

ASPINWALL ISLAND



FRED WARNER SHIBLEY



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THE COTTAGE FROM THE NORTH

ASPINWALL
ISLAND

BY
FRED WARNER SHIBLEY

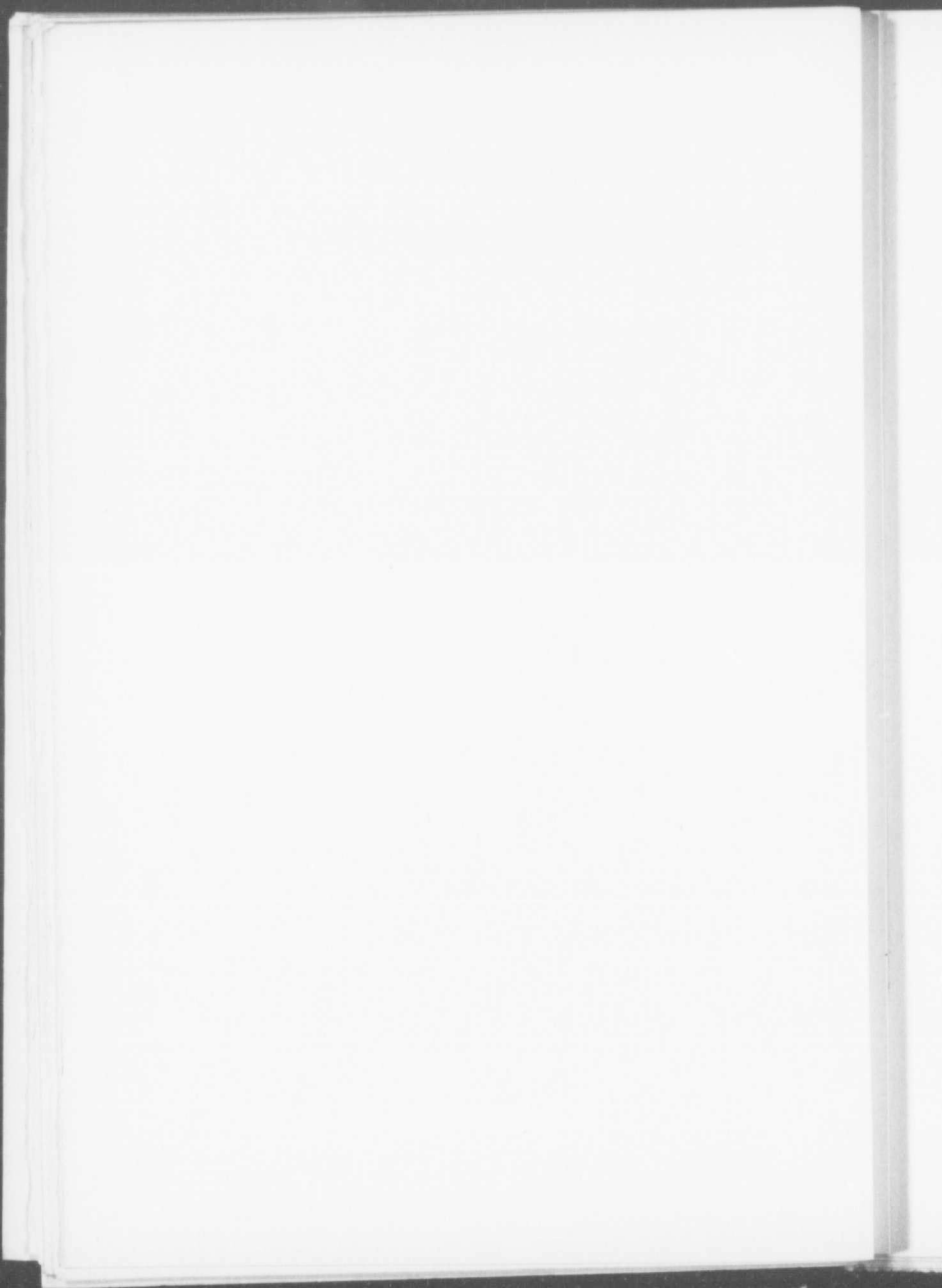
*"To-morrow is not; yesterday is spent;
To-day, O Sadi, take thy heart's content."*

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TO MY WIFE



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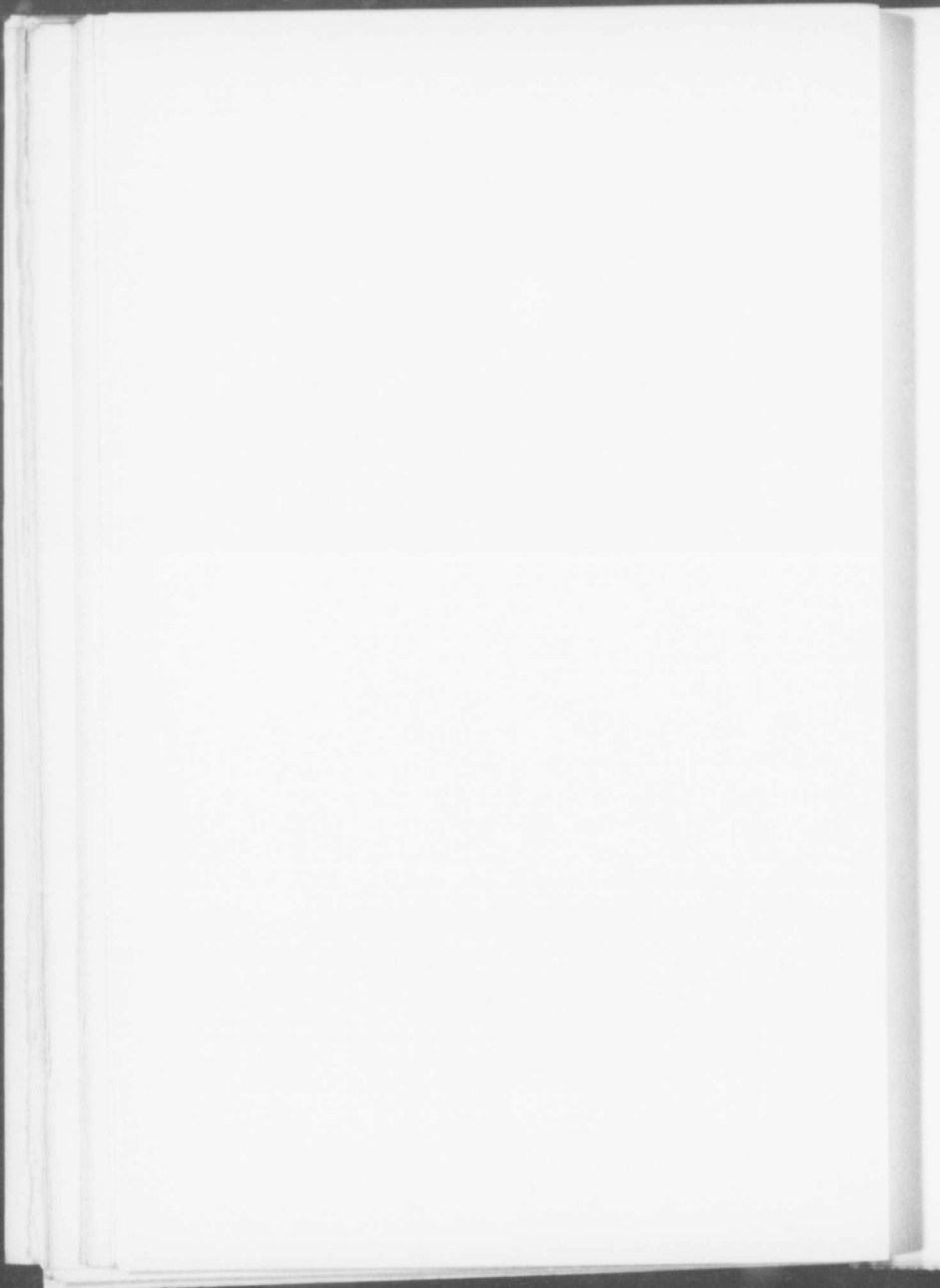


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ASPINWALL ISLAND



CHAPTER I
SHARBOT LAKE

THIS is the story of an island in a lake of spring water, of flowers and trees, of fish and birds which think and reflect, of myriad tireless insects, of a sky revealing each day and each night a new picture, of friends and friendships, of an Indian whose poise is that of a man delighting in his manhood and other rustic people whose lives are not keyed to excitement, but who love and appreciate sunshine and fresh air.

Aspinwall Island is the gem of ninety islands in Sharbot Lake, a body of water of a superficial area of about thirty square miles, neither long nor round, resembling most the body of a devil-fish, all its curving legs and tentacles being bays feeling their way into the land. This lake lies in the crest of the divide between the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa. Its general characteristics give one the impression that it is the crater of a volcano of the Laurentian period, for its boulder shores pour down into it just as if they had been melted rock at one time and

cooled while still flowing. The islands appear to have been volcanic cones.

What a devil's hole it must have been in those days which were ancient history when the first protoplasm crawled from the sea and inhaled a soul!

But now our mother Nature has clothed the rocks in greater part with soil, and trees grow everywhere, grow spontaneously as to the manner born and crowd upward to get their heads into the sunshine, a great variety of trees, fragrant, graceful, musical.

The islands stand up to their necks in water, many with barely their noses out. They are the places of little trees and flowers and mosses. These islands lie about in the lake promiscuously, as a rule, but in the southeastern end of the lake, where the shore sweeps in a grand curve like that of a scimeter and the water is very deep, so deep that most of the early islands have been beheaded by the centuries' wash of the waves and have become only shoals, there lies Aspinwall, the gem island, about three acres in extent, a rock clothed like an opera lady, beautifully gowned where covered, a rock of many indentations, permitting several little bays to snuggle in its embrace.

In a drawer in my desk is a parchment stamped with a large red seal and displaying

an array of red ribbon, proclaiming that her Majesty, Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, grants this Island to me and my heirs or assigns forever. I delight in that word "grants," for it would be ridiculous in me to think of owning this Island. There are so many other owners—I should say there are not less than two hundred birds that make it their summer home each year. There are countless fish that play about its shore, knowing no other habitation. There is now and then a ground-hog who claims squatter's rights and many a squirrel and mouse.

But her late Imperial Majesty did grant me the proprietary right of domicile on this Island and as a living being I have the right of sharing the Island with the trees and birds, so I have a sort of partnership in it which is participated in by my wife and the many good friends who loaf with us there in the summer months.

If one were to think otherwise as to this question of vested interest, the west wind would mock him and the north wind would jeer at his pretensions. They come roaring across the Island every now and then, roistering, bullying, contemptuous, and sometimes positively insulting. The lightning, moreover, serves notice on sundry occasions that it has its eye on this Island and is no respecter of species.

But if, after all this, one were still inclined to delude himself with the selfish thought of possession, he would lose conceit in his sole ownership if he were to visit the Island as I do for a day or so in the springtime, generally about the middle of May.

