

In Realms of Colour.

We slowly drift, 'neath skies aflame,
In sunset's after-glow,
O'er waves reflecting cloudland tints,
On river's rippled flow ;

Past isles where autumn maples blaze,
And reddening sumachs burn,
Where yellow gleam from beechen bough
Bends low o'er bronzing fern ;

And flashing light from tangled brake,
With strange, bright colours shine,
Through tawny brown and dusky green,
Of graceless, trailing vine.

The purple shadows softly fall,
Fast fades the red and gold,
And sunset glories turn to grey,
As twilight stars unfold.

We slowly drift o'er darkening waves,
From scene so wondrous fair,
But in our hearts a glad, sweet song,
Shall ring while life is there.

Toronto.

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A Ride With the Mail-Carrier.

THERE are some parts of Ontario which seem altogether too old-fashioned, too rustic, and too far removed from the pristine, wild and savage forest life to belong to a new and lately cleared country, but rather appear to have retained their present placid, sleepy condition since remote and distant ages.

In one of these quiet haunts of old-fashioned men I lately had occasion to make a short journey by one of the ancient vehicles which seem destined to disappear before the march of the new civilization of steam and electricity, and for the time being I felt that I had entered upon another sphere of existence apart from the whirl and worry of modern business life.

When I left the train and entered the 'bus which was to carry me to the hotel whence the stage started, I supposed that I should proceed with my journey at once, but I found that here began a new condition of things, another era, in fact a kind of relapse into the past. We rattled noisily down the village street and drew up with a flourish before the hotel aforesaid, where the landlord was himself awaiting us at his front door with his arms akimbo, and in his shirt sleeves. He informed me, in reply to a question, that the mail started sometimes at half-past ten and sometimes at twelve or later, "depinding whin the western train comes in with the mail."

As it was not yet ten I placed my valise in the front room and started out to see what the village looked like. First impressions were not very favourable to the idea of progress and business prosperity, for while the main street had passed the stage where front gardens and flowers enliven the aspect of things and had developed a few disjointed rows of brick stores, still most of these were empty and to be let and in others the stock-in-trade was neither valuable nor imposing. The groceries, of which there were three, alone made a cheerful display, for, as it was the autumnal season, the baskets of grapes, plums, pears and apples gave colour to the show, and bags of potatoes and carrots, together with fine heads of cabbages and cauliflowers, showed the produce of the surrounding country, while some well ripened peaches spoke well for the climate. Turning up a side street, some nice brick residences, standing each in its own well-kept lawn and garden, set me wondering who lived in this expensive style, and I concluded that no doubt the doctor, the lawyer, and some form or denomination of clergy; in a word, the professions here, as usual, represented the "classes." Then came the open fields, the fine elms and maples, cows and sheep at pasture, and I returned to see what were the prospects of a start with the mail-carrier. No sign or sound of any stage. The baker, I found, had come out of his workshop, covered with flour, to look at the world before going on kneading like a giant refreshed. There was a little garden in front of his house and shop, and a Jackmanni clematis was trained over the shop door, giving a bright blotch of purple to contrast

with the yellow roughcast building; some fine dahlias of vivid hues were tied to stakes on either side of the door and a bed of scarlet geraniums shone out of a tiny green lawn like a jewel.

I was just going over to thank him for embellishing the village in this gorgeous way when I was accosted by the mail-carrier himself, whom I had not before seen, and was beginning to regard in the light of a myth or bogey. But here he was in the living flesh, a hale specimen of manhood, tall and well set up, about—well, verging on sixty, with an air of reliability, and of an easy-going sureness of getting there, if I may so express it, which I have noticed to belong to mail-carriers. At the same time, there was no sign of hurry or ambitious and undue haste about him; he was evidently used to waiting for the western mail and told me in a resigned way that although not yet in it would be along shortly. Under these circumstances, I thought it would be a good idea to walk on ahead and let the stage overtake me when it obtained the long-looked-for mail and he at once acquiesced in the proposition. I started off on my walk through the quiet village street where it seemed as if almost all the people were asleep, and leaving the ambitious brick stores behind noticed how picturesquely the cottages and smaller dwellings grouped themselves beneath their sheltering elms and poplars.

It is delightful to me to see the appreciation for trees that is shown by some of the older villages of western Ontario. The maple is, perhaps, the most general favourite, but close behind come the elm and the Lombardy poplar; the horse chestnut is a more modern innovation, and most of the specimens I found planted along the roadside were young ones. Here, too, I found the smithy, that important part of a country village—sometimes, indeed, the first building put up at the cross-country roads around which the village afterwards develops. And in the smithy were the two farm-horses, with their collars and traces on, that always seem waiting to be shod. And here was the smith, blowing the bellows with one sinewy hand and raking up the fire with the other; and the farmer, seated on an old plough, and talking politics with the smith, not noisy politics, nor loud, but calm and quiet, as a man might talk to a member of the same party, the right party, the only just, true, honest, and righteous party that alone ought to have the handling of the public funds.

And here was the farmer's black-and-tan collie dog curled round and fast asleep at the farmer's feet, quite satisfied that everything was all right so long as the farmer was there. What a wonderful thing is the faith of a dog in man. One would think it would tempt him to do something sometimes to deserve it.

And then I passed that neat and pretty cottage that we all know, where everything is whitewashed till it shines again in the summer sun, where the bright green blinds seem always to have been just painted, where the trim little garden is filled with old-fashioned flowers, all of the olden time, and where the grape vines are trained over the lattice and on the arch across the gate and the cedar hedge between the path and the little lawn is trimmed and squared with the greatest exactness and is so green and close that you long to sit upon it.

And so at last I came to the mill, the great stone mill, with the miller's house attached, and where the many small dusty mill windows look like eyes that have gone to sleep. And here the road and sidewalk rises to surmount the bridge across the river and the miller's small garden is left sunk in a kind of basement, circumscribed by the stone foundation of the sidewalk and is seen to be a work of art and design; though so small, there are two black ash trees in it, there is a small lawn in it, and in the lawn a small circular pond or pool, with a fountain in the centre, throwing up a jet of water quite two feet high; there are moreover four pipes, one on each side, which look towards the centre and spout perpetual defiance towards that towering jet, and a keen eye carefully surveying the pool becomes aware of fish, three, four, five, fish alive and swimming and perhaps a little tired of the four streams and the jet and the noise and the circumscribed space and longing to get back to the river.

And then the rows of flower-pots, filled mostly with geraniums, on the long stand in the shade of the trees aforesaid, and the large, almost gigantic, specimen of the cactus known as the Indian fig, that of itself seems to give an