

## JOHN.

(A CHARACTER SKETCH FROM LIFE.)

His parents came to Canada many years ago, and settled in an almost unbroken section of the country, not far from the village of London, to conquer for themselves a home from the wilderness. There the subject of this sketch was born to the heritage of a simple and toilsome life. The boy developed, as he grew, a character that was naturally steadfast, self-reliant and loving, yet he lacked the power of expressing his affection, except by quiet and cheerful, often unnoticed self-sacrifice. His words were always simple and few, and even in times of deep feeling they came reluctantly, or remained unspoken—then his whole being wrought out in action what his tongue could not say.

In person he was short—a fact that caused him much secret mortification, quite unmingled with bitterness however—but he had a sturdiness of build that denoted great muscular strength. His face was what the folk thereabout called “homely”—not one fine or handsome feature in the whole countenance, yet to those who looked twice, there appeared something pleasantly attractive in the clear and cheerful glance of the blue eye, and a reason for trust in the kindly lines of the firm mouth. He was already a man when we children of from eight to twelve years of age became acquainted with him, during our long summer visits to the farm. His taller, better favored and more cultured brothers were our merry companions on many a long drive or walk. John cheerfully gave them precedence, and set them free to enjoy themselves, by doing their work with his own, almost as a matter of course; but in our small difficulties we soon learned to turn to him for help or comfort, in preference to any of the others. And his ready sympathy was not reserved merely for spoken troubles. Many a time, on a wet day, when attacks of homesickness seemed hardest to overcome, noticing a little dejected face, he would button an old coat round the small form, and carry the mourner off to the barn, or wherever he chanced to be at work; and there, without the ability to say much, his tender listening to childish heartache, was a world of comfort in