

expedition would cost as much as the land was worth, who knows how early a death might have overtaken this zeal for Empire-building.

Aunt Mary kept house for the young Wests. She was a small, slim old lady, of deprecatory manner, and timid and hesitating of speech. There were times, however, when she did express herself with decision and clarity. But Aunt Mary was just then enjoying a much-needed vacation from her self-appointed task of keeping house for the bear-garden at Tollbar Cottage, and the decision of the family council was conveyed to her, in an astounding letter from Alberta, as a matter already as good as accomplished, and indeed only requiring from her the housewifely assistance of packing up.

The magnitude of the proposal was almost stunning, but she started for home without further delay.

"The dear children are going to Canada next month," she explained, in much the same tone in which she might have spoken of a premeditated trip to Colwyn Bay. "I don't know how I am to get their things ready in time."

She never seriously considered the idea of opposing the scheme. "Alberta is so headstrong, and she never listens to me," she sighed. "These young people are a terrible responsibility. I only hope and pray it may turn out all right. They are going to build on the land, I gather, and Gerald, who is now paying a big premium, will be able to have a large salary at once in that country, Alberta says. The climate, it seems, is the very thing that has so often been recommended for my bronchitis. That is really very thoughtful of the children, isn't it?"