

# The Northwest Review.

"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

VOL. 2.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1886.

NO 40

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## LOVE'S HARVESTING.

Nay, do not quarrel with the seasons, dear,  
Nor make an enemy of friendly time.  
The fruit and foliage of the falling year  
Rival the buds and blossoms of its prime.  
Is not the harvest moon as round and bright  
As that to which the nightingales did sing?  
And thou, that call'st thyself my satellite,  
Wilt seem in Autumn all thou art in Spring.  
When steadfast sunshine follows fitful rain,  
And gleams the sickle where once passed the  
plow.  
Since tender green hath grown to mellow  
grain,  
Love then will gather what it scattereth now,  
And, like contented reaper, rest its head  
upon the sheaves itself hath harvested.

## MERE SUZANNE

By Katharine S. Macquoid.

It would be hard to say how many  
times La Mere Suzanne had read that  
letter—first aloud to Jules, and then  
over and over to herself out in the gar-  
den-plot, where an old gray-green pump  
stood under the shade of a walnut tree.  
She had less to do in Auguste's absence  
and her thoughts were busier. She often  
wondered if he got time to mend his  
stockings as she sat on the edge of the  
stone trough beside the pump, reading  
and re-reading the precious letter: then  
she put it carefully in her pocket and  
went on knitting at the set of new stock-  
ings which she hoped he would come  
back before long and claim: for, indeed,  
Monsieur Haulard, the tailor, and Clopin,  
the gossiping seedsman in the little  
town yonder, had greatly cheered Jules  
only last Saturday by telling him the  
Emperor would soon drive the Prussians  
out of the country, and that then the  
newly-raised troops would be disbanded  
and the soldiers would return to their  
homes.

"The country has lost money enough,"  
Monsieur Haulard said; "it will not  
want to pay soldiers whom it needs no  
longer." So very few neighbors found  
their way to the marais to see the lonely  
couple, that the tailor's and seedsman's  
wisdom had not been contradicted.

In one field in the marais the grass  
had grown high again for it was Septem-  
ber. There had been a good deal of  
rain, and as the breeze swept over the  
after crops the green looked intense  
against the gray of the willow-trees. It was  
a warm afternoon, and Mere Suzanne had  
gone to the front door to cool her hot  
face. She had bent over the hearth  
while she stirred the pot-au-feu. She  
thought the tall glass looked so cool and  
refreshing. What a cheering sight it  
would be to Auguste, who was, perhaps,  
at that very moment marching along a  
hot, dusty road!

She sighed, and then she looked to-  
wards the bridge, for she heard the click  
of the little gate which led into the  
marais. Some one was coming down the  
stony path of the bridge, some one who  
was short, square, and red faced. This  
personage walked with a certain air of  
possession, and no wonder, for he was  
Doctor Marbeuge, the owner of the cot-  
tage and of the field in which it stood,  
and not only was he the best doctor that  
could be found between Rouen and Havre  
but he was also a most accomplished  
antiquary, a member of more than one  
learned society, and an authority against  
whose decision there could be no appeal,  
either in the matter of a Roman coin or  
a prehistoric monolith. Suzanne ran  
quickly indoors.

"It is the doctor, Jules." She looked  
around, and seeing that all was neat and  
in its place, she went to the door to re-  
ceive the visitor. He nodded to her, but  
it seems as if, instead of hastening for-  
ward, he slackened his pace. Suzanne  
put her hand up over her eyes, and  
thought how grave he looked as he came  
slowly towards her.

"Good-day, Mere Suzanne," he said;  
'and how is the good man, eh? No worse  
than usual!' He smiled as he said this.

"Come in, Monsieur le Docteur, you  
are welcome." She stood aside to let him  
pass. "Monsieur will find my man much  
as he left him, except that Jules is wear-  
ing for another letter from the dear  
boy."

The doctor went quickly by her into  
the square, low room.

"Is there fresh news, Monsieur, to-day  
from the army?"

It was Jules who broke silence. The  
same question was on Suzanne's lips, but

she could not speak—the certainty that  
here was bad news kept her dumb and  
motionless.

The doctor shook his square grizzled  
head before he answered.

"Yes, my friend, there is fresh news,  
and, I grieve to say, it is bad news. Our  
troops have been badly beaten, the Em-  
peror and half the army are prisoners,  
and there has been great loss of life in  
the battle."

"Holy Virgin!" Jules said, and he bent  
his head till it nearly touched his knees.  
"Monsieur"—the doctor started at the  
sound of Suzanne's voice, it was so feeble  
—"tell me—tell us—you have brought  
news of our boy."

"Sit down, my good mother," he said;  
"you cannot think so well standing, and  
I have to tell you something which re-  
quires thinking over. Well, then," he  
went on when she seated herself, "I re-  
ceived a letter just now from a friend of  
mine, an army surgeon who is at pre-  
sent at Bouillon; some of the wounded  
have been transported to the castle  
there from Sedan, and my friend sends a  
message from Auguste Didier, of Caude-  
bec, who is among them."

