



## AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

### A Monarch of the Winter World.

By ADELINE TESKEY.

"O! PINE tree tall, O! pine tree tall,  
How faithful are thy branches,  
Not green alone in summer time,  
But green 'mid winter's snow and rime,  
O! pine tree tall, O! pine tree tall,  
With faithful leaves and branches."



"Great tree-trunks rising like Cathedral columns"

Purple-green against the blue-grey of a winter sky stands the pine tree in our northern clime, almost, one could imagine, with an air of defiance toward the fiercest winds and keenest frosts the season can bring forth. Not a leaf will it drop because of the wind and chill; the most it will do is fold them for the winter's rest. If the stark, bare, tragic-looking form of a leafless pine confronts the eye as it sweeps the horizon, be sure that the tree is dead.

The conifers, or cone-bearing trees are distinguished for giving us the cheer of green all through the winter months. There are other trees, such as the live oak, and the red-berried holly, that retain their green in winter, but they never can be confused with the conifers. "All needle-leaved, tapering trees," clothed in green when the snow is on the ground, are cone-bearers.

There are a number of conifers, and even people accustomed to looking at them daily are often confused as to their species. The hemlock, the spruce, the fir, the cedar, the pine are all winter greens—how are we to distinguish them? If we were to acknowledge that we could not distinguish a pine tree from other evergreens we would probably amuse very many people who have been reared among the aromatic trees; but we believe there are some who are labouring under this difficulty.

There are eighty members of the genus *Pinus*, and all are distinguished from other conifers by the fact that their leaves or needles are attached in clusters to the twigs. All other native conifers have their leaves set singly upon the twigs. This one thing of groups distinguishes the pine. Pine needles are also much longer than those of any other conifer, ranging from one to twelve inches, according to species. The leaves of other conifers are short. The number of needles is constant to a certain species of pine tree; sometimes there are five or seven, but more often two or three.

The pines are divided into two distinct groups, the pitch pine, and the soft pine. The early settlers of this country, when clearing their land of the primeval forest, made very picturesque and enduring fences out of pine stumps, and the knots of the pitch pine made the fires, of which we read with regret that they are a thing of the past, in the old-time fireplaces. Across the whole end of the settler's cabin those fireplaces were often built, and a log twelve feet long, and whole pine stumps could be burned in them. Those great fires provided for the family both heat and light.

Surely a picture worthy of an artist's brush is that old-time fireplace, the pioneer sitting in front of it fashioning an axe-handle, his wife knitting or carding the wool, while the children crack butter-nuts on the great hearthstone, the fire throwing its glory over the entire group.

The soft pine is light-coloured and fine-grained, containing little resin. It is used largely by the carpenter, and it is considered quite an acquisition to have one's den or study wainscotted or ceiled with white, or what dealers in the north call "Georgia pine." Five needles in a cluster is what is usually found on a soft pine.

The pitch pine is hard, coarse-grained, heavy, and saturated with pitch or pine gum. The thick, resinous substance of a dark brown, or black colour, which we call tar, is made by burning the wood of

pitch pine and firs with a close, smothering heat.

We are not surprised to learn that the great tree made an impression on the spirits of men, and that some primitive peoples regarded it as having supernatural qualities. Finding it in the snowy Himalaya Mountains, the Hindoo called it the "tree of gods."

The Douglas pine reaches a height of three hundred feet, and grows so straight that it is used for masts of ships. One writing of them says: "So great is their height that it seems as if a man standing on the topmost bough might with his outstretched hand pluck the stars from their places."

Anyone who has had the privilege of walking through a pine forest knows the feeling of awe and reverence which it inspires; the great tree-trunks rising like cathedral columns; the soft carpet of fallen pine needles, grown brown with age, on which a foot-fall can scarcely be heard. One feels like treading lightly and speaking softly. The light is dim. The stillness is intense, for the fragrant gum of those trees is so bitter that no insects trouble them. Indeed, the pine has been called the most inhospitable of trees, because of the fact that it does not invite or entertain the insect world. Then there is the pungent odour, which is said to be laden with health-giving virtues, and the over-arching branches forming such a close roof that snow or rain can scarcely reach the silent temple underneath.

