

# THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

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## FRED'S SACRIFICE

Written specially for The Western Home Monthly.

"The thrush is singing its heart out,  
Midst the budding orchard trees;  
The cuckoo's shrill, familiar shout  
Comes on the scented breeze—  
'Tis spring in dear old England!"

"The gorse and broom, on moor and hill,  
Gleam golden in the sun;  
The breaths of shy primroses fill  
The morning first begun—  
'Tis spring in dear old England!"

The lines ended abruptly with a blot that looked suspiciously like a tear-drop. Fred Derrick gazed stupidly at the scrap of paper which he still held in his hand, emotions many and varied making his heart ache and throb. The handwriting was that of his wife. He had gone to her desk for an envelope he had wanted and there he had lighted upon this fragment of poor little verse which he knew meant so much to the writer.

A year ago he had brought his bride from the old country to try their fortune in "golden Canada." He knew it had grieved her to part from her mother and sisters, but he had little guessed how severe the wrench had been. She had always been so bright and cheerful, taking such a pride in her tiny house, their farm and stock.

There were times, of course, when she had sighed to him for her mother and sisters, but she had always appeared satisfied when he had said: "Have patience, darling, we will have them out in two years' time."

When he could afford the money, he had made up his mind to send for them, but just then he was saving up to buy a good team of horses. Up to the present, his oxen had served his purpose well, but his ambition was to have a team of horses. For this purpose he was hoarding up his dollars, and the bundle of notes in his pocket-book was steadily increasing.

He had not told his wife—he was keeping it a secret, thinking what a pleasant surprise it would be to her when he would drive up one fine day with a spanking team, and tell her that it was their very own. He thought guiltily, miserably, of his hidden hoard, his secret ambition, as he read again the fragment of verse and felt the yearning for "home" that ran through it.

Meg had always been fond of books and poetry, he remembered, and at home she had been able to follow and cultivate these tastes to a certain extent, but since their marriage she appeared to have but little time for reading or anything else beyond her housework.

And yet all the time her tastes were the same, lying dormant for want of opportunity to spring into life—and she had been waiting silently and patiently. He started as he heard her voice calling him, and had time to slip the paper within her bosom before she entered, an open book in her hand, her face happy and expectant.

"From home, Fred! Isn't it lovely? Mr. Roberts has been to town and he'll bring the mail back with his; wasn't it?"

"How pleased to notice her husband's face and perturbed manner. He looked at his knee watching his face as she read the letter.

"Fred, eagerly, when he had

finished, "don't you think there's something suggestive about that one sentence of mother's?" and she repeated—

"I should dearly love to be with you when your baby is born and so would the girls—we won't despair yet, however; much may happen in two months, and we may be with you after all."

"Oh, Fred, wouldn't it be lovely?" she

"I could not love my home much more," she answered him, indignantly. "I love every bit of it, but it will be many a long year before I can love Canada as well as my native land, dear old England."

Her eyes filled with tears and her voice broke, and as he kissed and soothed her, Fred wondered for the hundredth time at the steadfastness and faithfulness of woman-kind.

He duly posted the draft by the next mail, not without a sigh, perhaps, for his fine team of horses, for he was only human, and he had set his heart upon that team. However, he had not much time for regret the following six weeks. He had his breaking and seeding to do, and in his spare

sent of their fares? Someone must have advanced them the money."

Fred thought of his horses, sighed, and smiled, and then joined heartily in his wife's eager preparation. He drove into the town on the appointed day and met the evening train by which, sure enough, his mother-in-law and her daughters arrived.

I will pass over that first happy moment when Meg felt her mother's arms around her, and heard her sisters' gay, young voices exclaim—

"What a charming little house, Meg!" We have had a delightful journey, and we have quite fallen in love with Canada already."

It seemed almost too good to be true to Meg to hear her sisters' laughing voices in the house, and to look into her mother's loving eyes.

"I cannot believe it is true," she cried, between laughing and crying. "I think I am the happiest young woman in Canada."

When the merry little supper was over that evening, the mother put on her glasses and taking out her purse handed her astonished son-in-law a roll of notes, and with a twinkling tear and smile said—

"Here are your dollars back, Fred. We did not need them, thanks to Aunt Mary. All the same, my dear boy, the girls and I thank you very, very much for your kindness."

"It was awfully good-natured of you, Fred," the two girls chimed in. "We hope you have not wanted the money. You see, Aunt Mary died, and to our amazement left Mother £500, and us three girls—you as well, Meg—£300 each, so we felt mighty independent, I can tell you, and decided at once to come out to Meg for a time, at any rate."

Meg, looking rather pale and bewildered, gazed from one to another, then, as light dawned upon her, turned accusingly to her husband—

"You sent the money home? Oh, you bad, deceitful, darling old boy. I want to box your ears, but I must really kiss you instead," and she did, until Fred felt himself to be the luckiest man in Canada at that moment.

Afterwards, when he went out to "feed up," leaving the women together, he felt the roll of notes in his pocket with a wry face. "After all, my sacrifice was in vain," he muttered. "That team is as good as mine."

Aunt Mary's legacy came in very useful; it enabled the young people to buy many things for the home and farm that before they had felt they must do without, and before many years had passed they had one of the largest and most prosperous farms in the Northwest.

### Interesting Facts.

Mount Sopris, near Glenwood Springs, Col., 14,200 feet above sea level, is to be made into a summer resort. Among the unique attractions will be the perfection of a natural toboggan slide which may be used all the summer months.

In 1901 the population of England and Wales a square mile was 558. In 1900 the population of the United States was 21.4 a square mile, so Britain is comparatively crowded.

Runaway horses are unknown in Russia. No one drives there without having a thin cord with a running noose around the neck of the animal. When an animal starts the cord is pulled and the horse stops as soon as it feels the pressure on the windpipe.



The Way the Story Ends.

cried, hiding her face upon his shoulder. "Do you think it reads as if they might really come?" He stroked her hair, kissing her flushed cheek, and replied slowly—

"Yes, I think it does—in fact I should not be a bit surprised if they are here in less than two months."

He meant what he said, for the resolve that had dimly formed itself when he had read her scrap of verse had steadily grown. He would send his hoard of dollars home to England by the next mail—the horses could wait another year.

"You would be quite happy then?" he asked her, wistfully.

"Quite. What more could I wish for?"

"You would love your home more, and not hanker after England?"

moments another bedroom to add to his house.

The spring days sped away, the extra room was finished and Meg had furnished it prettily, putting white muslin curtains to the little window and pictures on the walls, until it looked as cosy and homelike as love could make it.

One glad May day, Fred brought a letter from the town bearing the Winnipeg postmark. It contained a few lines from Meg's mother saying they were staying a few days in that city en route for Saskatoon, and giving the probable date on which they hoped to arrive. Of course Meg was in the seventh heaven of delight. "I knew it! I felt sure they were coming," she cried. "I wonder if Aunt Mary has made them a pre-