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A NARROW ESCAPE.

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"HAT I'm going to tell you happened long ago," said the old farmer, "when this part of the country first began to be settled, and I and Jim Ronan were the two first that took up land in this township. He pitched on to lot 29 on the 3rd Concession, mostly because that was the only concession opened up, but I wasn't quite satisfied with the land there; rather too light, as I judged, and too much pine and soft wood in the bush all along them concessions. So I followed the surveyor's line in through here; and all round where them wheat fields lie, and round back o' the barn, away down through the corn there down to the river, was as pretty a piece of hard wood bush, mostly maple too, as ever you laid eyes on. So I reckoned this would suit me, and I wanted Jim to come and take up lot 6, right here next to mine, but his wife wouldn't let him. We were both young men then, and just married; in fact, we'd married two sisters, but there was a good deal of difference atween 'em. She's been dead now these ten years, but she was one of them loud talking kind that's always got such lots to say, and is so anxious to be saying of it, that they won't give anybody else a chance to speak. You might speak to Jim about anything, it didn't much matter what; but ten to one you'd get your answer from Mary Jane. So when I says to Jim for him to come over and take up lot 6, afore he could answer she breaks in, 'You don't catch me a livin' way back in the woods, miles off the road, with never a livin' soul to speak to, not if I know it you don't.' Well, the end of it was, as I said, that Jim, he took upon the road and I began chopping away over here, the fact is, I didn't want to be too close to Mary. I was a little bit afraid she might influence her sister, and one of that kind's enough for a whole township. But still we used to visit and be friendly enough, specially when the women had their babies to show each other and comparing of 'em together and such like. Well, I used to find it was hard work to get them to come and see us. They always wanted it to be the other way and she used to complain of the road being so bad. Well, of course, it wasn't any too good of a road. I had to make it all by myself, and there was a good two mile of it and over. You see it's

near the width of two concessions, and a concession in this township is a mile and a quarter. So we used to have some talk sometimes as to whose turn it was to visit, and I says to Jim one night, as I was driving by his place on my way home from the village, that Em'ly (that's my wife, you know) was expecting 'em for Christmas. Jim was standing in the road by the waggon, and she was in the doorway of the shanty, but she heard me and says she, "No, you don't, it's Emily's turn to come here." Now, as this was the first Christmas, I told 'em it wasn't anybody's turn, but I'd toss up for it to begin and then we'd take turn and turn for the Christmases that was to come. "All right," says Jim, afore she rightly understood it, and I threw up a copper. "Heads," he says, and so it was. "Well, we'll come," I says, and away I drove, for I didn't want to stay supper 'cause Emily was easily scared if I didn't get home afore dark. It had been raining a good deal that fall, and there was a bad place where a swale crossed the road and the water used to come down pretty strong after a storm, though it wasn't a regular creek; I had been going to mend that place and put a bit of cross-ways down, but though I had got the logs cut for it and piled at the side of the road, I was waiting till I could get Jim to help me, and he was so busy this fall getting in his crops and underbrushing before the snow came, and I was just as busy myself, for it makes a deal of difference when you come to chopping if the underbrush is well cut down out of the way. Still an' all, I found the water so deep that night going home that I thought I'd have a try to get through with it; so next day down I goes with my axe and got a lot more logs cut and piled 'em the best I could alongside where they were wanted, but it takes two men to pile logs right, only I thought it wouldn't matter as we should put 'em in their places afore the snow. I put in the best part of the day at it, and went home thinking I'd get Jim to come the first of the week and help fix it.

That was the fifteenth of November and we'd had a fine open fall after the frosts in the middle of October, but that very night the weather changed cold, the wind went round to the North-West, and in the morning everything was froze up. The ground was that hard I couldn't finish banking up my stable that I'd been building, and had to pile manure and straw round it to