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WHAT THE WEST DID FOR UNCLE.

"My mind is made up," said the fond and foolish mother. "He shall be christened Algernon Emmerson, after his uncle."

"A pretty name, and a proper one. It takes the commonness off the Hopgood, gives distinction, so to speak." Thus did the equally fond and foolish grandmother aid and abet in the nefarious business of handicapping, at the outset of his career, the hope of the house of Hopgood. The occupant of the cradle whimpered; the big chap scented gingerly on the edge of the bed frowned. Poor Billy Hopgood was not at his ease. The pale-faced woman in the bed was not the merry Sarah he had known. With her new motherhood she had taken on a new dignity. As for Sarah's mother, the capable Mrs. Emmerson, he felt abashed at the bare thought of setting up his will in opposition to hers. But such a name! He looked down at the baby. The little face was wrinkled in protest; two tiny fists beat the air in protest; from the bit of a mouth issued a hail of protest. Something—the helplessness of the little mortal, the tremulousness of the wail—stirred him. A great wave of tenderness caught him and bore him out on a sea of audacity far beyond his depth. Wife or no wife, mother-in-law or no mother-in-law, he must stand by the boy.

"Don't want him called that," speaking fast, lest his courage fail. "There hasn't been any dude names in our family since great-uncle Rachel dubbed her tenth son Obadiah as a sort of—of high water mark, as it were. Call him Joseph, after father—Joe while he's a little tyke; Joseph when he's grown up. It's a family name."

"So is Algernon Emmerson," returned Sarah with an air of finality. "You'll like it when you get used to it. Won't he ma?"

Ma hoped so. Her patient tone suggested that one must not expect too much of a Hopgood.

Billy bent down and touched the baby's cheek. "In fighting trim already," he laughed, "and your fists no bigger than a moth's wing. Don't you fret, old chap. They can christen you any fool name they like, but you're Joe to me. Were you speaking, Sarah?"

Sarah was speaking but not to him. In a voice heavy with tears, she was asking her mother for the camphor bottle.

"I didn't mean to vex you," cried Billy. "It's just that, my father's name being Joe, I—"

"Let the subject drop," interrupted Mrs. Emmerson, with a smile. "Let the subject drop. If Sarah gets fevered it will be bad for her, and bad for little Algernon Emmerson. We must have perfect quiet; perfect quiet." With that "perfect quiet," she made a metaphorical new broom, which swept Billy out of the discussion, out of consideration, out of his self-confidence, out of the room and down the stairs.

So Algernon E. it was, but the name belied the bearer of it. Even in babyhood it did not go well with the Hopgood tow-head, the Hopgood genial homeliness. At two he was a sturdy, rollicking blade in curls and a French frock. Sarah did not peruse the fashion journal for nothing. At ten well-changes had taken place. Billy had sold the fifty-acre farm just out of Brandon and taken his small capital, his goods and chattels and his protesting family "out West." He was tired of farming on a miniature scale; besides, there was the boy. Here he had, as he was wont to say with pride, three hundred and twenty acres of good Manitoba soil and a strong desire for more.

Homesteading in the first stages has no poetry about it. It is chiefly work and worry. Billy would not admit as much, neither would Algernon Emmerson, who was, indeed, his father's son. When Sarah smiled, "Forty miles from anywhere and someone as all out doors," Billy laughed, and bade her have patience. "We'll be rich folks yet, rich as Uncle," said Algernon E. This was in a teasing mode, in parting desperate jests. At ten he was the "hand" rollicking blade of two, man and boy and team. His bullet head was cropped like dad's. His