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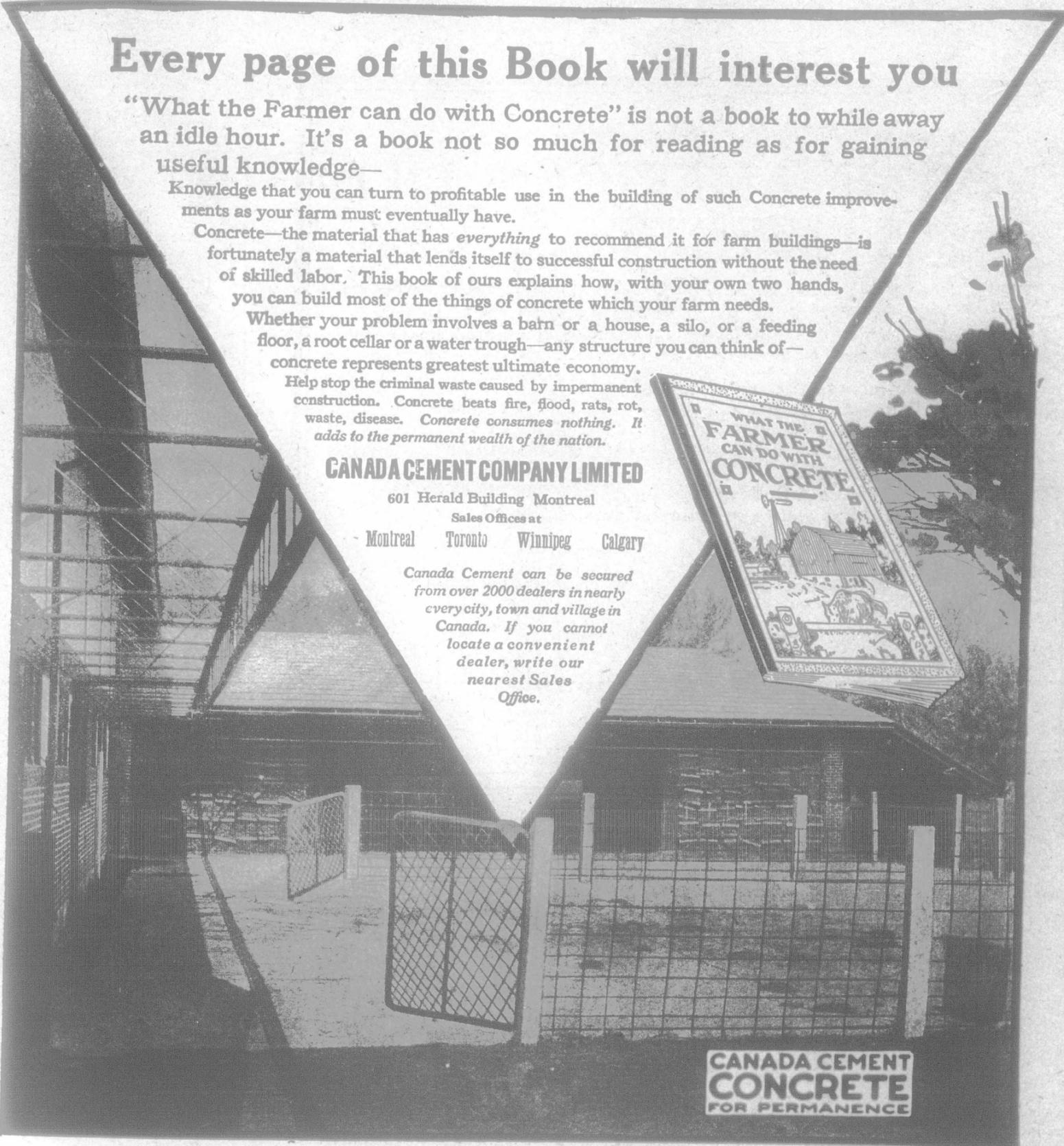
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### Our Serial Story

#### The Forging of the Pikes. A Romance Based on the Rebellion of 1837.

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#### CHAPTER XI. To a Far Country.

August 6th, 1837.

ON Thursday morning our neighborhood was startled by the news that Mrs. Deveril had died suddenly. Big Bill, who was going up to the Village in his wagon, carried the news telling anyone he met on the road and shouting it to the men in the fields and the women in the yards as he passed.

At our place he called it over the fence to me, and I went in to tell my mother.

She was plaiting hats for us, of the tough new straw, the long coils of the braid lying about her feet, but she arose immediately and began to roll it up.

"I must go to Barry at once," she said. "Perhaps I can do something."

We are not prodigal with caresses in

our house—the understanding and affection among us is too deep to require much demonstration,—but at that moment I drew my mother into my arms and kissed her. I think she feels, as I do, that such occasional outburst means more than continual expressions that come to mean comparatively little, were it only for frequency, and usually when I show my feeling to her thus, she looks up at me with all the motherlove in her gray eyes and makes believe to scold me for my boyishness; but this time she neither looked nor smiled, for which I loved her, for I knew that her thought was all of Barry.

My father drove her over in the wagon, and at nightfall she returned, finding me already washed and dressed to go to my girl.

"Yes," she said, "I think Barry may be glad to have you. I came away because the house was filling. I suppose there'll be a wake."

At which the heart of me turned resentful.

"I hate wakes," I said.

"So do I," returned my mother, "but it is the custom."

"And I suppose there'll be pipes—and drinking," I said, bitterly enough.

"Mother, will Barry have to face that rabble?"

"I don't think so," she replied, "Mistress Jones has taken charge—"

"Of course," I interrupted, for this news pleased me none too well.

"She's very capable," said my mother.

"Well, for one thing Barry may be thankful—she'll entertain the crowd."

But at that my mother raised a checking finger to me.

"Come, come," she said, "you are over hard on Mistress Jones.—Here, let me brush you."—And with that she made much ado to broom off a coat from which I had already knocked every mote of dust. Often she does that, but I permit her, out of lovingness to her lovingness.

The evening was very still. As I walked along the bush path, through the Golden-Winged Woods, it seemed to me that all the air held an unusual silence. And then I realized that it was the brooding of Death that had settled upon me and thrown its quiet mantle over the trees; for there had been other times, when, going through to meet Barry, the whole of the dim shades had seemed to be full of light and song, and when

I had returned to earth suddenly to find that all the light and all the song were in my own soul.

That night, however, I walked along, half awed and thinking about Death, which is not common enough yet, in this new country, to be easily dismissed.

What is It? What does It mean? Why are we placed here for so short time when we must needs spend so much of life in the struggle to be fed and clothed? Why cannot life last for one thousand years so that people might go on to really great accomplishment before being snuffed out like so many candles?—Of all this did I ponder as I walked along, more slowly than usual, in the growing darkness, winding in and out among the great boles of the trees.

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And then I remembered a sermon that the minister had preached about heaven, a city as broad as long, and as high as broad, with streets of gold, and walls of precious stones, and gates of pearl, and the spirits of the dead walking about in white robes, playing on harps forever and ever.

On the way home The Schoolmaster and Hank and I had walked together.—