

The Family Circle.

OMISSION

I might have said a word of cheer
Before I let him go
His weary visage haunts me yet;
But how could I foreknow
The slighted chance would be the last
To me in mercy given?
My utmost yearnings cannot send
That word from earth to heaven.

I might have looked the love I felt;
My brother had sore need
Of that for which I too shy and proud
He lacked the speech to plead
But self is near, and self is strong
And I was blind that day;
He sought with his careless eyes
And went, athirst, away.

I might have held in closer clasp
The hand he laid in mine;
The pulsing warmth of my rich life
Had been as generous wine.
Swelling a stream that, even then,
Was ebbing faint and slow,
Mine might have been (God knows!) the art
To stay the fatal flow.

The word, and look, and clasp withheld
O, brother-heart, now stilled!
Dear life, forever out of reach—
I might have warmed and filled
Talents misused and seasons lost,
O'er which I mourn in vain—
A waste as barren to my tears
As desert sands to rain!

Ah, friend! whose eyes to-day may look
Love into loving eyes,
Whose tone and touch, perchance, may thrill
Sad hearts with sweet surprise,
Be instant, like your Lord, in love,
And lavish as His grace,
With light and dew and manna-fall,
For night comes on apace.

—The Congregationist.

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MARJORIE'S CANADIAN WINTER.

BY AGNES MAULE MACHAR.

CHAPTER X.V

CARNIVAL GLORIES.

After a Sunday which was marked by a quietness that seemed unaffected by the presence of so many strangers, and the prospects of so many exciting novelties, the celebration of the Carnival began. Alan, who was the most enthusiastic member of the household in regard to the diversions of the week, kept the rest duly informed beforehand, and planned with careful calculation how Marjorie, in particular, could manage to see the largest share of all that was going on. Dr. Ramsay, of course, was too busy a man for much sightseeing, and carnivals were no novelty to either him or Mrs. Ramsay. And as Alan was a rather youthful escort for his sisters and cousin, much satisfaction was expressed when Professor Duncan accepted sundry hints thrown out by Marjorie and Millie, and placed himself at the disposal of the party for the four great evenings of the Carnival.

Monday evening had two events on the programme—the opening of the new *Tuque Bleue* toboggan slide, and the unveiling of the colossal ice lion. As this new slide was the one which, from its convenient nearness, the young Ramsays meant to frequent, Alan, Jack and Millie were very anxious to be there at the opening, so it was arranged that they should go there first, staying just long enough for Alan to take them down the slide once or twice, and then walk down to the *Place d'Armes*.

The *Tuque Bleue* slide was a purely artificial one, the tall wooden platform being erected in a large open field, stretching from St. Catherine Street to Sherbrooke Street, thus giving sufficient space for the toboggans to gradually come to a stop. The electric lights made the gay scene as light as day; a huge bonfire close by threw its ruddy glow athwart the white light and black shadows and Chinese lanterns, and soaring rockets added to the picturesque effect. The inclined plane from the platform, about forty feet high, was divided into five spaces by raised lines, so that five toboggans could come down abreast without any risk of collision. As soon as the slide was declared open, a number of toboggans waiting at the top with their merry crews, shot down with lightning speed, and were in a few moments

at the end of the course—their occupants quickly scrambling out of the way of those that were following as fast as safety permitted. Marjorie declined to be enticed to the platform for that evening, preferring to stand beside Professor Duncan and watch the animated scene. And, indeed, she had never even dreamed of anything like it before. The long white expanse of snow, bright with the variegated lights, the thunderous and constant rush of the fast-flying toboggans, the merry shouts of their occupants, the picturesque crowds of spectators, most of them arrayed in blanket costumes of many colours, red, white or blue, with gay striped borders, made the scene quite unique, more like a page out of a fairy tale than a bit of actual reality.

Both Marjorie and Professor Duncan were standing absorbed in the fascination of the spectacle, Marjorie trying to distinguish Alan and Jack and Millie, as they flashed past among the rest, and too much engrossed to notice the by-standers moving to and fro close by. But suddenly a very familiar voice and intonation sent her thoughts flying off to old homes cenes, before she was conscious of the reason. The next moment she looked eagerly around. Yes, sure enough! there was no mistake about it. Not ten yards off, as intent as she on the spectacle, stood Nettie Lane, her father and a cousin of Nettie's, also well-known to Marjorie. It looked so strange, yet so homelike, to see them. As Marjorie darted toward them, Nettie looked round, and there was a delighted recognition. Marjorie had hardly thought she should have been so glad to see her old school friend again.

