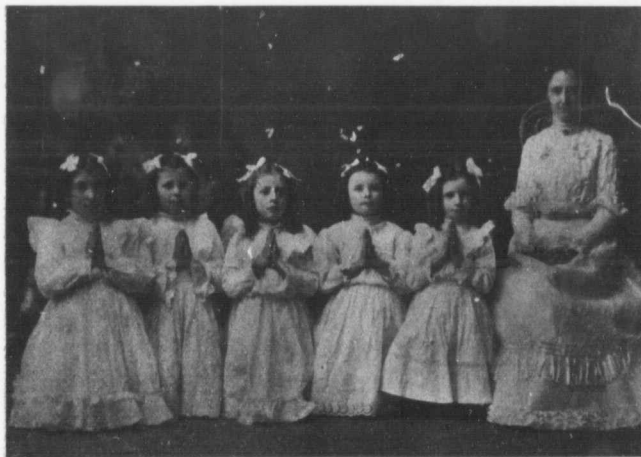
"Cheer up, Aleck," I said, "God has spared your life and you are going to live. You will miss your arm and leg and—" He didn't let me finish, but most piteously broke in with a heart-rending sob of anguish: "Tis my eyes; how can I live and not see again?" and the great frame was convulsed, the tears fell fast and the choking sobs were to me the saddest I've known. "Well, Aleck," I replied, "our lessons are sometimes hard to learn and difficult to understand, and perhaps the loss of your physical sight may mean the gain of spiritual vision. God can make a real man of you yet, bruised and broken as you are." Then, "Shall I sing for you, Aleck?" "Oh, yes, won't you sing the little piece you used to sing in camp? 'The Bird with a Broken Wing.'" We did, and at the last verse,

"But the bird with a broken pinion
Kept another from the snare,
And the life that sin had stricken
Raised another from despair."

Aleck piteously said, "Yes, perhaps that's me." We prayed together for Divine guidance and strength, but it was not till the third visit and we sang for the third time the sweet little song of hope, that Aleck felt God would accept his broken gift of his emaciated self. But he gave all that was left to his Master, and to-day though blind, supported by his crutches and leaning on his faithful wife, he sells books and Bible and humbly but gladly lives and tells to others the power of Jesus to save

"The bird with a broken pinion."

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LITTLE DEAF-MUTE GIRLS SINGING "NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP," AT THE INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB.

"treat" when "it was up to him." As is ever the case, Aleck's great heart and generous nature crippled his better judgment and strong will and he was "one of the boys."

In going my rounds as a bush preacher, costumed like my friends in shantyman garb, I several times met this manly character and loved to be in Aleck's company. I saw latent possibilities of usefulness for the Master's service in this man if he would only receive a vision of the Christ and the Higher Life. It seemed strange and hard that he should have to learn his lesson in the sad experience that came to him.

Aleck was sent in charge of a little gang of five, besides himself, to the district of Wahnapiatae to investigate a new mining property by sinking a small test shaft. They were supplied with plenty of dynamite for blasting purposes and also had a goodly supply of the usual flask stimulant. The little camp was snugly built and around the blazing and welcome camp fire the first night was spent. Stories were told, pipes were smoked and the flasks were passed. 'Twas a little earlier in the winter than this and the nights were always frosty. It is well known that dynamite is very susceptible to frost, so in the morning the first duty was to thaw this necessary article. They had with them a dynamite thawer—a tin can made double, with an outer compartment for water, which when heated gently thaws the powerful explosive which is placed in the inner chamber.

Around the fire in the early morning they chaffed and laughed and passed the flask, waiting for the dynamite to thaw; they were feeling good and did not notice the time quickly passing. One stepped to the fire and tested the can with a gentle kick. The water had all vaporized, the dynamite