I am always eager to see the Island after the long winter in the feverish, noisy city, and my heart swells as it comes into sight, vividly green in the heavy yellow humid sunshine peculiar to Nature when she is in the mother mood.

As I step on the Island, a thousand infantile flying things rise up from the grass, disturbed in their ecstatic fluttering. Robins scold and teeter-tail snipe shout to their mates, "Beware the man!" I am offended at this unfriendliness, I the owner, but soon the birds quiet down, seeing I am a harmless being careful of my footsteps. I ascend to the cottage with its windows and doors covered with heavy storm shields, and seating myself on a rustic bench on the east piazza, look about me, my senses relaxed to catch the sweet smells and sounds. I am made aware that there are myriad millions of living creatures on the Island, born there most of them, and most of them to die there. It is their natal place, their home. And they are all busy going about the work of the day, each at its own avocation, running, jumping, crawl-

ing, flying, singing, cheeping, stridulating, or simply breathing, playing each its part in the great drama and symphony.

I look up at the eaves and exclaim, "Where did those thousands of spiders come from?" There they go spinning their webs in the cornice, perfectly at home. And those swallows! Have they no respect for my rights and my pocket-book, building their nests in the towers and ruining the nice new paint? But hark! what is the trouble over there in the shrubbery at my left? It is a cat-bird seated on the swaying branch of a choke-cherry bush. Bless my soul, if the bird is not giving me a tongue lashing! "Who the deuce are you and what are you doing here fifteen feet from my nest?" it scolds. I whistle at it and it flies away in high dudgeon.

Then I turn my eyes to the great boulder which is the pride of the Island, one of Nature's masterpieces in landscape gardening, for I am aware that I am being stared at by a pair of particularly bright eyes. I smile and nod to the possessor of those eyes. It is my friend, the woodchuck.

In the basswood tree, shaped like the Mahometan Tree of Happiness in the picture books, immediately in front of the cottage, a dozen warblers are singing unblushingly the most passionate of love songs, and I look for the pretty

creatures to whom these songs are sung. There is one in the maple tree, preening herself, a gray wren, hearing every note but seemingly intent upon nothing but insect catching. "You are a sly minx," I say to myself as I observe her, "but I wager you adore every feather in the plume of your lover."

Then I light my pipe and drift into dreams, for I am very happy even if I am only one of the myriad proprietors of Aspinwall Island. They are all my very dear friends, these little people, and I would not willingly destroy the life of one of them. I have no enmity even to the spiders. They do not know it, but this colossal being they see seated on the piazza is a very soft-hearted fellow, who has never shot anything but a water snake since he was a boy, who shivers when he hears the dying slap of a fish in the box, who genuinely believes that every living child of nature has an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I am aroused from my reveries by the ripple of a paddle in the water and I look up to see John Antoine rounding the break-water in his "dug-out." I rise quickly and go down to the water to greet him.

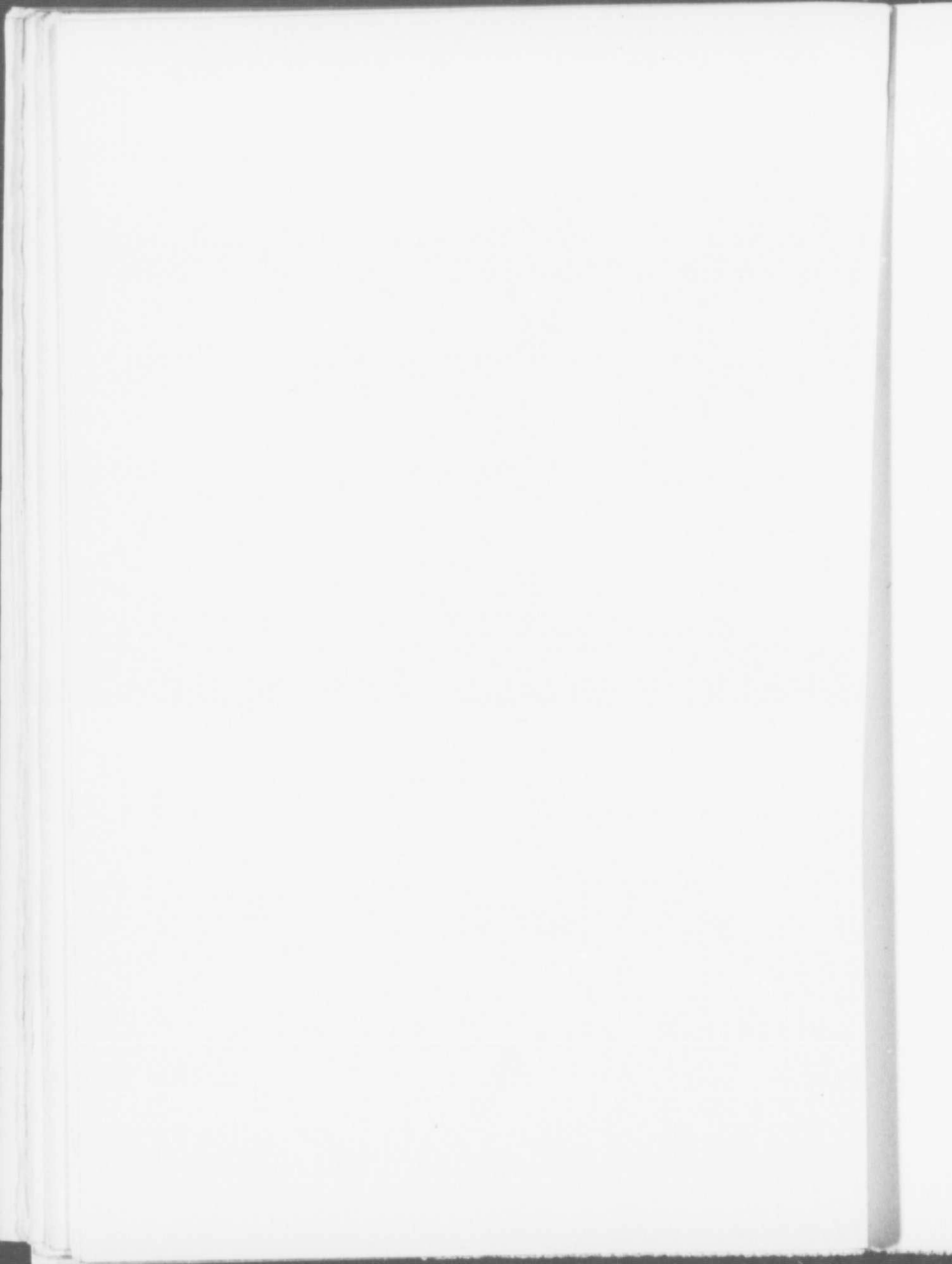
"Hello, John!" I cry joyously.

"Well?" he drawls slowly.

We have not seen each other for six months.



JOHN ANTOINE



He is a Chippewa Indian, my guide, my gardener, my woods companion, my neighbor and my friend.

The faintest suggestion of a smile creeps into his eyes as I shake his hand.

"How is everybody and everything?" I inquire.

"Not too bad," he replies. "And the wife?" he asks in turn. "Is she well?"

"Fine," I reply. "She sends you her kind regards."

Then John and I walk soberly about the Island examining the grass to see how the fertilizer has affected it, inspecting the new trees he has set out and the flower beds he has planted.

"The Island is looking great, John," I say with enthusiasm. "You have taken good care of it."

"Yes?" he replies simply, with a rising accent.

But I know he is delighted at my pleasure, for he loves the Island even as I do. It is the apple of his eye. There is not a dead limb to be seen anywhere, not a floating stick on the shore. Everything is neat as a pin. No tent worms are to be seen in the trees. He has guarded the Island as if it were a garden in Paradise.

John goes home after a while and I eat my lunch in the doorway of the boat house, seated in the sunshine, and incidentally I feed Charley and Willie, two rock bass that live under the boat house and have resided there for years. They line up side by side, about eighteen inches under water, and watch me, like two bull-pups, eager to spring at each morsel cast on the water. Charley is undershot and easily distinguishable among his mates. Willie is just an ordinary fellow, but his friend's chosen companion, perhaps his mate for all I know.

Having finished my lunch I drop off to sleep lulled by the harmony of the insects and aided to unconsciousness by the soporific fragrance of the air.

So much for one of my days on Aspinwall Island in May. Wonderful days those—breeders of charming thoughts!

I think I love the country and especially lonesome places so well because I spent my entire childhood on a farm far from the main road and twenty miles from the nearest city. I never saw a railroad until I was twelve and I did not ride on a train until I was seventeen. I grew up among the mysteries of Nature. Horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and dogs were my fellows and my friends. They knew me as I knew them. The voices of the forest stimulated my imagi-

nation, and as a child I came insensibly to take a large view of things, for I was surrounded by immensity. The entire horizon was presented daily to my view and at night when I brought home the cows I would sit on the fence on the hill back of the farm and survey the heavens, wondering and imagining, thinking of the stars and the children who lived in the stars, watching the meteors flash across the Milky Way, half believing they were souls returning to God, as Hans Christian Andersen had told me in his story of "The Poor Little Match Girl."

I saw and came to somewhat of a conception of the forces of Nature working in the soil. I dug into the earth with my hands and watched the sprouts develop on the potatoes planted as seed. I observed the bees carrying pollen from one flower to another. I knew the ways of nesting things and the habits of those creatures that burrowed in the ground. I learned to distinguish trees by the sounds they made when the breeze fluttered their leaves. Night after night I have lain awake and listened to the noises of Nature, guessing at their meaning. I had a shrewd idea what hens and ducks talked about and what pigs were saying when they grunted to each other. And I never believed, even when a very little boy, the stories folks told me in Sunday School about Heaven and Hell and

what happened to good people and what to bad. It did not sound natural to me. I was never attracted by the idea of a Heaven above the clouds with gold streets and jasper walls, where I was to be dressed all in white and play a harp before the throne for ever and ever. I did not know how to play a harp and had never seen a harp. What would I look like, I thought, standing in line with a lot of angels, in a flowing white robe, playing a harp all day long? And Hell—that was ridiculous. I knew the Devil was a bogey man to scare bad boys with. The idea of floating about in a lake of fire and brimstone for all eternity, never being consumed but always suffering,—that was so fiendish and absurd, that I rebelled at even the suggestion of it.

I knew God as He manifested Himself in Nature, and I stood in awe of Him and respected Him, believing in Him actually, for I was aware of His presence. I always thought of Him as a good God, genuinely solicitous for the welfare of every living thing. I believed He felt sorry just as I did when the frost killed the early vegetables, when the grasshoppers destroyed the foliage, and when the birds or the sheep or the little pigs died. I used to imagine He was in the sun, and night after night I would sit on the milk-stand which projected into the road and look at the sun go down, feeling pretty cer-

tain that no one but God Himself could produce such a wealth of color. Instinctively I became a sun-worshiper, and I have never lost completely this infatuation. In fact I have made little progress in religious development. I am the same Pantheist I was when I was five years old and I have never learned a thing more about the Creator than I conceived as a child.

