

of going round to the gate, a rosy-faced girl came rushing out of the house, and flung her hands up in joyful gesticulation about something or other, whilst she shouted something Fred could not hear.

"What is it?" he panted, thinking at first his sister was reproaching him for coming home late.

"Father has come home from Athabasca," she shouted again, her voice plainly audible this time.

"Hurrah!" cried Fred in a rather broken-winded fashion, owing to his want of breath, then without staying to shout the good news to Sam, who was ever so far behind, whilst Johnny was not even in sight, he rushed on towards the house.

"When did father come, Ella, and where is he now?" he panted, tugging at the strap of his book-bag, and nearly wrenching it asunder in his haste to get it off.

"He is out in the barn, I think; here, I will take your bag, and oh, Fred, he has found a place that he likes, so we shall have to go," she cried, catching her breath in a sharp little sob.

"Where?" he demanded quickly, pausing for her answer, whilst his heart gave a painful bound.

"He will tell you; I don't think the place has got a name yet, but it is somewhere by the Wabamun Lake, beyond Stony Plain and Spruce Grove," said Ella, in a tone which seemed to imply that the prospect was anything but inviting.

Fred whistled softly, but said nothing in answer, only rushed away to the barn to find his father, who had been away in the wilds prospecting for a fresh place of settlement ever since the close of harvest.

Maitland Crawford was a man with a passion for the wilderness pure and simple, and when a district became fairly settled, he felt crowded, and, longing for elbow room, yearned for a new location beyond the bounds of civilization.