

Our Young Folk's Serial.

THE WHITE COTTAGE: Or the Fortunes of a Boy-Emigrant in Canada.

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CHAPTER II.

OLD JOSIAH.

THERE was an old pensioner lived in our village, a funny old man with one arm, one leg and one eye, who used to tell us boys wonderful stories about Nelson, Copenhagen and Canada. Like lads who love everything wild and adventurous, we liked his stories of Red Indians, wolves and rattlesnakes best, and cared very little for the doleful plights in which he told us soldiers often found themselves with wounds, fevers and agues; and it was reckoned one of our greatest enjoyments when old Josiah would be persuaded to talk about "Kanady". One evening, as I was returning to the farm where I lived as a ploughboy, after having been home to see how mother was getting along, old Josiah called to me from his cottage door to come in and read him a letter which the carrier had just brought him. It was from one of his sons in Canada, and told in a very cheerful tone of his possessions, prospects and hopes; and, while I was reading it, old Josiah would often rub his hands with delight, and bid me "read that again". The letter ended thus: "Though I came here with only your gift of twenty pounds, I am sure you would think I had made good use of it, if you could see my hundred acres, fifty of them cleared, a good house, a team, and a cow and a few pigs for the wife, though I can't say but I have to work hard, and the missis too, but then the place is *my own*".

"I should think I should!" cried old Josiah; "I should think I *should* think thee had'st done well, and all in a matter o' ten year, but then Joe wur al'ays stiddy".

"Joe must have got good wages over there to have bought a farm, even with your money to help, Mr. Jackson", said I.

"Not much 'o that, not much 'o that, lad", he replied; "he on'y got ten dollars a month, that's forty shillin', when he just went over, and that on'y in the summer; the winter they doant gie so much, his waäge wur six".

"But forty shillin' a month and lodge in the house that's a good lot; here's me only a gettin' ten shillin', and I work hard for it too".

Waäges is bigger in Canady, because labour's sca'ce lad; but things is a good deal dearer—böots and all kinds o' clothes, but land's cheap, very cheap, and a poor man stan's a chance o' gettin' a few acres for himself if he's industrious".

When I left old Josiah that night, my mind was all in a whirl. I felt as if a great fortune had been left me in

a distant country, and I had only to travel there in order to obtain it. Plan after plan of what I would do for my mother, for my sisters, for my brothers, for everybody that needed it, chased one another like shadows through my excited brain. How different the world looked all at once! I had left my mother's house angry and depressed, notwithstanding her parting kiss and word of praise. Why should we be so poor, and others be so rich? Why should some seem to have everything, and others nothing? Why were some men large landed proprietors and able to leave fortunes to their children, while others would have to be buried in ground paid for by others, not even a poor six foot of earth to call their own? And no hope that it would ever be otherwise! My memory told me well enough how it was in our case, but I was determined to adopt the grievances of the whole parish, nay, of the whole country and to be discontented and covetous. But now! I no longer envied the squire his fields, and the lord of the manor his money. There was a way opened to me to get money and lands, and get it I would, but how? there was the question. How should I get over to that happy country? And where was the twenty pounds to begin with that Joe Jackson's father had given him? That was the old man's prize money, but my father—oh! dear.

Next time I went home I told mother all about Josiah's letter, and the prospects for a strong lad in Canada, adding my desire to go thither. At first mother was very averse to thinking about it, but as I urged the chances that I might prosper as well as another, and the hopelessness that ever I should buy even an acre of land in England, (though I knew there was every reason to hope that by steady industry I might be able to rent a snug little place such as I was born in), she at last began to entertain the idea, and acknowledged that it would be a benefit to me if I could get the chance. Seeing that mother sympathised with me, I began to discuss matters freely with her, and when I went home next time, I found that she had been to see old Josiah, in order to learn how I might reach Canada, how far it was off, and what it would cost; but she foresaw difficulty with my father, who always looked to my wages to pay the year's rent. And if he heard of the prospect in a new country, he was likely to think that he had the best right to try it. "Which would be ruin, Tom", said my mother, and I felt that it would, indeed.

"Say nothing about it to anybody, Tom; leave it to me; pray for the direction of the Almighty, and keep steady at your work, and we'll see what can be done".

This was delightful language to me. I knew that mother would never leave off trying as long as there was the slightest hope of success, and I went to work again, happy.

Several weeks went by, and poor dear mother was no nearer finding an answer to the riddle than ever, and I began to get both impatient and despondent. I always wanted to do a thing right off, which, though a very good rule in its way, is not always best. Some things require a good deal of thinking about, and others when decided upon cannot always be accomplished at once, and it is very foolish in young people to give way to an impatience that will do no good, and, indeed, does harm. "Let patience have her perfect work", says the Scripture, and, if we can see no other consolation, we should remember that patience is a Christian virtue, and as such is accepted in the sight of God. But I forgot all this, and began to doubt dear mother's ability, nay, I even went so far as to doubt her intention.