Perhaps also I love the country and old-fashioned people because I have had so considerable an experience with city people and urban life. I will criticize neither. However, I will tell this little story to illustrate the other man's point of view.

A friend of mine, a student of life, a thinker and a philosopher, born and raised in New York City, a man who had always lived in that city, at the earnest solicitation of his wife and a group of his most intimate personal friends consented to spend two weeks at a summer hotel on a lake in southwestern Maine. One day he and I were sitting on the piazza in the sunshine enjoying a smoke and looking across the lake to the Presidential range, fifty miles away, rising grandly against the western sky. A boy was driving a number of cows over the causeway that divided the lake immediately before us. Young men and women loitered on the boat-landing in a picturesque group. Occasionally

the strong, clear note of a meadow lark rippled in the lazy summer air.

Suddenly my friend arose from his chair, spread out his arms and cried, "My God, what a silence! Oh, for the noise of Broadway! A day more of this will be the death of me."

There is no argument in such a case. Every man must be true to his own nature, but nevertheless I maintain that David, the shepherd boy, singing his songs on the hillside while his sheep fed in the valley below him, was happier than Solomon seated on the high throne in his cedar palace, cloyed by the sensuous luxuries of life, writing on his waxen tablets that all was vanity and vexation of spirit.

I look at it this way. As far as we know, we have only this one life to live and our days are short at the best. It is a wonderful thing to be alive and marvellous to possess an intelligence that can conceive even in a meager way God and His Universe. Like the poor, sick woman in the parable, if we can only come to touch the hem of His garment, we have gained much. We are wonderful beings. We all glory in ourselves now and then, whether we admit it or not. It is so good to hear, to feel, to smell, to taste. Every twenty-four hours we experience a miracle when we sleep and when we wake. I have found myself countless times watching my

fingers move, studying the play of my muscles, rejoicing in my perfect health. I have sent thought orders to my nerves and seen them obey in a flash. I have said to my toes, "Move," and instantly they have moved, while I laughed aloud. We are the highest expressions of life. Our bodies are chemical combinations, perfectly harmonious in coöperation. Our souls are a part of God Himself. I know this one thing absolutely. I am not modest in my assertion. On the contrary, I am vain of it. Whatever I am, I am indestructible. My soul can do no wrong, for it is God-like.

Realizing such a sublime fact, it seems to me that we will show greatest wisdom if we come to a knowledge of ourselves as soon as possible while we are still young, so that instead of allowing our senses the idiotic sway of self-command, we can place these delightful senses under the control of our souls so that their pleasure will be increased a thousandfold.

Any fool can look at the ocean, but only a Swinburne can conceive it, revel in its mysteries, mix it with his nature, just as the great old masters played with colors, like gods making sunsets.

Therefore if it is true that it is good to extract the last drop of honey from the comb of life, how can we best proceed about it?

It is so easy to talk about things, while performance is so difficult.

Let us look at the sordid side of our lives, the three meals a day, the morning paper and the evening paper, the journey down-town to business and the journey home again at night, the worries and the cares, the wondering if we can make money enough to meet our expenses, the eternal worry of clothes and boots and gloves and hats, the going to the play and the boredom of the after-theater supper, the bad taste in the mouth in the morning, the examination of our teeth to see whether they are holding their own, the travail of spirit over thinning and graying hair, the monotony of the days, the grind, the endless grind and the hopelessness of ever getting ahead. "It is horrible," we cry many times.

And yet, outdoors there is the same old yellow sun. There is the morning breeze coming in from the sea. The park is aflame with flowers. "God 's in His Heaven. All 's well with the world."

What 's the trouble?

The answer is very simple, but even if one came back from the dead and told us, we would not believe.

"Consider the lilies of the field—they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto you that

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

We don't want to be like lilies of the field. We want the sordid luxuries of life. We want to be rich, to be grand, to be idle. We are by nature mentally and physically lazy. We want excitement, so we may not think. We want to be amused, to be fêted, to be considered great people. We are vain. We are absurd.

Did not some old thinker say far back in the story of mankind that man made a mess of the idle life of an aristocrat among animals and was driven forth from the zoölogical collection to become a man by earning his bread in the sweat of his brow?

No man can be happy who does not work. No man can think sanely who does not work. All these new-thought people, these anarchists and social rebels, are lazy men and women who yelp like curs for the mean satisfaction of yelping.

Play is the reward of labor. And rest! What a delightful sensation is rest! No one can enjoy it who has not toiled.

I remember once when I was a little boy going out to the corn-field one day to watch the men, for I was lonesome, I suppose. I climbed the rail fence and, seated thereon, watched Wilse Bailey and Sime Snider, our two hired men, hoe corn. As they came opposite me, they paused,

leaning on their hoes, and each placed a hand instinctively in the small of his back.

"Wilse," said Sime thoughtfully, "what would you do if you had a thousand dollars?"

"I 'd jes' set down and rest," Wilse gravely replied.

It is this idea of rest that makes the story of Heaven so attractive to many good people.

Poverty is considered a curse in this world, but nevertheless it is the scratching of the wolf at the door that arouses man to thought; and men and women have got to think if they are going to discover and understand the rare beauties in their natures that only await charming into vitality.

Poverty, labor, rest, thought! There is a Joy which, like the fairy spirit *Ariel* in "The Tempest," is the slave of each. We need not go so far as the good Saint Francis in the glorification of poverty, but at no time in my life, even when the drudgery of the days palled on me, have I regretted the poverty of my childhood and youth, for in those days I learned to want greatly, to yearn for leisure, to appreciate even a little progress and meager pleasure. I was a man grown and of fixed habits before I came to know satiety in any form, and then I found what I had dreamed was charming to be stupid and unattractive.

How often we hear the expression, "I never want my son or daughter to work as hard as I have and endure the privations I did." The people who talk like that do not think. Any system that attempts to improve on Nature is a bad system, and one that is bound to breed unhappiness. And just as poverty is good in the early years of one's life, so is labor good also. This is a truism demonstrated beyond the possibility of discussion. He who tries to eliminate labor from his life is a fool. The wise man, when he has risen above the need of labor, seeks labor, for he knows it to be one of his best friends. If he has become wealthy by the work of his hands, he seeks mental labor, or if his brains only have been the means of his success, we find him craving a farm where he can work with his hands.

Aspinwall Island, beautiful as it is, would mean little to me if I could find nothing there to keep me busy. When I was a growing boy, I was as lazy as the traditional white dog. I hated physical labor; but now that I am growing old, I delight most in doing the work of a hired man. I love to tinker around, to make concrete walks, to handle stone, to plant trees, to dig the earth, to chop wood, to polish the motor boats, to scrub and scour, to paint piazza chairs and flag poles, to water the grass and the flowers,

to keep going, doing odds and ends of things, improving, making more beautiful, if possible, this charming spot.

In the morning I arise at six, and donning a bath-robe, walk down to the lake in my bare feet over the cold, wet lawn and plunge into the deep clear water, which is always cool. After a vigorous rub down, I do my exercises on the break-water. It 's great there in the sharp morning air, rain or shine, July or September. Then, still barefooted, I cross the Island to the pump house, start the gasoline engine, turn on the sprinklers, while the robins shout for joy, and all the other birds welcome me with undeserved adulation.

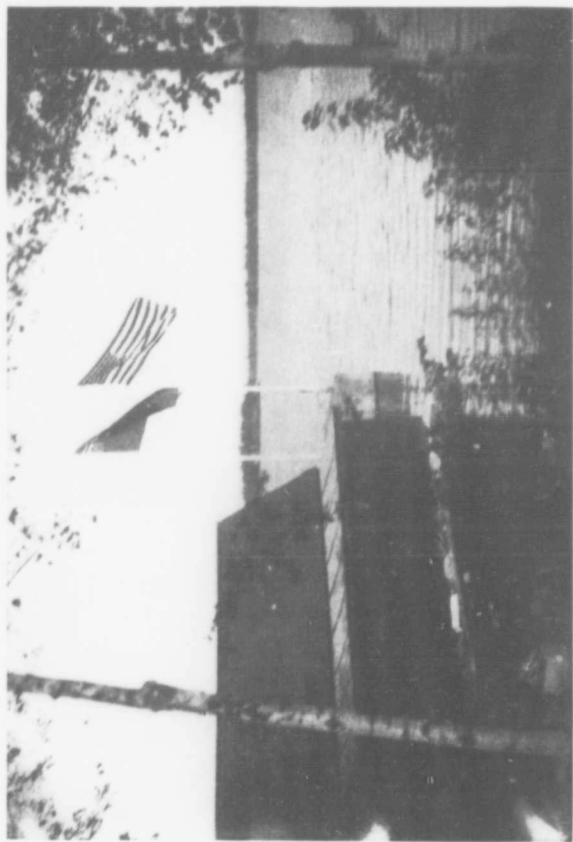
I light the fire in the sitting-room as I pass through, just to take the chill off, and because I love to hear the fire crack and snap while I am shaving and finishing my toilet. Having dressed, I walk out on the piazza, inhaling the savory odor of bacon and eggs on the way, look out over the lake to the east where the sun is once more squandering his wealth for the joy of it, look up toward the village westward to see if Larry is coming down in the motor boat with the mail, say "Hello!" to everybody who has so far shown himself or herself, rub my hands and simply feel bully.

After breakfast, which is usually eaten in the

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THE OLD BOAT HOUSE

sun room at the east corner of the piazza, the first business of the day is to get the guests started off fishing with John. I seldom go. There are so many other things to do, puttery things, and as I have said, I delight to putter. Perhaps Larry and I take the fast boat and shoot up to the village on some errand, or we haul sand for concrete in some building operation we have on hand. We are always building, renovating, reconstructing. Two years ago, after we had completed the pump house and piped water over most of the Island, we felt that there was nothing more to do. Aspinwall Island was perfect. Larry boasted of the completeness of things. There was no possibility of extra work in sight. The following year Larry sat in the door of the boat house most of the summer and read magazines. I yawned and thought. In 1915 nothing could hold me. I yearned for labor and the excitement of building operations. So we removed the old boat house to the north end of the Island on a foundation in the water that John Badore and Larry and I had constructed, a heavy, lasting piece of work of which we are proud. We went down to the woods, cut the timber, floated it to the Island, built a crib and filled it with stone, work warranted to reduce any undue waist measurement and to make the noonday meal hour something

to be looked forward to. Then we built the new boat house. We tore the cover from the break-water and replaced it with eighteen inches of concrete. That break-water was a glutton for Portland cement. Larry hauled sand and cement, punt load after punt load, until it became a joke and he gibed at the endlessness of the job. The contractors, of course, built the concrete piers and the boat house itself with its great fireplace, but John and Larry and I were mason tenders about in the order named. It was not in Larry's contract, but his imagination was excited by the new boat house, and he became a hero, hauling materials and men, standing around, watching things until the ice froze over the lake and the contractors quit. Now a two-story boat house on concrete piers, 32 feet by 32 feet, two stories in height, with a fireplace and chimney of the first order, is some public works, as we term it on the Island; but the building lust possessed me, and we dug a big cesspool, buried it under a flower bed, put in a bath-room, hot and cold water all over the cottage, repainted the cottage and the other buildings, constructed a concrete hot-bed and three or four concrete landing steps here and there, and prepared to finish things up early in the spring—a very orgy of building, you will say, why not spread it out thinner? Nature is a determined destructional-



THE BOAT HOUSE



ist. Lightning might destroy the big flag pole or ice wreck the break-water. Something will surely happen and there will be plenty of things to do. So I look into the future with pleasant anticipations, knowing that I shall always find so much work ahead of me that I shall never get a chance to spend the summer anywhere else; and although this is a selfish thought, I chew it with satisfaction.