The song of the pine has been immortalised by more than one poet:

"Many voices there are in Nature's choir,  
And none but were good to hear  
Had we mastered the laws of their music well,  
And could read their meanings clear.  
But we who can feel at Nature's touch,  
Cannot think as yet with her thought;  
And I only know that the sigh of the pine  
With a spell of its own is fraught."

The pine tree has not the power of reproducing itself possessed by other trees; as soon as the top is cut down the root dies, there exists no power of sending out shoots from the roots or stump. The cones are the seed-holders of the pine, the seeds being located at the base of the scales, and the young pines grow from the seeds alone. Owing to this, and the very large demands made for the timber of the pine, naturalists say that the tree is doomed to extinction as a forest tree, and in the near future shall be seen only where it is preserved in parks and gardens.

There are many legends connected with the pine tree, of which the following is an example:

"An Indian once went to the Great Spirit to ask a favour. He had a desire to be very tall, taller than any other Indian in the land. This displeased the Great Spirit, and in his anger he changed the Indian into the tall tree which we call the pine; and his tuft of feathers is now seen on the crown of that great monarch."

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### Household Service in England and Canada.

AN Englishwoman, who recently visited Canada, has expressed in the *Queen* newspaper some innocent wonder at many of our ways. Our liking for uncooked fruit, our lack of bells, our knowledge of housework and our contrivances to save trouble, all appear to her to be worthy of remark.

The Canadian woman, when, in her turn she crosses the Atlantic, finds no less food for thought in the habits and customs of the comfortable classes in England. To one used to a house managed with the minimum of domestic help, much of

the service rendered by the deft, black-robed maids of a well-ordered English household seems superfluous. It is well enough, she feels, to be roused on a dark winter's morning from the too seductive comfort of a warm and luxurious bed by a soft-voiced girl instead of a jingling alarm-clock, but the accompanying drawing up of blinds or lighting of gases seems to the sleepy guest a thought unnecessary, not to say intrusive; and throughout the day it is the same with other ministrations.

Many Canadians, however, find it easy to acquire even in a few months' time, a taste for these luxurious observances, and on returning home, this often makes the scarcity of servants seem doubly hard.

But there is another side to the question. Perhaps the insistence of the "servant problem" in Canada and the fact that Canadian girls do not shape readily into maids and shop-girls as deferential as those of England is not wholly to be regretted, for though in itself the work is useful and honourable it is often done under conditions quite unfair to the worker, and the comparative ease of the solution of this problem in England forces one to think of the grim background of the squalour and misery of thousands behind the pleasant luxuries of the well-to-do.

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### A Good Fairy.

MARIE MONTESSORI, a lecturer in the University at Rome, is said to be the most intellectual woman in Europe. She is an eloquent and convincing public speaker, and has gained a wide reputation for her ideas in the teaching of children. She advocates the carrying of instruction to the mind of the child by means of toys. She also has built a "model house" for the poor, and in it has a room set apart and specially equipped for the children. In it are toys of her own invention designed to teach the little ones to read and write. Her ideas have found such an appeal to the practical mind she has been invited to build a house exclusively for children in Milan.

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### Why He Was Excluded.

A FRIEND of Mr. James Whitcomb Riley tells of an occasion when the humorist was induced to attend a "literary" dinner in Indianapolis given in honour of one of the novelists who live there. Mr. Riley had been told to take in to dinner a sister of the host, an excellent woman, but not literary. The conversation touching upon the beauties of Chaucer, about whom a certain set of the city was then cultivating a fad, a spirited discussion ensued, during which the bewildered sister caught from time to time only the name "Chaucer." At last she whispered to Riley:

"Who is this Mr. Chaucer they're talking so much about? Is he very popular in society?"

"Madam," solemnly responded Riley, "that man did something that forever shuts him out of society."

"Mercy!" exclaimed the worthy woman. "What was it?"

"He died several hundred years ago," said Riley.

### YE OLDE ENGLISH INN.



The "Spread Eagle" Inn at Midhurst, one of the best preserved specimens of the old timbered style of English Architecture. It was recently visited by the King who stopped on his way to Dene Park, (the residence of Mr. William James), to inspect the quaint structure.