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country I found myself, a fortnight later, standing upon Canadian soil—I mean to say upon the dock at Quebec you know. I had learned with amazement that it would require five days to reach Alberta from this point. However I was fairly well supplied with cash though the pater had said at parting that he would allow me just six pounds per month.

"And remember, you need not write for more money."

He had added this with a severity that seemed odd in so kindly a man. But I have since learned that he meant to make me stand on my own legs for the first time in my life, and that he intended to play Papa Spartan up to the hilt in order to see me back in England within the year a well man.

"Dad, never fear!" I had replied loftily. "Out on the rolling plains new health and strength await me. I shall wrest a living from the soil if need be. I shall cavort about, near to Nature's heart, shall drink in gallons of the pure ozone—"

The pater had chuckled. "That's the way to talk! Ozone won't give you a morning headache."

And so we had shaken hands and parted. The mater, it is true, wept a little, and Sis had slipped into my portmanteau a book at the very last moment, the title of which as I found later, was: "The Philosophy of Agriculture."

So here we were in the promised land, by Jove—I and my man (for of course I had brought Boggs along)—and filled with a number of bewildering, new impressions. The spring air was like wine, the sunshine was dazzling, the sky was a perfect turquoise blue and although I would like to speak of the magnificent pine woods, the majestic rivers, the rich valleys and orchards and the fields of clover and springing wheat, I shall skip all that and get on with the story proper.

Boggs is a tremendously fine chap and much above his class. We get along like twin brothers; unfortunately though, he, too, was ineligible for military service owing to the Creator's having formed him on the Lilliputian principle. The poor little blighter has been turned down repeatedly even by the bantam battalions. I besought him to drop the slightly deferential air he wore in my company and to treat me quite as an equal. I dare say the natives took us for a couple of young tradesmen come out to settle, for I wore a suit of the head-gardener's. We were resolved from the start to dress the part, you understand.

Now part of Billy Smith's last letter written six months previously, had run something like this: "These prairies are almost as difficult to navigate as an uncharted sea, so if ever you should find yourself out in this part of the world, remember that I am on quarter-section number x, west-by-south of Calgary. Any livery in the town will bring you out, if you are unable to notify me. I should warn you though that the 'atmosphere' here is rather different, don't you know, from that of Mayfair."

I had this letter along and consulted it from time to time, but we had decided not to tell Billy of our coming. We would take the dear old chap by surprise, by Jove! Apropos of his warning I seemed to recall something I had once read, to the effect that no one should venture beyond the Great Lakes who was not possessed of both a strong constitution and a strong sense of humour. Later events proved the subtle wisdom of this. But I do not wish to appear pessimistic so early in the chapter.

As a matter of fact, the pessimism was merely a passing phase. We were keyed up for great and glorious adventures and nothing at that time could damp our enthusiasm. To be sure we had our adventures—but I'm getting ahead.

I felt most conspicuous in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the aisle-up-the-middle carriage, or car as they call it here in Canada. There were two Chinamen in the next section to ours and above us slept a Galician family, while across the aisle were several full-blooded Indians. Fancy removing one's collar, shoes and waistcoat with such an audience looking on!

Well, the morning of the sixth day found us enroute to Billy's ranch in a vehicle known as a prairie schooner, driven by a Yankee chap who was more than half-seas over. The trail was rough and as there was a lady present I undertook to administer a quiet lecture to the blighter on the subject of intemperance. As I thus improved the shining hour Boggs grinned

continuously in an irritating manner. I fancy he was thinking how many a time and oft he and the pater's butler had assisted me to bed after a party.

The lady I have referred to was a school-teacher from the eastern part of Canada who had come out only the day before to take the Lone Pine school after the Easter holidays. She was a very dainty little person with the suspicion of a twinkle in deep, blue eyes, and sunny brown hair and a dimple and quite the most entrancing voice I had ever heard. Everybody speaks to everybody else without an introduction in this country—a habit I had thought positively horrible until this day. Miss Elliott and I got along famously from the start. The other passengers were all strangers to the country too.

It was a beautiful morning and so clear was the air one could easily discern the faint outlines of the distant Rockies. All along the trail young gophers thrust inquiring noses up from their burrows and grass-birds rose fluttering at the squeak of our approaching wheels. The blood raced in one's veins and it was good to be alive. I fancied that already the pain in my lung was quite gone.

"There's the caboose," said our driver suddenly, pointing with his whip to some spot in the distant offing to our left.

"The what?" I asked, staring hard.

He rolled the quid of tobacco in his mouth to the other side, spat and said:

"It's the shack you blokes are headed for—Smith's."

"How extraordinary!" I exclaimed, for the building looked about the size of a cracker-box. "But it must be one of the outbuildings of course. My friend is the possessor of some means."

"Oh, well, of course we're four miles away yet your lawdship. But that's Smith's joint all right, all right."

Our amiable jehu now put the whip to the team and very soon we had covered about three miles, and then he drew up in the sagebrush with a loud "Whoa!"

"Look here," he said turning. "You guys don't mind hoofing it up the rise to the house I s'pose? Y'see I'm kinda late as it is and I gotta get this lady over to Lone Pine by noon."

"Not at all, since you put it that way." I made haste to assure him.

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