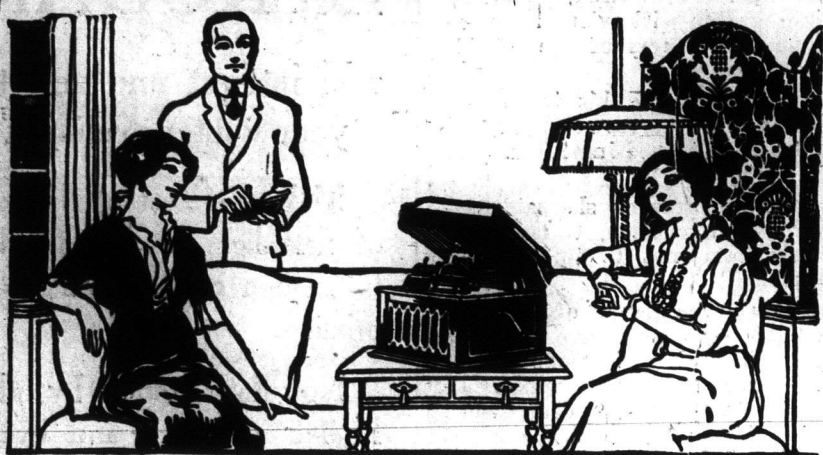




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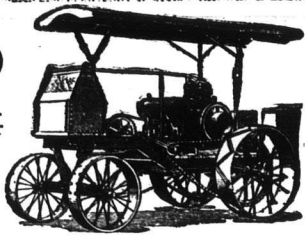
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river trail, but to Fraser McCartney all had changed.

For months that seemed like years he had dreamed of the time when he would bring his bride home. Then Jeanette's letters began growing shorter and farther apart. "There seems so little to write about," she had said. And the man who was longing to hear only three little words, "I love you," ate out his heart in lonely yearning. Then came a day in which business, in regard to a shipment of horses, called him to New York.

During all the long journey Fraser planned and re-planned the happy moment when he would again see Jeanette. But it had all been a distinct disappointment. In his tender loyalty he had never blamed his young sweetheart. Somehow she seemed always busy with classes and with a picture which she hoped to exhibit soon, so he had seen very little of her alone. He had come home with a vague feeling of unrest, and tonight, after weeks of waiting, he had received a letter from his betrothed. She spoke of how far apart their tastes had grown, and asked Fraser, if he still insisted on burying himself in the western wilds, to release her from her engagement.

That was the part that stung. Jeanette, his little Jeannie, was ashamed of him. A score of incidents of those New York days rushed to his mind and all pointed to the same inevitable conclusion. He ground his teeth as he remembered the flush on her face the day the artist had introduced him to Ethel Grant, a clever young Canadian journalist, who was winning success in New York. Of course, he had contrasted unfavorably in the eyes of a woman with the well-groomed young dandies to whom she was accustomed, thought Graham bitterly. He was humiliatingly conscious of the fact that the contrast was probably greater than he had realized at the time. Inwardly he vowed that some day Jeanette Clark should be proud to know him.

Could he give up his work at home and complete the law course? Something within him made him sure that he was capable of winning name and fame in the world of men. But his mother and the boys depended on him. Could he fail them? No, he could not leave.

Long he rode, conscious always of the humiliating letter in his pocket. All the brightness and joy had died out of the landscape. A cold, grey mist had settled over the valley. A misty moon glimmered icily, and the phantom song of the whip-poor-will voiced the sorrow of earth and sky. The hoof-beats of his favorite brown gelding translated themselves in Fraser's distorted imagination as "Lost—dead—dead—lost," and the vesper hymn of a belated song sparrow seemed a requiem for dead hopes and lost love.

PART III.

During the remaining years of her life Mrs. McCartney was cared for with an all-pervading love that shielded her from every care. Fraser could do nothing half-heartedly, and in spite of the unfilled natural depths of his life he was not morbidly unhappy. He was too absorbed in his work. So great was his success among the wheat growers of Alberta his name was one to conjure with.

