



HE was known all along the lake shore, from Silver Creek as far as Portage du Loup—this tall, lithe girl with her straight brows—if not personally, at least from hearsay; for she was quick of wit and sharp of speech, and her sayings were retailed many and many a time, sometimes with even more than their original embellishments, about camp fires in the woods, or to a select few off duty on the schooners and other craft which plied the lake during the season.

For twenty years Brough, her father, had been keeper of the Mern Lighthouse, situated on a "nastyish bit" near the north shore of Lake Erie. Where he had come from the people about did not know, although most of them remembered his arrival with his little girl, a dark-browed child of four or five years; but of his wife he had never spoken to any of them. He was a strange man, moody and reticent if let alone, but apt to be violent if questioned against his will. This his neighbours soon discovered and had gradually fallen into a way of respecting his moods, which were variable in the extreme. At first he took little notice of his child, and it was surprising how soon she learned to do things for herself, but as she grew older his feelings alternated between indifference, an occasional sort of pride in her ungirlish feats and language, and positive hatred, in which mood his conduct became so rough towards her that the men about—his own associates—had

been heard to say they found it hard work to keep their hands off him. This sort of treatment the girl bitterly resented, and, although moved by no cowardly fear, kept away from him as much as possible, or welcomed any company to the house beneath the revolving light, so that, at least, she was not alone with her father.

Thus she grew up, vigorous in mind and body, greatly preferring, as she frankly said, the company of men to that of women—and this was not very surprising, all things considered. Her accomplishments were what might have been expected under the circumstances,—more masculine than feminine,—for she could beat most of the men about in a fair race, pulling a steady, long stroke, for which they professed great admiration; had been known to swim to the Papoose, an island four miles out and back, with scarcely breathing space between, and could dive from any rock about with as little sound as is compatible with such an operation. She had been heard to say that she could read and write, although no proof had ever been given her hearers, but she could swear, upon occasion, that they all knew, with great ease and brilliancy. Added to all this, Meg was intensely womanly, so far as love of finery went and dancing, and attended all the routs far and near, in whatever sort of weather, as long as a boat could leave the light-