For labor, common manual labor, is delightful not only as a change after tedious office work, but simply because of itself.

To illustrate this I will tell you of the time when John Antoine and I transplanted the pine tree. This was on a day when our guests chose to go motor-boating with Larry instead of fishing with John, possibly because it was very warm and the lake was like a mirror. Anyhow, John had nothing to do and I conceived the idea of transplanting one of the beautifully shaped pine trees I had spotted on a little island along the southern shore of the lake. This idea came into my mind naturally, because I had read in a magazine only a few days before that the time to transplant evergreen trees was in late August, and we were now enjoying the last days of that month.

I suggested it to John, and as usual, he was ready to fall into line. He showed considerable

interest, moreover, owing to the fact that he had not had very good luck with the pine trees he had transplanted in the spring.

“You see, John,” I said to him, as we chugged southward in the *Peter Pan*, towing the punt, “the fellow says that in August or early September the sap of a pine tree is resting in the roots. It ’s through with its season’s business. We catch it asleep, so to speak, and are not so apt to shock its sensibilities as earlier in the year. We will try this theory out, and to give it a good chance will be particular to dig up each root carefully and transplant the tree exactly as it now sits.”

“That sounds sensible to me,” John replied.

When we approached our destination, John and I fooled away fifteen minutes studying the lay of the deep rocks in the vicinity of the island, for the water was so clear we could see to a great depth. It ’s worth knowing where these sunken boulders are when you are fishing for black bass. Then John gave me a dissertation on moss formations while I filled my pipe and smoked. This took up another quarter of an hour. However, we were in no hurry, for it smelled good down there on that little pine-covered island, and the moss was as soft as a hair mattress. Once seated on it, we were held by the restful charm of it. John was in one of

his rare talkative moods. He never claims to know a thing positively; he just wonders if it is so. He told me that six deer entered the lake near this island the previous autumn, that Wall Commodore and three friends were stationed on the runways on the other side of the lake where the deer were bound to come out, that the deer did not come out where they were bound to come out, and that Wall and his friends never got a crack at one of them. "Would you believe it?"

"Could you hit a deer on the other shore with a bullet from here?" I asked.

"It would largely depend on how badly we needed meat," John replied gravely. "That makes a powerful lot of difference in my shooting." Then he added with a sigh, "That must have been an awful disappointment to Wall and his friends."

I saw he was beginning to brood over the perverseness of those six deer not coming out where they were bound to come out, and in order to change the subject I suggested that we had better explore the little island so as to select the most perfect pine tree. This was agreeable to John, and presently we agreed to confer our favor on one particular tree which was as slender and graceful as a young girl. It was about six inches in diameter at the base. There were

no rocks near it and it seemed to us that this was the tree we wanted to adorn the lawn of Aspinwall Island.

So we began to dig, not with spade or pick, but with our fingers, seeking to trace out the main roots of this maiden pine tree. My gloves lasted only a few minutes and I discarded them. John dug like a dog after a bone, his lean dark fingers tracing the slender thread-like roots which ran along the surface of the earth not deeper anywhere than a few inches but interlaced with the humus in a tenacious way. After we had traced the first root about eight feet, I said carelessly to John, "How far does the root of a small pine tree generally run?" "Well, you see," John replied, "generally it makes up its mind to go to the lake. It likes water. It ain't its nature to dig for water, so it just travels. When it travels so far and don't arrive at the water it gets disgusted and stops, but it always appears to be a-going and you never can tell when it will tire out. Now this root, for instance, ain't no mind to quit. We ain't anywhere near the end of it, it seems." I rested awhile and gazed suspiciously at the little maiden tree. I thought it possible that the transplanting of a six-inch pine tree might not be as romantic as it had first appeared to be. Then it was very warm on this miniature island.

It was true that the air was fragrant and the odor of the humus in which we were clawing particularly so, but nevertheless I wiped perspiration from my brow with a sigh, rolled up the sleeves of my shirt and went at it again.

John stopped after a bit to inquire if I had seen, the last year or so, the big turtle that lives in the deep water off the southeast point of Burnt Island.

I replied that I had not and took occasion to rub a kink from my back.

"That turtle," said John, slowly, "is a mystery to me. He was here in Pete Charles' day, and Pete himself told me that Francis Sharbot was the first man who told him that the turtle was a-living off Burnt Island. Now, you know Francis Sharbot was an old man when I was a little boy and that 's over sixty years ago. That turtle must be powerful aged."

At the expiration of half an hour we had the first root with all its collateral fibers free and clear and we took a rest.

We made better progress on the next root, but when we came to the east root we soon realized that it was some traveller.

"By golly!" John exclaimed, "this chap has made up his mind to see where the sun comes up," and to our shame we became disgusted with the sunrise voyager and broke it off.

At five o'clock we were still clawing and our hands were a sight. Every nail on every finger was a ruin. But we stuck at it, soaked in perspiration, our backs aching and our knees inflamed.

Finally the maiden pine tree swayed free of the entangling humus. We tied her hair roots up in a nice curl and laid her gently in the punt. I told John that for twenty-five cents I would plunge into the lake, clothes, watch and all, I was so hot, but he refused to donate the money.

When we arrived at Aspinwall Island, looking like two charcoal burners, everybody was home and showed us how to set out our pine tree.

John and I paid little attention to any one. We dug a hole for the body of the tree and then started to make trenches in the sod for the roots, while the folks stared and wondered. Then we stretched those roots each in its own proper place, packed mushy mud about them, regardless of all sense of respect for our hands, and when the job was done we rose up, looked upon our work, called it good, and I bragged of the care we had taken and the labor we had undergone.

John Badore was hanging around to witness the performance of our tree-planting.

"I still maintain that the spring is the time to

set out all kinds of trees," he said; "early in the spring, just as the frost leaves the ground, and if you will let me do it" (this to me), "I will set you out next spring a nice, big pine tree wherever you say. Then we can see which lives the longer, yours or mine."

I winked at John Antoine. "All right," I replied graciously to John Badore. "I'll show you a suitable place, but remember you must bring all the roots."

"Sure, I know," John Badore returned proudly. "I know how to do it."

The next morning I offered to bet Larry a dollar even money that John Badore's tree would not live through the summer. I did not believe it possible that any man would ever again take the pains to unravel the roots of a pine tree that John Antoine and I had taken that hot afternoon.

NOTE.—Our pine tree bloomed throughout the autumn, but in the following spring contracted quick consumption and John and I laid it away on the brush-pile. I am forced to relate, moreover, with sadness that John Badore's pine tree fell a victim to infantile paralysis in its first spring.

CHAPTER II

ABOUT FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIPS

THOSE who come to visit us at Aspinwall Island each summer add greatly to our pleasure.

Having discovered this gem in the wilderness and made it habitable, we desired immediately to exhibit the treasure to our friends and to listen like pleased children as they praised its beauties.

But these good people were hundreds of miles away and we were rather shy about asking them to travel so great a distance simply to spend a week or so with us on an island in a lake, where the conveniences were limited. So to decoy them I told fish stories during the winter months. I told of the sensation caused by a three-pound small-mouthed black bass hooked to a silk line attached to a slender bamboo rod; of how such a bass would run out and in with the line, every few moments leaping grandly from the water, plunging, tugging, swirling, fighting every second of the time. As I talked





MAKING CHOWDER

I would watch the expressions in the eyes of my friends, and if their eyes glistened I had hopes. Then I would tell of a rare fish chowder a guide had shown me how to make; how I took a lamb bone, a fat chicken and a pound of breakfast bacon chopped fine and boiled these in a pot for one hour under a white birch tree near a great rock on the Island; how I added to this a plate of chopped onions, another of cabbage and potatoes, and when these had disappeared as substances I dropped in the pot a dozen one-pounder black bass, skinned, with all the bones extracted and watched this white fish flesh merge into the harmonious ensemble as I peppered and salted to taste; how I added a dash of tabasco and a tablespoonful of Worcestershire sauce; how within fifteen minutes of the end I added a can of tomatoes and then brooded over the pot as it bubbled and boiled, inhaling its aroma until the bubbles began to plop, plop, and I knew it was done. As I thus talked earnestly, seeming passionately enamoured of the delectable nature of this chowder, I would watch the lips of my listeners, and if I saw that they were forced to use their handkerchiefs owing to their mouths beginning to water, I knew they would risk much time and reckon little on expense to be placed in physical contact with such a brew. Then I would say, while the glamour was still

in their eyes and their lips were still moist, "Why don't you run up and spend a week with us at Sharbot Lake next summer and catch a few bass? If you will come I shall promise to make you a chowder."

Strong men busied with large undertakings, and fine ladies accustomed to the ease and luxuries of seaside and mountain hotels, have fought vainly against the cravings of their natures as these realistic stories penetrated to the depths of their sensibilities. In the end they have come through the heat and the dust of the long journey and we have met them at the humble little station, conducted them over the railway tracks, through the sawdust down to the landing, stowed them in the motor boat with their hand baggage, told Larry to let her go, all the while our hearts in our mouths, my dear wife and I, for fear that all this while they would be exclaiming mentally, "Well, this is an out-of-the-way corner of the world, and whatever induced us to come here?"

And then, when the *Sharbotina* shot out into the water, turned the corner of Thomson's Point, and the beauties of the upper lake unrolled to view, for the first time we would dare to turn and look them in the face.

The next morning, when we found our guests up and around, inhaling the delicious fresh air,

examining the flower beds, peeping into the pump house, listening to the birds, their faces aglow with happiness, we felt reassured.

But at night, when they came in after a day with John on the lake, came in with laughter and a merry shout, holding up the largest fish for us to see as we trotted down to the boat house to greet them, then we knew we were safe from any possibility of recrimination, that the sunshine, the air, the lake, the Island and John had entered into their blood and become a part of them and that they were enmeshed in the Sharbotian snare forever.

Then we have rejoiced with them frankly as we sat on the piazza side by side in a row after supper, watching the sunset glows fade from the sky, watching the stars peep out, watching the moon unveil, watching the night creep in from the lake and enfold us, listening to the cries of the whippoorwills, for friendship is sweet and holy and it is so good to love one's friends and be loved by them.

Friendship! It is rarer than love, the kindest emotion of the human heart. It is the supreme sentiment which the soul manifests toward other souls. It is affection without sex attraction. Throughout my life I have sought earnestly to make friends and I have not limited myself to a chosen few, but have been on the

contrary somewhat inclined to view discrimination in this regard with disfavor.