He paused. Jules moved restlessly.  
"Mon Dieu," he murmured, "it is too  
hard—the last and the best of all."

But Mere Suzanne neither spoke nor  
moved.

"It is very sad for you, my friends,"  
the doctor said, "but I must not tell you  
it is the fortune of war. It must comfort  
you to know that your boy is in good  
hands. Dr. Godefroi is one of the clever-  
est surgeons in the army. Auguste  
his love and says that he has a kind doc-  
tor and nurse. He has, I am sorry to say,  
received a bayonet wound in the thigh.  
Now you must tell me what I am to write  
to him."

Suzanne unclasped her hands, and  
raised her head; she seemed just awak-  
ened from sleep.

"How far off is Bouillon, monsieur," she  
said;

"How far off? The doctor put his  
hand to his chin and looked down at the  
floor. "Well, my good Suzanne it is  
about one hundred miles from Soissons to  
Bouillon, but from this place to Soissons  
it must be more than one hundred and  
fifty. Truly it is a long way—yet, as  
you see, the post travels the distance in  
a few hours. Ah! modern progress is  
marvellous."

Suzanne sat counting her fingers.  
"Monsieur," she said, timidly, "if I went  
part of the way by rail, and walked the  
rest, do you think I could reach Bouillon  
in five days?"

"Walk," the doctor looked at her anx-  
iously; he thought the shock must have  
touched her brain. "Why, Suzanne Did-  
ier, you have never walked far in your  
life. I have heard you say that Ville-  
quier was quite a long way off, and yet  
the distance from the house to Ville-  
quier is just two miles. Walk, indeed!  
You would fall down on the high road be-  
fore you reached Rouen."

"But, monsieur," she said, earnestly, "is  
it not possible that our boy may not re-  
cover, and that he is wanting me?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. It  
was easy to see that her words distur-  
bed him, and also that he was resolved  
not to be shaken from his opinion.

"What use could you be to him? you  
know nothing about wounds; and al-  
though the poor lad's is an honorable  
wound—for it is plain that he came to  
close quarters instead of running away  
as so many of the cowards did—yet at  
thrust from a bayonet is an ugly disaster  
and only the most skillful treatment  
can be of service."

Suzanne's eyes brightened with eager-  
ness, and a red flush on each cheek.

"Monsieur is right—I am too ignorant  
to help my boy. Thank God that he is  
in good hands. But, monsieur, the sight  
of his old mother will cheer him. It is  
necessary for me to go."

She kept her voice steady but tears  
rolled over her withered cheeks, and  
the doctor turned his head aside and  
looked out of the window.

"Diable," he muttered, "what am I to  
say to her—and yet she must not go to  
Bouillon."

Suzanne stood patiently awaiting his  
answer.

At last he said: "My good woman, how

can you go? You have no money to  
spare, and it costs a good many francs to  
get so far as Sedan, and beyond that you  
have the diligence journey to Bouillon;  
and even then how will you find your  
son?"

At this she raised her head, for it had  
sunk on her breast while he spoke. Her  
eyes were glazed with tears, but there  
was a hopeful tone in her voice. She  
had been thinking all this while, and  
what she had to do lay clearly before  
her.

"Monsieur will say I am obstinate;  
perhaps I am, but I cannot help it. Even  
if I tried to stay here my feet would  
carry me to Auguste. There is a little  
money put by;—it was for him, well,  
then, monsieur, I will use it for him; and  
if monsieur will be so good, if he will  
give me a letter to this Doctor Gode-  
froi there's no fear but I shall get to  
my Auguste."

The doctor turned round and looked  
at her curiously.

"Women are strange creatures," he was  
thinking, "I never knew this one had a  
will of her own till now."

"You are foolish as well as obstinate,"  
he stopped and looked at Suzanne, but  
he saw that his words did not move her.  
"I suppose you mean to go whether I  
approve or not?"

She glanced at Jules, but his face was  
hidden by his large bony hands. Mon-  
sieur Maubeuge guessed her meaning,  
and he led the way into the passage.  
She shut the door after her, and looked  
pleadingly into the doctor's frowning  
face.

"Monsieur, I cannot go if Jules is not  
willing, but I expect he will bid me  
start at once. He so loves the boy, and  
he cannot go himself—he is too stiff and  
laine, as monsieur knows." She waited,  
but no answer came. "Well, then, mon-  
sieur, it seems to me that I can get to  
Yvetot in time for the evening train to  
Rouen. Monsieur Clopin will take me  
in his cart if I ask him, and my cousin  
at Rouen will let me sleep at her house  
to-night; so if monsieur will be so good,  
I would call presently for the letter to  
Monsieur Godefroi."

The doctor whistled. "I could not  
have planned it out more quickly," he  
thought; "women are certainly nimble-  
witted. Well, well," he said, "I will  
write the letter; but it is possible Jules  
will not let you go. I hope he won't."

She bent down and kissed his hand.  
"Pardon me, monsieur, I am grateful, but  
I must go; it seems to me that my boy  
keeps asking for his mother, and that  
already I ought to be on the road. May  
I come at six o'clock, Monsieur le Doc-  
teur?"

