

ered off the outer envelope. She resumed her seat. Her time was coming, and she wished to collect her thoughts, so that he could scatter his. Rip! and the contents of the letter was displayed—more wedding cake.

"Oh! Mr. Macquarrie!" she rippled, "more cake—more sisters!" Her dark eyes snapped with amusement. He read the card that accompanied the cake, and dropped in a chair. She watched him lovingly—but also unsympathetically.

"Darn it!" he cried. "Oh! Mr. Macquarrie!" The beauty shook her head. "Naughty! Naughty! To darn your sisters after they have darned your socks for you all—"

"Darn my sisters," he roared. "I haven't got any."

"Not any?" she whispered to him.

"No! these are from two girls who have turned me down. Two flirts!"

"But you couldn't have married either."

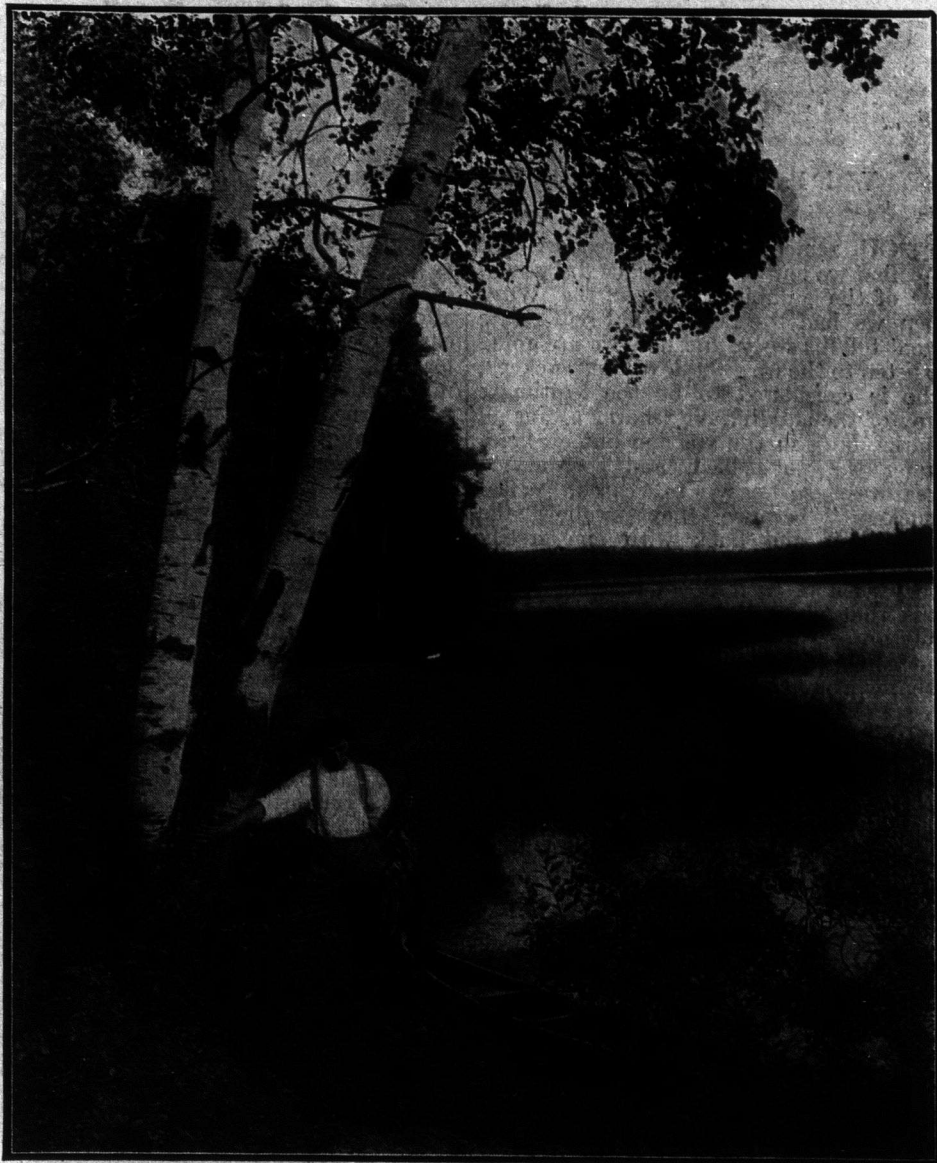
"Why should they hurry to get married at all?" he muttered.

"Oh, Mr. Macquarrie, I'm afraid you're the flirt. Writing to two girls at the same time." Her voice sounded severe, but in it could be detected a cooing note. She leaned across the counter, and her lips looked many things. "After all," she went on, "there's just as good fish in the sea as were ever pulled out."

He looked at her. Willie was fickle. Willie was impressionable. This was a good fish right before him, a particularly fine fish. Why waste time on girls thousands of miles away—especially girls who unfeelingly got married without thought of his lacerated feelings? He ground the second piece of cake under his heel.

"What shameful waste!" Lena shrieked. She ran around the counter, and prepared to pick up the crumbs. He leaned over her, and said "Lena!"

She looked up at him, and replied warningly, "Miss Mason." Her eyes were bright as diamonds. He took her



Lake Minnitaki, E. Winnipeg, National Transcontinental Railway.

hand and pulled her to her feet. What could she do but come? he was the stronger. Then this impressionable young Scotchman carried her to the counter. She expostulated. She coaxed. But he wouldn't let her go. Her eyes carried tears now, but there was a smile behind them. He bent her face and kissed her on lips that invited caresses. Then she fired up, and struck him.

"What do you mean?" she cried fiercely and tearfully. "You with your girls and your Valentines. Do you suppose Lena Mason is to be kissed by any homesteader who chooses to buy a two-cent stamp?" And she struck the astonished young farmer again. This was her idea of love tactics. A girl must not give herself away too easily.

He looked at her, then seemed to slough away his indecision. He threw his arms around her and rushed her, kicking, to the door of the street. He flung it open and pointed across the snows.

"Lena!" he said earnestly, "I'm only a shilly shally, but I've made up my mind. Over there is what I call my home, what can be a real home—if you will but come to it."

"You mean!" and her eyes shone like the Northern stars.

"I mean, will you be my wife?" For reply she kissed him on the lips. He went outside to cool—the young man wasn't used to proposals.

Lena ran happily behind the counter, and whispered into the foreign mail box. "If he but knew that I had opened his precious Valentines, before he saw them! Why! he wouldn't have had them if they had been dangerous."

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