

XXII

The Glad Day

THE YEAR 1919 BROKE IN GLADNESS OVER OUR FAMILY. The Armistice was signed. Demobilization was under way, and Jack was coming home, a Lieutenant now, having won his commission on the field.

For the joyous homecoming, the house on 123rd Street was getting a going-over that it would remember, if houses have memories. It was a good, big, square, honest house, built for a big family, with a fine attic the full size of the house, and a basement to match, so there was room for everyone's possessions—sleighs, skates, hockey sticks, one toboggan, numerous baseball bats, though I am not saying they were always to be found in their rightful places. Having been built in the time when sleeping porches were in fashion, we had one at the back of the house and one at the front, where fresh air seekers could fill their lungs with northern ozone.

Jack had not seen this house, so we felt we must present it in its best light. There is something about hard physical labour that satisfies the heart when emotion is running high and even at this distance I can recapture the joy of that season of house-cleaning and curtain making. My sister-in-law Eleanor Anderson, from Winnipeg, came to visit us, and together we manicured that house, lifted her face and made a lady of her, with scraped floors and new stairs carpet and new chintz for the living room.

Listening to a radio speaker today I hear that in the