

A WIFE'S DEVOTION.

A Canadian Heroine of Sixty Years Ago.

By JANET CARNOCHAN.

The story of the heroic exertions of Maria Wait during four years, first to save the life of her husband and next to obtain a full pardon or some amelioration of his sufferings when a prisoner in Van Dieman's Land, is known to comparatively few persons and forms a remarkably interesting page of Canadian History, giving us glimpses of governors, judges, lawyers; a journey in the first place of seven hundred miles in the days before the advent of railways, introducing us to officials in Toronto, Kingston, Quebec, Lieutenant Governor Arthur and Lord Durham, Bishop Mountain, Wm. Hamilton Merritt, M.P.P., Jesse Ketchum, and affords the dramatic ending of her labors, the respite arriving only half an hour before that appointed for the execution of the prisoners. Next she travels from Niagara to Kingston to visit her husband in the prison at Fort Henry and returns to obtain signatures, this indefatigable woman, leaving her babe, takes a journey of three thousand miles, crossing the Atlantic to intercede for her husband even at the foot of the throne.

We now have glimpses of Charles Buller, the Secretary of Lord Durham, Joseph Hume, Mrs. Fry, Miss Strickland, Mrs. Opie, Mary Howitt, the Philanthropists Buxton, Clarkson, Wilberforce, the Patriot Dan O'Connell, Sir Robert Peel, Prince Albert, the young Queen, our heroine meeting the best in the fashionable, literary, political, philanthropic and religious world of that day.

Her letters show a well trained mind, an affectionate heart, an indomitable will, and a deeply religious spirit, while those of her husband show great vigor and close reasoning powers, he having had some legal training, and we can understand and pardon the bitterness with which he speaks when we remember his sufferings. To all her other difficulties was added that of insufficient means. We note with interest that though so much is re-