Friendships are not forced into being. They are self-creative. They come spontaneously. I like John Smith and John likes me. We get into closer communion with each other and find cause for mutual attraction. I like to hear my friend talk about himself and his interests, about his successes and his failures. If he is my friend, his companionship is good to me. I am at ease with him. I like to see the smile in his eyes when he greets me, and I like to make him believe in himself by showing him that I admire and respect him and that I am fond of him, for no one knows better than I do how much the kind words and cordial hand-clasps of one's friends mean to a man, aid him in the building of his character, and make of him whatever kind of a man he is. A good wife and a good friend—they are a man's best assets.

The Theosophists have the charming thought, for it is too fantastic to be termed a belief, that each individual is surrounded by an aura, colored by his personality, and that he radiates yellow rays when he gives off love, crimson rays when his heart emits hate or evil, and many other rays descriptive of his several moods. This is a delightful fancy, and for all I know, there may be something to it. It is the one

beauty in Theosophy that my heart clung to after my mind decided that there were saner methods of arriving at an intelligent conception of spirituality than this transcendental philosophy imported from India.

Each one of us, like a living star, has an atmosphere of his own. My own eyesight cannot detect colored emanations on the astral plane, but I like to think they are there. I do know, however, that what I have termed atmosphere exists, and that it is charged with magnetism, for I realize that I change to conform to the moods of my friends just as a chameleon takes on the coloring of its environment.

Aspinwall Island has an aura of its own, of powerful influence and magnetic attraction, but I have seen one gray-haired man envelop this splendid aura in his own magnificent personality and dominate whatever radiating was being done on that Island while he was a guest. We call this man our "star boarder." He lands from the train with a shout of greeting. You are convinced that he was never happier at any other moment in his life. He has thrown the world from his shoulders and here he is, feeling fine. Arriving at the boat-landing, he throws out his arms, inhales the strong, pure air, looks up at the sun high in heaven and cheers the Creator. He is tickled to death to see every-

body, even the village dogs and the *Sharbotina*.

He moves out on the lake, snapping joy fires like a spark-plug. When he reaches the Island, he feels it over lovingly like a fond mother her cherished child. He has a present for everybody and the suit of clothes he stands in is for John Antoine. He has worn it purposely. John knows by past experience that that suit will be his and gives it a discriminating glance.

He is full of news, hungry as a bear, and has brought with him a full set of fishing tackle, the latest word in that line, for so the man who sold it to his son assured him. We look over this fishing outfit, Larry and I, just as we have done season after season for years. It is impossible, a steel rod heavy enough to land a muskellonge, and hooks big enough for salmon, heavy cotton lines and reels that were made for the Ten Cent Stores. We hoot at it.

"All right," he cries. "Give it to Leslie" (John's boy), "and I 'll fish with Fred's old pole same as I 've always done."

The next morning I am awakened by loud shouting at five-thirty. It 's no use. Further sleep is impossible, and anyhow the sun is staring me out of countenance through the French windows. I don my bathing-suit and go down to the break-water. There he is in the water

to his neck, shouting that if he knew where the crowbar was he could get out another stone that he feels with his toes. From year to year, he makes a business of removing stones from the little bay before the boat house. "It's fine exercise for the abdominal muscles," he says.

He has lived a day before breakfast but is eager to be off with John. They are blood brothers of long standing.

That man is one of the friends who come to see us at Aspinwall Island. We love him. Everybody loves him. They can't help it. He dominates all influences wherever he goes and is at bottom the simplest-minded, kindest fellow who ever lived,—a big, white-haired boy who will never grow old. And we love his wife just as we love him. We call her the "Gentle One," for exactly as he is robust, is she gentle. She sits all day on the piazza knitting afghans for a grandchild now existent or one expectant. The "Gentle One" has knitted miles of afghans, it seems to me. She, too, diffuses happiness.

The point I wish to make in this brief sketch of the "star boarder," is that each of our visitors has an atmosphere or a radiance of his or her own, that while they are with us their lives mix with ours, that we absorb their influences and they absorb ours, that each has his own individual charm of personality, and that the

love and esteem of our friends add greatly to our happiness and to the beauty of Aspinwall Island; for the fact that so many people have been happy on this Island, admired it and loved it, has undoubtedly magnified its charms in our eyes.

Now there is Roby. He has a surname, but it is not necessary to tell you what it is. Everybody calls him Roby except John Antoine, who has always called him Reuben, not properly understanding his name in the first instance.

I have known Roby for many years and we have been like brothers from the day we met. Roby is not disingenuous like a little child. He is a child. I never knew Roby loved to fish until the day in New York when I told him about Aspinwall Island. He lives in the sunny South, far down, and whenever he comes "to the Big City to see the millionaires spend the beautiful money," as he puts it, he reaches my office early in the day and offers me immediately a fat two-for-a-quarter cigar—one of a fine brand that one of his partners introduced to his attention. Then he sits down opposite me and we tell each other everything we know. First he asks me about the "Good Lady," as he terms my wife, and I inquire as to the health and happiness of Mrs. Roby and the little Robys, chiefly of Roby, Jr., the son and heir, a child marvellous in all particulars, the latest story being that his

mother had just fitted him out for public school with a hygienic lunch in a sterilized lunch box, and that when he came home from this first day at school, he replied, in answer to her question as to how he enjoyed his lunch, that he had traded it with another boy for some canned salmon sandwiches.

But we must get back to earlier days, long before little Roby was born. I told Roby, of course, all about my finding Aspinwall Island and the wonderful black bass fishing in Sharbot Lake. Then he unburdened his heart to me, told me how he loved to fish, what an expert fisherman he was, how he dreamed about fish as soon as the pussy-willows budded in the spring, and he asked me if there were not some vacant island in Sharbot Lake where he and a few of his Southern friends could pitch a tent and spend a few weeks.

“What is the good of camping out?” I replied. “You come along with me to Aspinwall Island next summer. There is lots of room.”

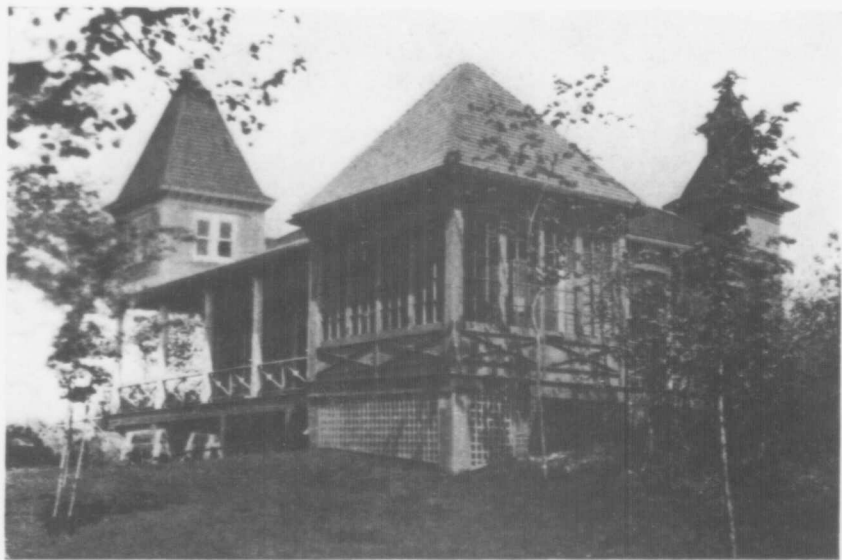
“Fred,” he replied, “if you had asked me to go to Heaven I ’d hesitate on account of the wife and children, but I reckon I can’t refuse such a polite invitation as you extend to me. I ’ll come. You can bet five hundred thousand dollars that I ’ll come the minute I get your wire; and I ’ll tell you what ’s more, I ’ll bring up the

finest fishing outfit ever displayed before the eyes of a Canadian guide."

So Roby came the first summer. He fell in love with Sharbot Lake and Aspinwall Island on sight. He fished all day long and in the evening laid out his tackle for the next day. He had a box with many compartments full of things. He was constantly polishing and oiling. He had half a dozen poles which he fondled morning and evening. He smoked incessantly those remarkable two-for-a-quarter cigars, but knowing my sarcastic proclivities, he brought a box of havanas which he set on the writing-table for the guests. As for him, he preferred the delectable brands of Key West.

Roby added another ray of sunshine to the glory of the day. He mourned, as we did, when he went away, and during the following winter he talked incessantly about buying an island and having a little shack put up for himself and his friends. I did not rise to his lure until late in the spring, when I said to him carelessly, "I suppose you will be with us for a couple of weeks at Sharbot this summer."

"Fred," he said, "to be real honest, I never did enjoy sleeping in a tent. That west bedroom at the cottage on Aspinwall Island is my ideal for peaceful slumber. Do you honestly mean you want me to come up this summer?"



THE COTTAGE

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“To be sure,” I replied.

“Well, you have saved my life, old man,” he returned gravely. “I ’d ’a’ died of longing if you had not asked me.”

The following year little Roby was born and he did not come, but the year after that Mrs. Roby and the baby and the nurse and Roby all came to the Island. We considered it a great honor for Mrs. Roby to come, for we thought the wilderness would not attract so dainty a lady, but she came and outdid Roby even in enthusiasm. In fact, she determined to purchase a point a little to the north of the Island, and we forthwith named it Roby’s Point. On this point the Robys built a very pretty cottage the following spring, and they have been our next door neighbors nearly every summer since then. Each season when they come they bring a few Southern friends as guests, and it is my delight to paddle over to the Point in the morning and listen to these charming Southern people talk. We visit back and forth several times a day, and Roby is always calling on me to go fishing with him, but I seldom have time. But when we do go out together, our conversation must afford John rare entertainment. We rail at each other’s fishing methods. We lay all kinds of wagers. We abuse each other’s cigars. In fact we have a fine time, and generally we

bring home a box of fish that makes even Larry sit up and take notice.

Such friendships are altogether delightful. Life would mean little without them. To sit in the sunshine of a friend's smile is the most ideal form of relaxation. Friendship is a bridge between two personalities that affords a neutral meeting place for spiritual communications.

I made a friend once simply by giving earnest expression to opinions. It was in the little smoking compartment of a Pullman sleeping-car in North Dakota. The train was stuck fast in a huge snowdrift. It was the time of the great European war. There were half a dozen men of us, all strangers, and we were discussing the war. One man, a fine old fellow, smart and suave, a banker and large rancher, argued strongly in favor of Germany because of its kultur and efficiency. He worshipped the latter characteristic of the Teutons. He told us that life meant to him progress developed along definite lines, expertness in each occupation or profession, and he believed that such progress would not be attained by the individual except under the masterful dominance of the State. He elaborated on this idea until my patience was exhausted. It was the same old propaganda, word for word, preached by Dr. Dernberg and his successors. So I said to him: "Sir, you told us

about your life here in North Dakota, your great farm, your bank, your lumber mill in British Columbia, and your delight in life, before you branched off on the doctrine according to Saint Otto von Bismarck. You strike me as a man who has enjoyed all his life long the fullest measure of individual liberty. Initiative fairly oozes from you. But you have had such a completeness of liberty in your life that it has been to you simply like the sunshine and fresh air, unbounded and unmeasurable, an every-day affair, a matter of course, not worth the brain effort necessary to a proper appreciation and conception of it.

