

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CALEDONIA STAGE ROAD

With a pull of the line and a crack of
the whip
We're off on the Caledonia stage;
Give modern-day cares and worries the
slip
And live for an hour in another age.

If the road is good we may get there
soon;
If it isn't we'll possibly have to
walk;
But, speedy or slow, grant this one
boon—
Sit down and listen to old men talk.



UCH as one may rejoice that his life has been set in the immediate present in this century of wonderful things there is a mine of interesting incident to be opened up and delved into when one considers the earlier years of the century around this neighborhood in almost any direction. As, for instance, the records of the old stage coach days along the road over the mountain and into Caledonia. We people of this day know next to nothing of the real old-fashioned stage coach other than what we read about it in the school books, but there are plenty of the old folks left who knew no other mode of travel in their younger days. And an interesting method of travel it used to be, too, particularly in the springs and falls of the years. For it must be remembered that in stage coach days the science of road building in this land was a thing undreamed of, and the best roads of the country were those known as plank roads. These were good enough in the summer, when everything was dry, and in the winter, when everything was frozen up, but in the spring and fall—well, they were different. That Caledonia road, now so beautifully kept by a generous toll road company, was one of those plank roads in the early days, and from

what the old people say it had a record for wickedness in spring and fall seasons. The stage would leave Hamilton in the early morning, four big, heavy horses pulling it, and at Terryberry's hotel the change of beasts would be made. When the roads were very bad it would be impossible for passengers to travel to Caledonia without saying something to each other, or in some way coming together. If they refused to be sociable in any other way a lurch of the stage would throw them unceremoniously in a heap. The mud of the road was so deep and soft at these times of the year that the coach would sink to the hubs in many places, and it was no uncommon things for passengers to have to get out and walk for miles of the way. And yet there are some of us who fail to appreciate modern methods of travel and make our lives unhappy by grumbling and growling because street cars or trains are too slow.

* * *

If there are any people around this part of the country who ought to rejoice at the progress their pet reform has made within 50 years they are the temperance people. According to what the old folks tell us there was a time when no less than fifteen hotels lined the road from John Clark's, at the top of the mountain, to Caledonia. Now there are but two. And more than that; in those days there was practically no license law, and the man who wanted to drink could do it at any time of the day or night, and not get the very best sort of liquor for his drinking either. Shortly before 1856, Jacob Terryberry, who died last fall, went out into Glanford township and cast his eyes upon about 400 acres of beautifully timbered land. It pleased him and he bought it. There was a good deal of money in the lumber business in those days, and in a short time Mr. Terryberry had saw mills