

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FINAL HOME COMING.

"O wanderers from ancestral soil,
Leave noisome mill and chaffering store;
Gird up your loins for sturdier toil,
And build the home once more.
Come back to bayberry-scented slopes,
And fragrant fern, and ground-mat vine;
Breathe airs blown overholt and copse
Sweet with black birch and pine."

—Whittier.

"Well, I am going to give up journalism, abandon the city and go back to the farm" was the way Norman introduced himself to his employer the next morning after the events narrated in last chapter. "Nonsense my boy, what are you talking about anyhow?" The busy man looked up from his work with a half laugh scarcely believing he had heard aright. "I am talking about going back to the farm" he answered firmly "and I intend to do it too." "What is the trouble, don't we pay you enough?" He was getting interested now that he understood his most brilliant writer was about to leave him, and a money consideration seemed to him the only feasible explanation of such a strange procedure. "Yes my salary is ample," he answered, "sometimes I think it is more than I earn. But the life has become distasteful to me." "Do you mean that your associates on the staff are not congenial, or that the social world does not suit you?" "My associates on the staff are all pleasant, the social world does not interest me much but that fact has very little to do with my present decision." "Please sit down then and explain exactly why you wish to leave us, it is all a puzzle to me" the manager said wearily as he laid aside his pen and prepared to listen.

"Why Mr. Anderson, have you never heard of people abandoning the city and going back to the farm again?" Norman exclaimed in some surprise.