

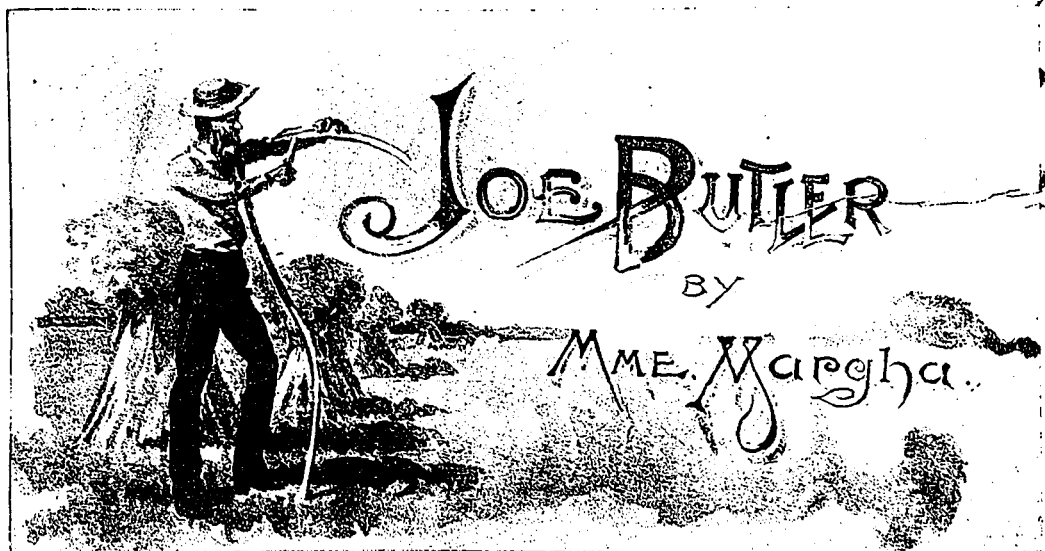
THE CANADIAN QUEEN.

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FOR THE CANADIAN QUEEN.

PART I.

IT was a hot July day in 1856. The sun beat fiercely and mercilessly upon the men in Farmer Butler's fields. Machinery, in the shape of reapers and binders, had not yet come to the relief of the husbandman. The great scythes swung to and fro in the strong hands of the "hired men," while Farmer Butler and Joe his youngest son followed, binding the golden sheaves. They worked in silence and steadily, only stopping once in a while to take a draught of oatmeal water from an old pitcher, and wipe the perspiration from face and neck. Two other sons, Sam and Henry, or "Hank," as he was called, were loading the grain and "hauling in," before the rain should come. Farmer Butler said that a storm was brewing. He had never been known to fail in a weather prophecy, and now, though not a cloud was to be seen, they worked with a will, for he had given his opinion that before night there would be a "rouser." In the farm house Mrs. Butler (or Aunt Polly) was sitting knitting as peacefully as the weather would allow. The large old-fashioned kitchen

in its cool, sweet cleanliness was her usual sitting room. From the door she could see her husband and Joe as they bent to their work. On the wall near her chair hung an old mirror, under which was suspended an almanac and a bright colored pin cushion, the last handiwork of Libbie, the only daughter God had ever given John and Polly Butler. She had died two years before the opening of our story, and was lying at rest in the Bethel graveyard, a little cemetery attached to the church bearing that name. The neighbors said that Aunt Polly had never been the same since her daughter's death. She had lost the energetic, aggressive activity of healthy middle age. Instead of her usual flow of lively gossip, and her incessant planning of something that was to add to the wealth or comfort of her house she had sunk into a strange, unfamiliar calm. Her house was as inviting, and her butter and bread as sweet and white as ever, but—but, there was something gone from her which she could not call back. The neighbors who had been wont to drop in of an evening to chat about politics or religion went home earlier and did not repeat their visits as often as formerly. Father Smith, the old class leader in the Bethel chapel, seemed to have diagnosed her ailment when he spoke to her one Sunday in the meeting. "Sister Butler," he said, "one o' the cords o' your earthly tabernacle hae been snapped, one o' the pins hae been loosed, but cheer up, sister, you hae a house not