'Well, now, isn't it funny we should meet you so soon!' exclaimed Nettie, when the first exclamations of surprise were over, and Professor Duncan had been introduced to the strangers.

'When did you come?' asked Marjorie.

'Oh! we got here Saturday night, and we were awfully tired yesterday. We're at the Windsor, you know, and to-day we were driving all round the city. Father wanted we should see it, but we were most frozen when we got in. I think it's frightfully cold here, so we had to stay in to get thawed. And we were going to find you out the first thing in the morning; but it's splendid, isn't it, meeting here? I think it's all lovely! But I should be frightened to death to go down in one of those things.'

'Oh! it's not so bad when you get used to it,' remarked Marjorie, with a little pride in her enlarged experience.

'Have you been down in one, then?' Nettie asked, much impressed, and Mr. Lane, who had been talking with Professor Duncan, laughed, and said that 'Nettie would never be happy now till she went too.'

'There are my cousins now,' said Marjorie. 'See, you can get a better sight of them now—they're just stopping—and getting up.'

'What! that tall lad in the blanket suit and red cap and sash?' asked Nettie, regarding him with great admiration as a distinguished-looking personage, quite eclipsing his more soberly attired companions.

The three had now had all the tobogganing they wanted for that evening, and, leaving the track, came round to meet Marjorie and the professor, and were duly introduced to her New York friends. As the latter were also eager to go to see the ice lion, they all went on together, Mr. Lane hailing a sleigh near the entrance, into which the whole party managed to squeeze themselves by dint of a little ingenuity. As they drove down town, both Marjorie and Nettie had a hundred questions to ask. Nettie explained that their visit was quite a sudden idea. Her father had some business in Montreal, which he thought he could accomplish best in person, and as her aunt and cousin in New York wanted to come, he thought he would take Nettie also. Her aunt had remained at the hotel, having had enough of the keen, frosty air for one day.

'Father wanted mother to come,' explained Nettie, 'but you know how busy

she always is, with meetings and things. She thought it was very nice for me to go, but she said she'd rather stay at home and attend to her poor people, than go to all the carnivals that ever were.'

Marjorie felt a livelier emotion esteem for Mrs. Lane than she had ever known before. After knowing Mrs. West, she could better appreciate Mrs. Lane's Christian zeal and devotion, even if she had judged her dear father too rashly.

They had not nearly got through the rapid interchange of queries and answers when they found themselves down at the great square, where the tall church towers rose stately in the white electric lights. Marjorie tried to explain to Nettie something of the gallant feat of *Maisonneuve*, that had become so associated in her mind with the *Place d'Armes*, but Nettie was too much interested in the present fireworks to care much about—

—'old, unhappy, far-off things
And battles long ago.'

Mr. Lane, however, was genuinely interested in the reminiscence, and was delighted when he found in Professor Duncan a companion who could gratify his desire for information about the past as well as the present. Their sleigh was drawn up with others on the edge of the square, whence they could see fairly well over the crowds that encircled the point of interest. Amid a great blaze of fireworks, hissing rockets, Roman candles and colored lights, the lion was unveiled, crouched on a pyramidal pedestal of ice, at the sides of which stood ice-fountains, apparently playing, the whole being encircled with great white cannon balls of ice and snow. The lion himself showed as much spirit as was possible with his hard and cold composition. He sat with head erect and open mouth and paw half-uplifted, as if in angry menace.

'Not quite so bad as the American eagle, as he is generally portrayed,' remarked Mr. Lane after they had scrutinized him for a few moments, getting a good view of his great head in profile from their post of observation.

'What a jolly lion!' exclaimed Alan.

'I think he's a beauty!' exclaimed Nettie, enthusiastically; and Marjorie and Millie wanted to know whether he was English or French.

'Both, I'm glad to say,' said the professor, then added musingly:

'I wonder what he's thinking of—the dynamite explosion at St. Stephen's, or the fortunes of our brave men in the Soudan, or Gordon shut up still, I fear, in Khartoum!'

'Yes, indeed,' replied Mr. Lane. 'He has enough to make him look anxious. It's a ticklish time for your Government just now.'