He stared at her. "I suppose so," he  
said, doggedly; then as he turned away  
he muttered; "Poor dear soul, but  
the most absurd proposal I ever heard. There  
is no use in going against instinct  
—we all know that."

## CHAPTER III.

The sun shines down hotly on the  
round stones that pave the irregular  
streets of Sedan, and as the flies cluster  
and buzz round the horses of the dili-  
gence these tormented creatures toss  
their heads and switch their tails and  
stamp impatiently on the burning stones.  
They stand on the side of the Place near  
the booking office, ready to start, but  
there is none of the gay bustle round  
the vehicle that one so often sees in a  
foreign town. The driver leans against  
a door post, examining the end of his  
whip, and the conductor looks dejected  
as he stares down the street. The town  
is silent, there are few inhabitants to be  
seen, and these go about their business  
in as hushed a manner as if they had  
just come back from a funeral. The  
town-folk are usually light-hearted en-  
ough, and at another time both the driver  
and conductor would have been plav-  
gued with witticisms about one thing and  
another; but to day is different. No one  
can for a moment forget that up yonder  
only a few hundreds yards away, is the  
stretch of fields covered with mounds,  
and only a few days ago red with the  
blood of dead and dying Frenchmen.

And besides this, some miles away, in  
the gloomy old castle frowning over the  
Semois—once the dark stronghold of

the Dukes of Bouillon and the Prince  
Bishops of Liege—are lying hundreds of  
prisoners, many of them suffering tor-  
tures from the wounds received in the  
bloody battle. Yes, there are hundreds  
of them up there. When the diligence  
comes back this evening there will be  
many inquiries about these sufferers in  
the hospital in the castle of Bouillon.

To-day there are only two passengers  
for the diligence—English tourists—one  
of whom is curious to see the room in  
the little inn at Bouillon where the  
French Emperor slept after he had  
yielded himself a prisoner. This traveller  
is a small, fair, dapper man, so intent  
on the journey before him that he has  
become impatient of the delay in start-  
ing.

"Come, come," he calls out to the  
driver, "how much longer are you going  
to wait? It will get hotter instead of  
cooler, my friend."

The driver opens first one eye and  
then the other widely.

"Do not trouble yourself, monsieur,  
we shall not start for ten minutes or so;  
but if monsieur likes to walk on, he will  
find that the road is shaded by trees,  
when he has passed the battle field."

"I will go on." The dapper little man  
in gray suit and hat steps briskly out  
and puts up his sun-umbrella. He is  
very anxious to examine the battle-field  
and he pulls out a smart red note-book  
from the breast of his coat, that he may  
have it ready to record his impressions  
therein.

The other traveller is older and less  
carefully dressed; he does not follow his  
companion.

"Are you coming," calls back the tour-  
ist with the note-book.

"No," says the other. "I would rather  
go out of my way to avoid a battle-field."

"You don't say so. I think it most in-  
teresting. Well, you'll overtake me on  
the hill."

As the inquiring tourist passes up the  
stony street a small bent figure appears  
on the lower side of the Place. The  
driver and conductor both look round at  
the stooping woman; they consider that  
she is possibly a passenger. She is dress-  
ed in a rusty black gown and jacket;  
her white peasant cap shows plainly  
under a shapeless bonnet.

"Good morning, mother," says the con-  
ductor, then, as she limps slowly along,  
he adds: "You are lame. Are you going  
to ride; by chance?"

Poor old Suzanne courtsays. "Mon-  
sieur," she says humbly, "will you have  
the kindness to tell me how far it is to  
Bouillon. Is it a long walk?"

She raises her tired blue eyes to his  
face. The man whistles. "Too far to  
walk," he says—"over nineteen kilome-  
tres. Our diligence does the distance in  
two hours and a half, though the way is  
steep."

Mere Suzanne sighs. She has walked  
a good deal in these four days, but she  
has also paid many francs in railway  
journeys, it seems to her that Auguste  
may need the rest of her little store.  
Her back aches terribly, and her feet  
are lamed by the hot stony roads—and  
yet she is not quite spent. Surely if  
he tries she can walk some of these  
nineteen kilometres. "How much is  
the fare to Bouillon, monsieur." She  
sees that it is really an omnibus—there  
is no coup in front, nor are there any  
outside seats—it is perhaps less expen-  
sive to ride in than a diligence is.

"Two francs," he says carelessly. "It  
is too little to ask, for the road is steep  
and the horses do not like such hills in  
hot weather. Will you get in mother?"

Suzanne shakes her head. "Two  
francs," she says and then she smiles.  
"Monsieur, I thank you, but I have not  
so much to spare. I will walk on to  
wards Bouillon."

The man watches her limp up the  
stony street.

"The poor old creature has a husband  
or a son in the hospital," he says. Jo-  
seph, you might have taken her along  
for nothing."

"Diable, and why not?" Joseph an-  
swers, "Why did you not say so. What  
is the use of you if you cannot give me  
the benefit of your ideas."

TO BE CONTINUED