“Now let me tell you something which all the world knows, except possibly North Dakota. There is an iron hand that goes with German kultur and efficiency. This iron hand touches every man, woman and child in the Empire, and at that touch they feel a command to do what the State demands, and they know that they must do this, good or bad, without reflection on their own personal desires. Many centuries ago this iron hand of imperial dominance existed in England, and it so revolted the consciences of those rude Normans, Saxons and Celts that they threw it off forever when they declared for the liberty of the individual in Magna Charta. That love of individual initiative, of personal voli-

tion, is aflame in the world to-day, burning in the hearts of all members of the British Empire, of all Frenchmen, of all Russians, of all Italians. Those people are fighting your fight and mine, a fight that you may continue to be the free man you are, and you don't realize it but talk to me about kultur and efficiency. I say, 'To the Devil with kultur and efficiency if their companion is to be the iron hand of the State!' I demand to be my own master under the common law. I want to do as I like, go where I like, talk as I like, believe as I like, and that is why I hope the Allies will win."

Just then I felt a vigorous slap on my shoulder, and turning my head I looked up to see a man over six feet tall, standing leaning on the rail of my seat which went half way across the compartment. He was a dark-faced, grim-looking man with clear, cold eyes which glinted earnestly.

"Friend," said he to me, "you have struck the nail on the head. I never thought of it that way before, but I know you are right."

Then he turned to the others. "Men," he said slowly, "I am a sheep-rancher. I own ten thousand sheep on the plains in southern Alberta. They are my sheep. I moved over from Montana, where I was being crowded, and started with a buck and two ewes some ten

years ago. And there ain't a morning of those ten years that I have n't gone out to the grazing grounds where you could see the sky touch ground all about you, and lifting up my head, thanked the Almighty that I was a free man. I love human liberty. It 's a passion with me. I will obey the law, but I don't want that law to come on to my sheep ranch and tell me what I shall do and what I sha'n't do. I know my place in the State. Let the State keep to its own place."

The next morning this sheep-rancher came and sat down beside me and told me the story of his life, and I never listened to a more entertaining one. He was a shepherd who loved his sheep, who had studied the psychology of his flock, who treated the timid creatures in his care on the basis of the personality of each. I got a wise saying from him, one that I will never forget and one that every young man should frame and ponder on. It is this: "The successful sheep-raiser must be on hand personally when the lambs are born." This, he told me, was the key to the sheep business. "Be on hand yourself when the lambs are born." There 's a lot of thought in those words.

That sheep-rancher and I became great friends. He invited me to visit him at his sheep farm and I am going to do it some day. When

he gave me his card and took mine, he said, in a deep, strong voice: "You and I could n't ever be anything else but friends, for we have the same identical idea of liberty and the same love of nature. I knew it when I heard you talk. I knew you then as well as I would know you in a hundred years. That old North Dakota fellow has good ideas about business, but he ain't right about liberty. Business and efficiency have nothing to do with it. It 's a religion, like a man's love of God when he lies on his back of a summer night on the plains and looks up at the stars."

There was a man such as Abraham was in his younger days, before he developed bad habits trading with the Egyptians.

CHAPTER III

THE WINKLES AND THE WOODS

ONE afternoon John and I went fishing along the high wooded shore of a long, deep bay which forms the southern extremity of Sharbot Lake. It was warm and there was barely a ripple on the water. We knew the fish would not bite, but I was in an indolent mood and cared little whether I had luck or not. I leaned back contentedly in the comfortable cane chair in the stern of the boat, with John facing me and rowing mechanically hand over hand slowly, while he inspected the shore as intently as if he anticipated a discovery. After a while we rounded a little point and entered a channel between the mainland and an island. Presently I saw the ruin of a log house on the shore and I asked John who had lived there.

“Old Mr. Winkle and his wife lived there a number of years ago,” John replied, as he looked thoughtfully at the cabin.

“Let us land,” I said, “and look the place over.”

The windows and doors were gone, the floor had fallen in, but we discovered that the roof was still in good condition and the log walls in an excellent state of preservation. Leading up from the lake was the outline of a path that had been bordered by rose and black currant bushes, and at the right and left of this path were two beds that once had contained flowers but which now nourished only weeds.

“The old woman had a fine garden here once,” John observed.

I seated myself on the door-sill of the cabin, filled and lit my pipe, while John seated himself on a boulder near me.

“Tell me about those old people who lived here,” I asked him.

“Well, sir,” John began slowly, drawling his words as was his habit, “that was a long time ago. They were here when I first came to the lake, old Mr. and Mrs. Winkle; he was a little, dried-up old fellow and she was even smaller and thinner, but the brightest, most active old woman you ever saw. She was twice as smart as he was and always used to paddle him back and forth to the village. Years before I knew them, they had come to the lake. There was no railroad then, just a little store and a few houses at the village and Francis Sharbot and his family settled in Sharbot’s Cove. The lum-

bermen had just begun to cut the tall pine trees which grew thick on the shores. The Winkles built this log house, cleared the few acres you see in back of it, got together a cow or so, a few pigs and chickens, made maple sugar in the spring, fished when they wanted fish, raised a few potatoes and hay enough to winter their cows, and the old woman she raised flowers."

John paused and looked down over the ruined garden.

"Everybody liked Mrs. Winkle," he resumed. "She was a laughing, jolly old woman, but Old Man Winkle would get drunk and helpless as a baby, and when he was drunk he would chatter like an idiot. Many a time at her request I have carried him down to their dugout, set him safe in the bottom and started them off home, she full of fun and good nature, a-petting the old man like as if he were a bad child. How she ever got him up to the house when they reached home, I never could make out. But she did it, the tiny, little weazened-up, old body, and the next day he would be all right again, running around trying to do something to please her, for he simply worshipped her, did that old man.

"He taught me to play the fiddle. Sundays I used to paddle down to see them, me and Pete Charles, and we would find them dressed up spick and span, she sitting in an arm-chair out

here on the lawn among the flowers and the old man sitting where you are now, on the doorstep, playing the fiddle. We could hear it far up the lake as we paddled. I always wished I could play the fiddle as well as Old Man Winkle."

"What did he play?" I inquired.

"Tunes, all kinds of tunes," John replied. "The sweetest tunes I ever heard, but never a jig on Sunday. No, sir; the old lady would n't have it. It might have been church music. I don't know. It was just grand to listen to, and me and Pete Charles would lie stretched out on the grass here for hours and listen. I asked him once where he learned it all. He said he did n't know. It just came natural. But I never could learn those Sunday tunes. I got the jigs all right, but the music he played for the old woman of a Sunday was too much for me."

"After the music I suppose you and Pete stayed for dinner," I ventured.

"Well, we usually did," John returned dryly. "You see, me and Pete were youngish men then and they were both along in years. So after the music we turned to and cut 'em up a week's stove wood and did any heavy work there was to do round the place. The old woman always gave us a fine dinner, I tell you! She generally

had fried cakes and honey, them twisted kind of fried cakes with lots of honey. The bee-hives used to set along the rocks over there to the right. Perhaps they would have chicken pot-pie. There was plenty to eat, and that the best. Then, sir, in the afternoon the old man would play the fiddle again and old Mrs. Winkle would sing religious tunes. She had a piping, high-pitched voice, but me and Pete liked to hear her. We always had a fondness for that old woman and days and days we hunted roots for her in the woods to make medicine with, and we were eternally finding flower bushes for her. Why, she had a garden here that bloomed clear to the lake, flowers every foot of it. That 's how I come to be handy at making flower beds up at the Island for you. I learned it from her. She had a saying, 'Smile on the flowers and the flowers 'll smile back at you.' She loved them, and it 's a true saying that you got to love flowers to make them grow. They certainly grew for her. She could raise anything down here."

John paused suddenly, arose and examined a black currant bush. "I remember when she first planted them black currants," he said. "She died that year."

"Did she die first, or did the old man?" I asked.

"He went first, but she followed him two days

after and we buried them side by side up yonder on the hill," John replied, pointing to the hill.

I arose and followed him to the graves. There were no slabs to mark the last home of these quaint, old people, but the earth revealed clearly where they rested.

Immediately in the rear of the graves was a decayed rail fence, and as I turned I received the impression that the tall trees of the forest were bending over this fence observing me, the forest that this man and woman had moved back to the crest of the ridge and placed in bonds.

It was an eerie sensation. I returned to the cabin and threw myself on the grass by the shore, a slave to the fancies that took possession of me, for I could not resist recreating the scene. I saw the cabin with its cleanly scrubbed floor, its windows bright with flowers. I saw the shelves on which were placed the few dishes and bits of crockery. I saw the smoke rising from the chimney. Little, old Mrs. Winkle was getting dinner ready, for I heard the kettle sing on the stove. Presently she came to the door and looked out. What a delightful view was presented to her eyes! The graceful curving channel of water between her and the charming island covered with white birches, to the east and west the lake shores fringed with graceful white pines, and immediately before her the gar-

den of flowers she loved. I saw her step from the cabin, bend down among her flowers, caressing them with eye and hand as she inhaled their fragrance. And then I saw old Mr. Winkle come in from his work, stand his hoe up against the cabin, wash his hands and face in the basin near the door, and ask his good wife if the dinner was ready. John was right. They loved each other, these two little, old people in the wilderness. They were all in all to each other. He was her man, she his woman. They had mated years ago, and having no possessions had wandered into the loving arms of the good God. Like two birds they had made themselves a nest on the sloping southern shore of the lake where the forest broke the force of the north wind, where the spring came early, where there was a perpetual hummer and drummer of life in the air in all but the stern winter months, where flowers and berries grew luxuriantly, where the sky seemed almost just over the tree-tops and peace brooded upon the earth. I listened and I heard old Mr. Winkle playing his Sunday tunes on his violin. I knew, even if John did not, what those tunes were. They were the love songs of the birds at mating time. They were the croonings of the west wind as it swept through the channel, they were the sighings of the pine trees over on the south shore, they were

the songs of the waters and the melodies of the summer rain falling upon the parched earth, they were the slumber songs of the stars singing together in the long twilights, they were the beatings of his heart and of that of the woman he loved.

I listened and I heard old Mrs. Winkle in shrill, quavering tones sing her Sunday hymns: "Blessed be Thou, our God Who lovest us, Who hast given us sweet water to drink, clean food to nourish our bodies, pure air to breathe, Who hast spread out Thy Heavens before us in all their majesty and beauty, Who hast shielded us from the tempest, Who hast removed us from evil, Who hast honored the altar we have raised to Thee in the wilderness, Who givest us rest and sleep. Praise be to God!"

And I closed my eyes in reverence and awe, for I realized at that moment that the mysteries of this lovely spot were being unveiled.