After the death of his mother he completed his law course. He was one of the most popular men of the province, and when a representative was needed in the provincial parliament to safeguard the interests of the wheat growers, no one, except Fraser himself, was surprised when young McCartney carried the constituency by an overwhelming majority.

Frequently during these years he had heard of Jeanette Clark. Her name was often mentioned in art journals; but since the death of her father she had gone to London to study, and her visits to Canada had been very rare. Fraser and she had never met since his memorable visit to New York.

He did not know that the young artist had travelled far to the Utopia of her dreams only to find that its waters were bitter as those of Marah. On the evening of a day on which she had been hailed as the greatest Canadian woman artist, when her name was on the lips of all visitors to the Paris Salon, her most

intimate friend was surprised to find her weeping the bitterest tears of her life. "Why, Jeannie Clark, what under the light of creation can you find to cry about tonight," she cried.

"Because I am a failure—a failure of failures. I've got what I thought I wanted, and I know I have thrown away all that is really worth while."

"Well, of all the goosey geese! You have conquered the earth and now you are crying for the moon."

"It isn't the moon. It's a man!" cried Jeanette impulsively, as she sprang to her feet and prepared to bathe her swollen eyes in cold water. "No, Peggy, you needn't look at me like that. It isn't the Englishman, nor yet the German count. He is a Canadian whom I knew years ago. I loved him, and I've always loved him, but I was young enough to think that fine clothes and social position counted for more than a clean heart and an unselfish life. If you value your future happiness, you will marry John Windemere tomorrow, or whenever he wants you to. Nothing this side of Heaven ever compensates a woman for the loss of love and a home. I'm doubtful if there is joy enough in Heaven to repay her."

"My mother says her Bible teaches her that everything worth saving was saved in couples, and now you also are among the prophets," sighed Peggy.

The conversation closed here; but within a few weeks Peggy was shyly displaying a diamond solitaire ring to her intimate friends. The day she showed it to Jeanette, the young artist said as she kissed her happy friend: "I'm going to Canada next month. I mean to spend some time in the Rockies."

Her decision had been suddenly made when she saw the look of radiant happiness on Peggy's face. That morning she had received from an old classmate a letter of congratulation on her latest picture. Part of her friend's letter had read: "My husband has been transferred to the Calgary office and we are all in love with the breezy, buoyant atmosphere of the West. If you come to Canada this year you must certainly spend a month or two with us. We have a cottage in Banff and there you may revel in mountain scenery to your heart's content. Do come. I am so eager to show you my babies."

All day she had been thinking of this letter. She longed to see Mary and her babies. She was eager to view the Rockies. More than all, however, she wished to see Fraser McCartney and to hear how he had fared during the years of silence. Often and often his words had recurred to her: "When you weary of the rush and the glare—when the choking gets in your throat—come back." Now she listened to their insistent call. She would go to Mary in Calgary—and then—and then—

The next morning she wrote to her friend saying that she was coming to Canada in June and would spend the month of July with her and her babies.

Jeanette's journey from Fort William to Calgary was one long series of surprises. She had been so long abroad and had so rarely seen a Canadian paper that she was not prepared for the tremendous growth of the West. She had expected to find it much as it was when she had made the trip years before. And, lo! villages and lonely station houses were replaced by cities and towns, and what had been the fringe of civilization was now the granary of an Empire.

Mary, with her two children, met her guest at the Calgary station, and drove her home in a luxurious limousine. Jeanette was almost breathless with astonishment at the transformation of the "little cow town."

"I feel just as Rip Van Winkle must have," she exclaimed. "I was so self-centered that I forgot that things could advance when I was not near to superintend their progress. Mary, I do think your babies are the sweetest children! I am so proud of my little namesake. I wonder if it would be possible to keep Billy still long enough to sketch him."

After dinner when she was comfortably ensconced in a cosy arm-chair on the wide western verandah, and Mary was tucking her little ones into their white cots, Jeanette gazed again on an Alberta sunset. Tonight the west was a city, an immense city with places and