

"I hope not," said the girl quietly. "But what do you mean? What is the stir in town for?"

"Why, don't you know? Haven't you heard, or read the papers? There's extras out—"

"We only get a weekly paper," said Miss Thorpe. "What is the matter?"

"You've not heard? Why, there's more trouble in the North West. There was a fight last Thursday, and nine men killed."

"Never!" exclaimed Miss Thorpe, in no slightest degree realizing the meaning of the words.

"Yes: the same man has raised it that was at the bottom of the '70 trouble, when my son was out; but they say this is worse. Anyway the soldiers are on their way to the West; they're to be here to-day, and there's great excitement over it. My boys are down to the station now to see them come in."

"But I can't believe it!" said Miss Thorpe, incredulously. "How is it we had no warning—that we've heard nothing about it before?"

"Ah, that's the wonder!" said her hostess, shaking her head. "Some people must have known, of course, but folks like you and me have been left in the dark. Why, even last week the papers said there was no fear. But now tell me about yourself—do you expect the doctor?"

"Yes: I got a card from him to be here to-day."

"And I got one to say that you'd come. Anything up?" she added, with a significant smile.

"No, Mrs. Gould, I don't know why I'm here, any more than you do."

"Well, if the doctor fixed it, it's all right; he never does anything without a reason, and a good one, doesn't Mr. Thorold. Of all the students I ever boarded he was the most reliable. You're a lucky girl, Miss Thorpe, even if you do have to wait a while."

Miss Thorpe did not answer, and a thought seemed to occur to her hostess. "Why, you must be tired! sit down while I make you a cup of tea. Here's all the papers, and you can study up the rebellion while you wait for the doctor. Likely he'll come on the train with the soldiers—the express is in long ago."

So Miss Thorpe sat down to "study up the rebellion," a study in which she had many fellow-scholars that spring. The word had startled her. She had read some history and knew what it had sometimes meant, what, wherever it is breathed, it may mean. At first in her reading she was perplexed; events of which she had never heard were spoken of as being of deep significance—places whose names were unknown to her (as indeed they were unknown to many of us Canadians until a fierce necessity compelled a new study of geography) were referred to as being centres of vital interest; but as her attention became more fixed, as she by degrees disentangled fact from its wrappings of heated discussion, she learned what is now history—in our history, alas! a black-bordered page. She learned that the country was threatened—no, not threatened—but quivering under the shock of an insurrection of which no one at that time knew the extent or could foresee the end; she learned that battle, murder and sudden death had startled the land like a lightning flash from a summer sky; that sedition had lifted its serpent head and that

patriotism had arisen to crush the reptile under its heel; that the menaced nation had appealed to her children to sustain her majesty and her authority; and that throughout her length and breadth they had responded to the call.

It had not entered her mind that events of such importance could concern so humble a person as herself; her interest was entirely impersonal, but as she read, something woke in her breast that had never before stirred there; and her pulse quickened at the story how a few days before the Queen City had poured forth her sons on that loyal errand from which alas!—alas! yes, but also to their eternal honor—some of them were never to return.

She was of course, incapable, as were many others, of judging of the merits of the case; the oft-repeated phrases "Half-breed claims," "Bill of Rights," "Misgovernment avenged" etc., were to her but words; but accurate knowledge is seldom necessary to strength of feeling, and Miss Thorpe threw all the strength of hers on the side of existing law. The very name rebellion presupposed a system of order against which to rebel, and which, however far from perfect, must be preferable to the chaos resulting from its rash and violent overthrow. Time has taught us that then, as on other occasions, there was right, as there were faults, on both sides; but it needed time to teach the lesson, and to Miss Thorpe the fact that five days before the northern snow had been stained with the blood of nine brave and loyal men who had laid down their lives in obedience to, and in defence of, law and country, was sufficient to rouse a passion which left little room for discussion as to where the greater share of the blame might lie.

While she studied and pondered the day waned and the dusk fell. She was in a gloomy reverie, her thoughts far away with the dead at Duck Lake and the living who wept them, when one of the children of the house came and said to her in an awe-struck whisper, "There's a soldier here that says he's Dr. Thorold."

She could hear the beating of her heart as she went to meet him, and paused a moment with her hand upon the door. The opaque lamp left the room partly in shadow, and she hesitated as the unfamiliar figure advanced to greet her.

"Grace, darling—" and in an instant she was in his arms.

"Forgive me, dear, for having left you waiting so. As you see—my time is no longer my own."

She looked up quickly; there was no need of questions. The dress he wore told her all.

"Oh, Paul—I did not think—I did not know—"

"You did not know, dear, because there was never need to tell you; but the need has come."

Again she could say nothing but, "Oh, Paul!"

On their further words let us not intrude for a while. There were many such spoken in those days.

"So you see," he said, after an interval, "the country doctor is no more exempt from the call of duty than the business man or the workman. And I hope he is no less willing to obey."

As she looked at him the expression on his face caused her to exclaim: "Oh, Paul, do you think it so serious?" She spoke

imploringly, as if his opinion must with her outweigh all others.

"I fear so," he returned. "There are those, I know, who profess to make light of it, and I hope they may be right; but I am afraid it will be no play."

She drew a long sigh.

"Therefore—I could not go without seeing you again. You know—sometimes—people—when those men went out from Prince Albert last week they did not come back, Gracie, dear."

"But, Paul—you don't seem sorry—I believe you are glad to go!"

"Glad?" he repeated, "that is hardly the word. I don't know how others may feel at a time like this, but it seems to me that I have only just begun to live. Glad? If the surrender of my own breath would bring back the lives that are lost—if my own blood would efface from the country the stain of that which was shed last week—it is little to say that I would gladly give them; but as it is—Grace, you know my heart; to you I have confessed what it has been to me never to know my parents; can you think what it must be to me to have found in my country a mother at last?"

He smiled, while a light, half fierce, half tender, shone in his eyes. His fervour struck an answering spark in Grace, even while she felt a momentary pang of womanly jealousy of the patriotic enthusiasm that rose above and beyond even the thought of her.

"And you must do your part," he said, kissing her; but she remained silent. "Grace, can you be brave—for yourself and others?"

"I will try," she said; but as she spoke she clung closer to his arm.

"Now," he resumed after a pause, "let us think of others; there is much to say and my time is short. How is Annis?"

"Very ill. Her grandfather is going to send her here with me for advice, attendance and care."

"He is going to do something sensible at last? Grace—was it that business with Norman Wright that has made Annis so much worse?"

"I am sure of it. She was very fond of him, and never being strong the worry and grief overcame her."

"Tell me, Grace, how was it?"

"There's little to tell. You know Norman was—well, not quite steady; not much amiss, but still—and uncle spoke to him—seriously—and he took it in bad part. He wanted Annis to promise him, but she took her grandfather's advice—and the end was that Norman got very angry—he would listen to nothing, and at last he broke it off and went away. We don't know where he is now."

"Grace, he is here now—with me."

"Paul, you don't mean it!"

"I do. He's sorry enough he ever left. I met him in L— and proposed to him to come and he jumped at the chance of going as substitute for one of my men who met with an accident. He was too likely a fellow and too well drilled to be refused. I'll look after him."

"How will Annis bear to have him go?"

"She must bear it as others do, sweet-heart. He is at all events more worthy of her now than ever before, and maybe her grandfather will think so too, when we get back."

"And we must stay here—and do nothing—while you are fighting!" said Grace, sadly.