Then John and I came away. And always since then, as I row past this ruined cabin and this abandoned garden, I look with veneration upon the place, for here once lived and spun out their tale of days, a man and a woman who loved life and each other and were happy, and such a spot is holy ground.

But the memory of those great trees bending over the decayed rail fence, observing me as I

stood by the graves of the two old people, remained with me even when I returned to the city, where fancies do not thrive well in the glare and roar of urban life.

Trees I have always respected as of my own kin. They have a language which I understand. The spirits of those trees appealed to me with the cry of souls in captivity, and for a long time I could not conceive what message they had for me. Suddenly I realized it. They dreaded the axe. Every forest for many miles about the lake had been slain by the lumbermen, yet for some reason or other these sturdy trees on the shore of this one bay in the lake had been spared. I made inquiries and discovered that this wood lot consisted of some two hundred acres, that for forty years it had been in Chancery, and no man had presented a legal claim to it, but that now the title was clear and it awaited the auction block and the highest bidder.

I bought this forest immediately, not knowing its value, but being fully aware that I could free those trees, whose spirits had appealed to me, from all present fear of the axe, and having the further knowledge that the Winkle homestead was included in the purchase.

The following season, on a clear, cold September day, John and I started on a trip of inspection. We entered the forest at the eastern point

where it juts out into the lake like a human thumb. John soon found a deer trail and we followed this through the dense growth of cedars, beech and poplar until we came to a ravine at the base of the thumb. Beyond this we entered into a forest cathedral pillared with giant maples, many of them being over two feet in diameter and rising some sixty feet before branching out. Subsequently we counted fully fifteen hundred of these maples and I realized that I had purchased a Rubens when I had only expected an ordinary painting.

All the morning we wandered among these trees. Many of the leaves had fallen and we walked on a yellow carpet. Here and there we found groups of basswood trees, tall and slender. It was amusing to observe how these trees had clambered for the sunshine. Each one seemed determined to climb high enough to look over the heads of his fellows. What beautiful clean-limbed creatures they were! I rejoiced in them and I swore to them then and there that while I lived they should live also.

As we walked we could hear eagles screech as they soared overhead and now and then we obtained a glimpse of one against the blue sky.

What a sugar bush! The maples should not object if they were tapped now and then in the springtime. Having conceived this thought, I

seated myself with John on a log and discussed a plan covering the building of a log cabin in the midst of these maples, a cabin with a fireplace and bunks along two sides of it, like berths in a state-room. In the center of the cabin we decided that there should be a square wooden table and four comfortable arm-chairs placed about it. There must be a cupboard for dishes and pots and pans. Also this cabin must be stocked with a maple sugar outfit sufficient to take care of say five hundred trees, the boiling place to be immediately in front of the building. Such a layout would permit me to invite three choice souls each spring to accompany me to this log shanty in the forest and make sugar on shares. We might ask John to give us instructions, but we would do all our own work, cook our food and live like backwoodsmen.

Would it not be fine here in the forest with a couple of feet of clean, white snow on the ground! Each morning we would gather sap and boil all day. In the evening, tired as only men can be who have tramped miles in the snow, we would sit by the fire and smoke and tell yarns. And what a fire we would have, great beech logs and white birches that would snap and roar!

John thought it would be great and told me I might make a lot of money selling maple

sugar. We decided then and there on the brand. We would cast every cake in a mould containing the stamp, "Absolutely pure, from the Winkle Woods in the Wilderness."

I laughed aloud and John smiled. Then we arose and continued our tramp through the forest until we reached the western boundary. These woods proved to be a glorious virgin hardwood forest, a mighty congregation of maples, beeches, elms, ironwoods, noble forest gentlemen in the sight of the Lord.

When I returned to New York that fall, the first man I unveiled the sugar bush scheme to was a nerve specialist of national reputation, a good friend of mine, a man who had been reared with nine brothers in a log cabin in Nova Scotia.

"O man," he wrote to me one time, commenting on a little book I had sent him called "A Memory of Tom Fox and Happiness," in which I had described a log cabin in the woods where my brother and I one day had dinner, "if instead of the stove Tom Fox had had a big stone fireplace, your story would have been more appealing,—such a fireplace as we had when I was a boy. It seems very beautiful to me now when I see it in my reveries. Many a time I stood in the corner of the chimney and looked up at the stars on a clear night. And such stars! The heavens look more beautiful

and the stars twinkle more sharply on clear, frosty Canadian nights than in warmer regions. If you had had the memory of a chimney and fire logs of white birch warming and lighting the kitchen and shining on the china on the 'dresser' in the corner, you would have written a poem."

It is evident that he was the type of man to unburden one's heart to in relation to a proposed sugar camp in a Canadian forest.

"Will I go, you ask me?" he exclaimed with enthusiasm. "I will go, and hospital lectures may go hang when you pass me the word; but say, let me design the fireplace in our cabin."

He has my plighted word.

The next man I told my sugar bush romance to was the vice-president of one of our great trunk line systems. He never faltered. "I will count the days until then," he assured me. "And say," he added, "why have John? I know how to boil down sap and tap trees. Let us have no hired men. I will chop all the wood and you do the cooking. Can you make batter for old-fashioned buckwheat pancakes? If you can't, I 'll show you how. You know it has to be set over night. It rises fluffy in the morning. I know a man along our line who makes camping outfits. Let me supply the fixtures."

One day last summer I was taking lunch at

the Bankers Club with a man who had just completed several contracts in war supplies that had netted him a great deal of money. He looked tired and worn. So as we sat and ate, looking now and then over the roofs of Wall Street, down the Bay, I thought I would try my sugar bush Elysian dream on him as a psychological experiment.

"How many acres have you got up there?" was the first question he asked me.

"About two hundred," I replied.

"And about fifteen hundred maple trees?"

"Fully that number."

"Sell me half and name your own price?"

"Oh, no," I replied, somewhat offended. "I would never think of selling any part of the forest."

"Then why tell me about it? Don't you realize that I was born in Michigan where trees grow, that I was reared in a sugar bush?"

"Well, then, come along and take one of the bunks."

He laughed. "Sell me half of the bush and I will have a camp there this coming winter and invite you as my guest. You will never build your camp. You are a dreamer, just a miserable dreamer, who loves to aggravate a fellow. Why, say, I had rather spend a month in such a camp as you propose than six years at Palm

Beach. Where did you get the idea? Come, let's do it. You furnish the trees, I'll furnish the camp and fit it out complete. By George! it will be immense. We must get hold of lumbermen's long-legged boots with red tassels on them. We'll cut a hole in the lake for drinking water. Say, do you know how to make corn-meal johnny-cake? I do. I can fry bacon and eggs so they will melt in your mouth. Come on, sell me half of that sugar bush, for I know you'll just dream about it."

I have not dared to tell my story to any more of my friends, for there are only four bunks in that imaginary cabin.

Some day I certainly shall build that log shanty in the maple forest. The Doctor has the fireplace all designed and my railroad friend keeps constantly inquiring when I shall be ready for the fixtures.

But my ammunition friend sneers at me. He says I am a dog in the manger, that he will never be happy until he finds a sugar bush for his own, but that it will never be as attractive as my sugar bush, for there haloes mine all the confounded romance that I have woven about John and Old Man Winkle and Mrs. Winkle and the tall trees stretching up to look over one another's shoulders to see what is going on in the world. "How can you expect a man," he

says, "ever to be content to settle down in a common, every-day sugar bush? It is not reasonable."

However, I told none of them about the delights of making Cockayne in the snow. They may know all about it, but I dare not suggest it until I am ready to build that cabin, for there is a limit to man's endurance. The description of sitting around that big fireplace toasting one's toes in the evening and smoking one's pipe is as near Heaven as I dare attempt to lead any man, knowing the gate is closed for the time being.

CHAPTER IV

TOM JOHNSON AND ROVER

ASPINWALL ISLAND lacks one essential—a dog. We have no dog because we have no permanent home with a back yard, and a dog for the few months at the Island would mean a pain at parting each autumn, and the jealous apprehension that he would be Larry's dog or John Antoine's when we returned the following season.

I have loved two dogs in my time. The first was a mongrel terrier I adopted when a small boy and to whose memory I remained faithful for thirty years. Then I came to love Tom Johnson the Barmecide, a Boston bull of fine breeding, a dog with the spirit of a being unknown to evil.

Why did I call him Tom Johnson the Barmecide? Foolishness, just foolishness. I had been reading Sir Richard Burton's "A Thousand Nights and a Night," and with particular interest the tales concerning the adventures of "Harun el Raschid and Jaafer the Barmecide,"

the loyal companion and friend, so I called Tom Johnson "the Barmecide," one evening as we played together on the stairs. All the folks thought it a delightful name. If it were not for the sunshine of such foolishness, how cold our lives would be!

One day when I entered my office I found a fat young man awaiting me, and at his feet a Boston bull puppy.

I sat down and looked at the man and the dog.

"I heard you wanted a thoroughbred pup," the fat young man said, smiling universally as to his face, a remarkable and captivating smile which played across the lines of his forehead, danced in his eyes, rippled about the corners of his mouth, and ran in and out of the wrinkles of his fleshy cheeks and neck.

The puppy seated itself on its haunches squarely before me, opened its mouth, lolled out its pink tongue, and looked up into my eyes with the look of a child that trusts you absolutely, likes your face, and is prepared to break into a gleeful gurgle at the first sight of a reciprocating feeling on your part.

"What is his name?" I inquired.

"Tommy I calls him," the fat young man replied.

"Tommy!" I repeated in low tones and smiled back at the puppy.

His eyes melted into a look of absolute felicity.

Then the fat young man told me Tommy's pedigree for five generations or so, but I did not heed his words. My soul and Tommy's soul were trying to remember where they had met before, could not recollect, but were certain they were affinities. There was no question about it.

"How much do you want for the puppy?" I asked absently.

"Fifty dollars, and he 's dirt cheap," the fat young man replied with emphasis.

I turned to my desk mechanically, wrote out a check, handed it to him and shook his hand.

"You don't take long to make up your mind," he said, and once again smiled universally.

"At times, no," I returned, and bid him good-day. When he was gone Tommy and I fell into each other's arms.

Tommy, soon called Tom Johnson for the sake of euphony, and later Tom Johnson the Barmecide, lived with us for three years; every one at home loved him and Bridget adored him. He had no knowledge of fear. He had not a single mean or cringing instinct. He was never sad, but always joyous, always ready to play, and always that beautiful, ecstatic spirit beamed or coquetted in his eyes. And dogs loved him as

spontaneously as did humans. I have seen a savage fighting dog make after him as he and I were taking a stroll. Tom Johnson would stop, wait for the big dog to rush up at him, then put his two forepaws on the other's shoulders and look at him. That was all. In a few seconds the big dog would be caressing Tom Johnson and fairly begging him to stay and play awhile.

He died on Thanksgiving day just at dinner time. He had been ill for a couple of days with double pneumonia. The doctor could not help him. He lay on a soft cushion on an arm-chair in the kitchen near the stove. About twelve o'clock I went in to see him and he licked my hand and smiled. I thought he might get better.