And the two gentlemen began to talk politics, while the others watched the lion in silence, as blue lights began to burn and throw about him a weird effect; rapidly changing as yellow, green and rose-colored fire and smoke-clouds varied the coloring. Several showy pyrotechnic devices followed, while the rockets and Roman candles continued to go up, and showers of colored meteors came down about the gleaming sides of the lion, who remained calmly grim and unflinching to the end, when at last he was left to keep his lonely watch through the silence of the moonlight night. Weeks after they all remembered how the lion had suggested Gordon's solitary watch in the desert. For when the sad news came, they knew that that very day Khartoum had fallen, opened to the Mahdi by the traitor Faragh; and that a treacherous stroke had ended at once Gordon's lonely watch and his brave and devoted life.

As they drove up to Dr. Ramsay's house to deposit the young people there, it was settled, by Alan's suggestion, that Nettie should come to spend the following afternoon with Marjorie, and that they should all go together to see the opening of the new slide at St. Helen's Island in the evening.

Accordingly, next day, Mr. Lane brought Nettie up to the Ramsays', where she was introduced to Mrs. Ramsay, Marion and the little ones. She was eager to see how every

thing looked in a Canadian home, and went especially into raptures over the toboggan standing in the entry, and the snow-shoes hanging up in the hall. But her admiration reached its height when Effie came in, rosy with play, her bright eyes and dark locks just peeping out of the peaked *capote* of her little pink-bordered blanket-coat; for it was a bitterly cold day, and the warm *capote* was a needed protection.

'Oh, you cunning little thing!' she exclaimed when she had kissed and hugged Effie—more to her own content than Effie's. Millie looked up from her book with a surprised and rather indignant expression in her keen eyes, which Marjorie rightly interpreted, and laughingly explained that Nettie did not mean to use the word 'cunning' in the sense they usually associated with it. Effie understood the admiration well enough if she did not the word, and went off to get her Christmas doll to show, that 'Millie and Marjorie had dressed for her,' while Norman brought in their own little toboggan for exhibition, and offered Nettie a ride on it. As for Robin, he justified his mistress's high opinion of his sagacity by his evident cordial recognition of Nettie, with whom he had been a great favorite.

Cold as it was, Nettie thought she should like to go for a brisk walk along Sherbrooke Street, and Marjorie and she set out, well muffled up, for Nettie had added a 'cloud' and some other wraps to her outfit since she had experienced 'carnival weather.'

'I think your cousin Marion's just lovely, Marjorie,' said Nettie, as soon as they were out. 'And your aunt's real handsome, and I'm sure she's very kind, though she's so quiet. But they're all splendid! I think it's ever so much nicer for you to be there where it's all so lively, than to be all alone in a dull poky house all day.'

'I'm very fond of my aunt and cousins,' said Marjorie, 'but you know "there's no place like home," and I should never find any house "dull or poky" where my dear father lived.'

'Well, anyhow, it's a very good thing you've got such a nice home to live in while he's away,' rejoined the practical Nettie, and this, at least, was incontrovertible.

They walked far enough to get a distant view of the 'Montreal slide,' at the other end of the street, crowded with tobogganers in spite of the cold. By that time, however, they were glad to turn, but not before a gentleman they met had stopped to warn them that one of Nettie's ears, which was exposed to the bitter wind, was getting frost bitten. She was very much frightened, but Marjorie told her it was nothing, it would be all right in a few minutes. And then she rubbed it with the corner of her fur cap, which her uncle had told her was the best thing to do under such circumstances; much better than using snow. And presently Nettie declared that her ear was burning so that somebody must be praising her to the skies.

As they passed the Wests' handsome mansion, Marjorie pointed it out to Nettie, telling her how Ada and she had become great friends. Nettie admired the exterior exceedingly, and declared that she would give anything to see the inside. Marjorie did not see very well how she could be gratified, however. The Wests' house was full of visitors just then, and Ada was engrossed, of course, with them, and Marjorie thought that Mrs. West might consider it a great liberty if she were to take a friend of hers there unasked. However, fortune favored Nettie. As she wanted to go to the hotel for something she wished to show Marjorie, the two girls went down to the Windsor, and Nettie took Marjorie through the spacious and beautiful drawing rooms of that fine hotel. As they passed through, Marjorie encountered Ada and her mother, who had been paying a visit to a friend, also staying there. Of course Ada, who had not seen Marjorie for several days, stopped to talk, and Nettie was duly introduced, and to her great delight received an invitation to come with Marjorie to pay Ada a visit next day. Nettie showed her friend her own room, commanding an excellent view of the ice-palace, and said that her father wanted Marjorie to dine with them the next evening, and that he was going to invite the whole Ramsay party, Professor Duncan included, to come to see the 'storming' of the ice-palace from the windows of their own rooms which would accommodate them all.

(To be continued.)