

A PLAIN TALE OF PLAIN PEOPLE

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In the month of August, 1912, I made up my mind to go to Northern Ontario. I left Toronto on the first of September, arriving next day at my destination. My first impressions of the country were not at all encouraging. All the good lots in the township in which I intended to locate appeared to have been already taken, or they were veteran claims, and as such not open for settlement. The lots which I examined were not at all like what I had been led to expect. The small clearings of the settlers full of stumps, their rough log cabins and the thickness of the timber on the ground brought home to me in a very forcible manner the fact that I must not expect any rosy pathway to the realization of my dreams of a good farm in this country.

A young man who was cutting wood in front of his shack was anxious to talk. He had been about two years in the country. His faith was strong; so was his sense of hospitality. Would I stay with him a few days while I looked around? I would be delighted. We sat and talked till late in the evening. I learned much from him about the country. He imbued me with some of his faith in its future, and he assured me that success lay before every man who was ready and willing to work; who was not easily discouraged and had a reasonable amount of courage and determination. That night, for the first time in my life, I slept in a rough bunk, on a bed of straw with only rough grey blankets and my coat for a pillow.

Early next morning my new friend piloted me to a quarter section less than a mile from his home, and about five miles from the railway station. We found the posts and lines, and for most of that day we examined the lot thoroughly. A brook ran through it. The soil was rich and black, the sub-soil a good clay, but it was nearly all covered with moss. My friend, however, explained that this burned off easily. The forest was composed of spruce, balsam, birch, tamarac and poplar, but spruce was the prevailing timber. Some of it was very large and tall, but most trees were quite small, running about eight inches in diameter. This, my guide explained, made fine pulpwood.

We selected a site for my future home on a ridge of higher land at the foot of which ran the brook. There was a beautiful