

voice within. He stopped and waited outside the door.

The nights were growing cold, the fresh burned prairie stretched away on either hand, while far along the horizon the prairie fires still burned; everything looked bare and desolate.

From the little brown station across the street Hal caught the glint of the steel rails reaching out toward his old home; he thought if he could only be there, with his father, he would be happy.

Suddenly the door near which he stood opened, and the Major staggered out. He would have fallen had not Hal caught him and sorrowfully led him home.

Poor boy! He had little sleep that night, and after his hours of reflection morning found him no longer a boy, but a man in his determination to save his father from this terrible habit; for he now understood many things which had before been incomprehensible to him.

The Major could hardly look his boy in the face the next morning, and determined to send him back at once to his grandfather; but Hal's pleading again prevailed, for the Major had grown very fond of the lad.

The Major resolved to break off his association with the people who, he knew, made it harder for him to keep the resolve of abstinence which he had made, but his weakness was so great that the good resolutions were soon forgotten; and soon it became customary for Hal to go to the doors of the various saloons until he found where his father was, and then wait outside in the cold and darkness until the Major came stumbling out, when he would see him safely home, and the Major soon ceased to feel the disgrace and grew to depend on having the sturdy little fellow to care for him.

So winter settled down at Hastings. Blizzard after blizzard swept over the prairie. The winter was an exceptionally severe one, and the trains seldom came on regular time. They were lonely days for Hal Overly, who gay after day, looked at the little half-buried houses in the village, or off on the white expanse of unbroken, glittering snow, and wistfully thought of his old home.

Christmas had been a strangely dreary time for him, and now it was the middle of February; but Hal had no heart to remind his father that to-morrow would be his birthday—a day always made bright for him while his mother lived, and his grandparents, too, had made much of the anniversary. He had half-expected a box from them, but the storms had delayed the train, and so he sat dozing and dreaming by the fire in the hotel parlor, when the clock struck twelve.

Midnight, and his father had not yet returned! He arose with a start, and, hastily putting on his overcoat and drawing his cap well down over his ears, went to the door and peered out.

It was a fearful night, and he hesitated, as well he might, at venturing out; but a thought of his father's possible condition urged him on, so closing his lips firmly, he stepped out into the storm.

As long as he remained on the walk and close to the house he found he got on very well. He looked into every saloon he passed, but his father was in none of them. There was only one other, a little place across the railway track.

He was already tired from fighting his way

through the wind and snow, and as he leaned breathlessly against a building for a moment he could not keep back a few boyish tears.

But in a few minutes he turned resolutely away from the sheltered building, and plunged into drifted snow in the direction of the track. He did not realize his danger, through the swirling snow and darkness he could see nothing.

The sharp, compact snow blowing for miles across the prairie is a terrible thing to encounter; it beat against his face like needles. He seems to be suffocating. Gasping and bewildered, he turned to go back; but where was the street? The buildings with their flickering lights had disappeared.

He felt sure it could not be far; and he struggled on in the darkness, while the sharp, beating storm whirled about him, seeming to mock his efforts. Now a fearful sense of his danger came to him. He tore wildly at his collar for relief, for just one full breath in quiet, for one second of calm from this awful tumult.

He called out wildly for help, but his only reply was the shriek of the storm.

Then by a mighty effort he calmed himself and staggered on, believing he must reach a house soon. That fearful thought of his danger he put from him resolutely, that he might not be unnerved by it again.

He struggled courageously on through the cold and snow. By and by the cold seemed to be less bitter, but he stumbled often and at last fell. He lay still for a moment to rest; he felt sleepy, too. Then he thought he heard some one calling him; it seemed like a voice from his old home, and he was suddenly wide awake and hopeful. What it was that really aroused him—who can say? But in God's great world Hal Overly's work was not yet done.

He rose up wearily and took a few stiff and painful steps, then stumbled forward and fell again, not into the cold, drifted snow this time, but into a straw stack, and just within a hollow formed by cattle where they had burrowed into the stack for shelter and warmth as well as food. He lay there somewhat sheltered from the storm which raged without.

In the morning the storm had ceased; the sun shone on miles of dazzling white prairie, dotted here and there by sod barns and board cabins banked nearly to their eaves.

The freakish wind had swept in some places bare spots, and in others curved huge white drifts. On the roof of an empty cabin sat a great white owl sulking in the sunshine, and scarcely to be distinguished from the snow, over which rabbits in their white winter coats scurried.

Silence rested over the scene, and nowhere does silence seem so awesome as on the prairie after a winter's storm.

Out from the little village, where the smoke was just rising into the clear, blue sky, a party of men were ploughing their way through the drifts.

Major Overly, white and conscience smitten, was leading them in the search for his boy; but another search party, with a dog which Hal had often petted, found the lad.

Very tenderly they carried him into the town, just as the little church bell was calling the people for the Sabbath morning service.

It was a long time before Hal could be restored and the doctor could say he would live, but his right arm was so badly frozen that amputation finally became necessary.

Major Overly hardly moved from his son's bedside during the long illness which followed. On that morning after the storm the Major had seen a vision of his past life, and made a vow which he never broke in all the following years.

The Major's sign still swings in the breeze on Main street, but now from a large office; comfortable farm-houses dot the plain; but still the winter comes back with all fury, and the life of the settler has many hardships.

There is a young man with an empty sleeve, but a strong, resolute face, who is giving the best years of his life to the people of this little village and the region around, but giving it cheerfully and gladly. He is known and loved for miles about, and everywhere his face brings comfort. Whether he is preaching in some little school-house, or cheering some despondent farmer during a bad season, or standing by a lonely grave where the winter wind sweep over the prairie, his words have the power to help the hearers onto a higher and better standard of life, and lift them to a higher spiritual plane.

If you ask who he is, they will tell you, 'He is Hal Overly, the Major's boy.'

### Putting on the Beauty.

(Ada Melville Shaw, in Michigan 'Advocate'.)

Katharine's new sewing machine was whirring merrily enough. Katharine's face was anything but merry. When the door-bell added its jolly jingle to the song of the machine she pushed aside her work with a big frown and a bigger sigh. The frown changed to a broad smile and the sigh turned into notes of welcome when she saw her caller.

'Come right in, you "streak of sunshine!"' she said, emphasizing her words with a vigorous hug. 'I need chirking up.'

'Well, here I am, for whatever is needed,' answered the caller brightly. 'I've come to sew—see!' holding out a small parcel.

After a while they were 'settled' for the afternoon, Katharine at her machine and her friend busy with a bit of Battenberg.

'What are you doing, Katie?'

'Oh, hemming and tucking. Tads has to have a graduating dress and tucks are all the rage, but it is dreadful work!'

'Dreadful?' With your new machine? Why, I think tucking is just pure delight. Let me do it for you. This piece of idleness can wait as well as not, and ever quick to put herself aside for her friends, Julia Robinson folded up the Battenberg and gently displaced her friend.

'Why, Katie, child, I don't wonder you call it dreadful work. Where is your tucker?'

'Tucker? I don't know. What's a tucker?'

'The tucking attachment—here—yes, I thought so,' pulling a box out of the machine drawer with the speed and deftness of one entirely at home with the machine. 'Has no one showed you how to use these attachments?'

'No,' answered Katharine, shaking her head. 'They showed me how to manage the thread and the bobbins and things, and

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