

to make the work pleasant and profitable.

It has been a most neglected section and on Friday afternoons she has instituted an hour's singing and reading.

She has initiated them into the mysteries or the tonic sol-fa, and there she finds no lack of interest.

They one and all grow enthusiastic when she sings, which she does like a bird. Many a small insurrection, many a *mal quatre d'heure* has she sung down.

Ruth is a slim slip of a girl of 18, and some of her scholars are older than she.

Not a few of the girls are "keepin' siddy comp'ny"—a phrase she very often hears now—and in their inmost souls, regard her with wonder not unmixed with contempt, because Mr. and Mrs. Miller drive her to and from the Knot Hole Church.

Yet, they give her unblushingly, that sincerest of admiration—imitation. They copy faithfully her manner of dressing and "doing up" her hair. Before Ruth's advent, three rows of shiny ringlets—relics of a past decade—were the acme of fashion. Now, Psyche knots reign.

On the creek which runs behind the school she spends hours on her skates, and at night the boys and girls and bon-fires transform the place.

So at the close of one crisp February day, Ruth goes to visit Jack's mother.

She has never met her, but has heard her spoken of in the vernacular as a woman who would "use you clever." They go through the bush, a mile nearer than around by the road, and it is nearly dusk when they come to the long, log house where Jacob Smith, twenty-five years ago, took his red-cheeked country bride. Since then, sickness and bad crops, have combined to keep them rather badly off.

Jack opens the door, shouts, "Here she is mother."

Mother and sister Mary cordially welcome her, and she is relieved of her wrappings almost in silence on her part—she is almost dumb with astonishment.

She has become a trifle more accustomed during the last month to primeval simplicity, but this room is the oddest specimen she has yet seen. A long, low room with whitewashed walls and the carpet "conspicuous by its absence," three

little windows on the side, two at one end, one on each side of the door.

The scanty wood-work is painted the slightest shade of blue conceivable. In one end of the room is a cooking stove dazzlingly bright, by its side a high blue cupboard, a white pine table, perpendicular-backed little wooden chairs, invented solely for the purpose of pitching one forward; but the crowning bit of absurdity in Ruth's eyes, was two large feather beds in the other corner—immense mounds of red and yellow patchwork, that suggested step-ladders as a mode of mounting.

Mary Smith gets tea and all the preparations go on under her very nose. The blue cupboard disgorges old blue dishes, and a trap-door in the floor, through which Mary disappears every few minutes, evidently hides unlimited stores, for the long table is fairly crowded with home-made delicacies.

"Faither" and "the boys" file in, and each gives her a hearty hand-shake, and then Ruth finds she needs all her will-power to keep a decorous gravity, for in a brown crock on a bench behind the stove, the ablutions of the "men folks" are religiously gone through with. Each consults a cracked looking-glass hanging over a tin comb-case, each makes a few mysterious passes over his head, and then tilts himself back on the legs of his chair fully satisfied that his toilet is complete.

Such a meal! They have combined the three of a Canadian bill of fare, and it is a veritable "high tea."

All through the evening under a stream of pleasant talk runs the under current "Where *am* I to sleep?" The only door in the room is the outside one. To be sure there is the trap door, but that does not lead to beds. She has heard of outside stairs but she knows none exist here for she distinctly remembers there was no second storey. The barn stands near but they cannot intend her to sleep there. Then she finds herself mentally dividing the family. Father and the four grown up boys and Jack in one bed, Mother, Mary and herself in the other, and she laughs softly for she knows by daily experience that "9 into 2 won't go." The evening passes and she enjoys the odd stories of Canadian life in Mr. Smith's