Just as we had seated ourselves at the table, Jenny opened the serving door, the tears in her eyes, and said with a sob, "Tommy is dead." Then we heard Bridget wail.

That was a gloomy Thanksgiving day for our little family.

The following morning a neighboring carpenter made a box for him. Bridget and my wife laid him out, placing cotton batting in the bottom for him to rest on. Then in the afternoon my wife and I took him with us in the spider phaeton, drawn by Molly, who was also his dear

friend, out to the golf grounds, where we buried him at the foot of a large elm tree. I confess my wife and I shed tears as I filled the grave, for we dearly loved Tom Johnson the Barmecide.

We have never had a dog since.

Rover was an entirely different being from Tom Johnson and I loved him in a different way. He was my dog when I was a boy. We were bedfellows, chums, fellow adventurers, explorers, hunters, loafers, enjoying to its full that undefinable but charming relationship that exists between a boy and his dog. Rover was not a gentleman, neither was I. Our tastes were crude, even barbaric. We were gentle in play but savage in warfare. When entering into combat he had a smile like that of a demon. His teeth shone, his eyes glistened evilly, and every muscle and nerve of his body lusted for slaughter. And I would fight, and cry as I fought, for the sheer excitement of conflict. The boy and his dog are very close to the same plane, that is why there is such a spirit of true companionship uniting them and that is the reason they understand each other so well. Their natures are in harmony.

The boy who has not had his own dog and made a chum of him has missed much in his life. The following is a poem I wrote many years ago

when my Muse trailed that charming fellow,
Riley:

“I ’ve known women, likewise hosses,
And ain’t got nothin’ to say ag’in’ either;
But for downright lovin’ when hard luck
crosses
Y’r pathway, gimme a dog!”

I had been inclined to believe that only human beings had souls until I became well acquainted with Rover. There was no doubt about it in his case, for a soul shone in his eyes, revealing an intelligence of a high order.

Rover entered my life as a stray dog. One day Jack and I found him, frightfully hungry, making a meal on a piece of veal in the barn. He glared at us with eyes like balls of fire and snarled wickedly. So we left him to finish his breakfast and started to play baseball in the door-yard. Jack was pitcher, I was batter and the barn was catcher. If I got a two-bagger, I had to field it myself. Jack believed he had developed a true curve and I humored him in the idea, for my delight in those days was to “line ’em out.”

While we were thus playing, the strange dog approached us from the barnyard. We saw he was a black dog, medium-sized, of terrier breed, and we unanimously agreed that he was the

homeliest dog we had ever seen. He stood looking at us and we stopped our game, impelled to return his gaze by the earnestness of his expression. There was no friendliness in his look, not a bit. But I never was afraid of dogs, not even the ugliest of them, so I called to him cheerfully, if somewhat sarcastically:

“Hello, there, you old fellow!”

At this he wagged his tail once. Then I began to call him in dog names, but he made no motion until I called him “Rover.” At the sound of this name he pricked up his ears and advanced to within a few yards of us.

“Well,” I said to him, using dog talk, “he ’s a nice young feller, so he is, a good black dog, well, I guess yes, a fine black dog, that is what he is, a nice feller, sure, a good black dog.”

I had not completed the above complimentary remarks before this ill-favored animal began crawling meekly toward me until he reached my feet, and then he turned over on his back, surrendering himself absolutely to my mercy while he lolled out his tongue and assumed the picture of abject misery and helplessness.

It touched my heart and I knelt down and patted his head. He licked my hand and sought strenuously to lick my face, but I would not have that, the memory of his feast of veal being so fresh. Then I arose quickly and called to him:

“Hi there now, up you get and show us what you can do.”

I shall never forget the result. Jack and I nearly had spasms laughing at it. That dog leaped to his feet, ran three times around the smoke-house as if the “old boy” was after him, then chased himself about the door-yard, in and out of the barn, up and over the wood-pile, in a frenzy of delight. When he settled down at our feet, he was all in. I gave him immediately a hot bath with plenty of soap. He enjoyed it and that night he slept on the floor of my room. The next night he slept on the bed, at the foot, and later, when the cold winter nights came along, he crawled in under the blankets with me, and from that time on had his own pillow. We slept most of the time back to back, but sometimes in the morning he would turn over, place his feet against my back and stretch, and when I looked at him reprovingly, he would sneeze and laugh both with his mouth and eyes.

He was a great dog. I do not exaggerate when I say he knew about every word I said to him, and if I told him something he did not understand he would cock his ears, look fixedly at me and almost say with his eyes, “Come again, I did n’t get you.”

Every night, when Jack and I would be coming home from school, we would crawl up slyly

to the edge of a little hill about five hundred yards from our farm and peek over to see if Rover was looking for us. He always was. We would see him either seated on the milk-stand or more frequently standing on his hind legs, his paws on the rail of the picket fence, looking down the road. All we had to do was to raise a hand over the brow of the hill to attract his attention, and he would come tearing down the road to greet us.

As I have said, every real boy has his dog. They all probably love them as I loved Rover, but I have never seen such a wonderful soul in a dog as was his. His was the great faith, the love unutterable. He would have died for me and enjoyed the sacrifice. He was literally without fear and he did not look the part. That is the strange feature of it—he certainly was not blessed with a brave appearance.

Rover lives in the pleasantest memories of my boyhood. I am glad I knew him, for I learned many things from him, especially the truth of those old sayings, "Appearances are many times deceitful," and "Handsome is as handsome does." I learned loyalty from him, for I was ashamed of him once in public because he looked so mean and the boys derided him; but that day he licked a bull-dog twice his size, and at night in bed I heard him growl

softly as he fought again in his dreams, never thinking that I, his master, had been ashamed of his personal appearance, while I lay beside him hating myself for my lack of loyalty. I learned from him to look for my man in a man's eyes, just as he looked. You could n't fool that dog and look into his eyes, and he knew it. I learned from him that another world exists apart from our human world—the world of dogs and cats and horses; that they live their lives much as we do, with comparative joys and sorrows; that they suffer pain and humiliation even as we do, and that they have for death the same instinctive terror we have.

In order to come to an intelligent appreciation of animals, one must live with them and become friends of theirs. To most of us a canary in a cage is just a little yellow bird hopping aimlessly back and forth, expressing nothing important in this world. But there is probably one man or one woman to whom that canary is a dear and precious friend. Personally I have a special weakness for canaries and so has my wife. We are not ashamed of it. We have one now. He lives in a cage on top of a china cabinet in the dining-room, where he can enjoy the sunshine the greater part of the day. His name is "Peter the Peep." I talk to him regularly night and morning, swing

him in his swing, play hide and seek with him and make love to him, and the little creature expresses in turn the greatest delight. Peter the Peep has a very shrewd idea of life. He goes through his little routine of duties each day and adds his bit to the life of the world.

Some day, when I can live all the time in the country, I am going to have another dog, perhaps two dogs—an Airedale and a Boston bull, if I can ever find another puppy with such angelic eyes as those of Tom Johnson the Barmecide. I have been coveting my friends' Airedales for years. They are such fine dogly chaps, firm on their pins, proud, courageous, and possess such an absorbing desire to learn. But I know now I shall never find another dog soul of the fine spiritual quality possessed by the soul of Rover.

CHAPTER V

WILTON CEMETERY

FOUR guests who had spent the last two weeks in July with us at Aspinwall Island decided to return home by way of Kingston. In order to make connections at that city they would have to take a local train leaving Sharbot Lake at five-forty in the morning, and that meant that we should have to get up at four o'clock and have breakfast half an hour later. Larry had agreed to come down and get them in the *Sharbotina*.

When the maids awoke us that morning it was not yet daylight, and the air was cool. After dressing I went out on the eastern piazza and looked for the sun. The sky was a dull gray, but just over the Eagle Rocks, where the sun rose, there was a bar of red above the horizon. The moon looked a smoky white and the stars were mere specks in the heavens. I could not tell whether it would be a good day or not. But at five o'clock, when our friends were ready to leave, the sun appeared above the rocks, to all

appearances six feet in diameter. So my wife and I decided to take the *Peter Pan* and accompany our guests to the train.

The *Peter Pan* is a twenty-one-foot canvas canoe equipped with a three H.P. single cylinder motor, just cozy for two people. It slides along on the water and is a delightful little boat to ride in.

This morning as it moved out into the lake on its way to the village we were treated to a spectacle that I shall never forget. As has been stated previously, the shores of Sharbot Lake are indented with many bays. These bays were now filled with fog, looking exactly as if these compact vapors had been crowded into them so as to clear the main body of the lake for our trip. The sun was now wonderful to behold. My wife and I exclaimed rapturously at the glory of it. Its rays spread out behind us like a golden fan and we realized how much beauty we lost each morning by sleeping till well after the sun had abandoned playing the spectacular and settled down to the sober business of the day.

But as we looked, the fogs, packed into the bays, commenced moving out, approaching us like great icebergs, and we felt that soon we should be enveloped. Suddenly they stopped moving horizontally and began to lift, as if

Phœbus in his chariot had given the command, "Up, ye fogs, and become clouds!" In ten minutes they were high above our heads and drifting away in groups of friendly association.

We inhaled deeply and sighed like souls released from enchantment.

The day had begun.

I have thought that David, seated on the mountains, must have witnessed some such sunrise when he wrote that grandest of all his Psalms: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

The four guests we were seeing off were people we were very fond of, and we disliked to see them go. As we stood on the station platform it occurred to me that we might be with them a little longer if we were to accompany them as far as Harrowsmith. Then we could engage a livery and drive from that village to Wilton, where the cemetery was in which my father and mother were buried, together with Jack and many of my ancestors. I had promised my wife to make this trip each season for several years, but there seemed never to have been time. Now the occasion offered and was too tempting to be refused.

It is five miles from Harrowsmith to Wilton, but the narrow country road connecting these

two villages is bordered with historic farms, each of these farms having been granted to the original owner by the King at the time of the United Empire Loyalist settlement in upper Canada. There were five two-hundred-acre Shibley farms along this road, and of these thousand acres seven hundred are now owned and operated by lineal descendants of the original possessors.

My grandfather drew one of the two-hundred-acre farms, and as we came abreast of it, I had the driver stop his horses while I looked across the fields he had cleared, at the fine white farm house replacing the log cabin in which my father was born, and as I looked I was suffused with a pride of ancestry and reverence for my forefathers.

This grandfather was an old man when I was only an infant, but I remember my grandmother very well. She used to come to visit us when she was over eighty years old, driving herself, for it was one of her perquisites that she was to have her own horse and buggy as long as she lived.

She was a very quaint little Dutch woman with beautiful eyes and hair, gentle and humorous. After each meal she would smoke a white clay pipe and it was the delight of us children to cut the tobacco for her and fill her pipe. She

began to smoke when she was seventy-five, being afflicted slightly with asthma, and I cannot remember that I ever thought it the least bit odd that she should smoke, and yet I had never seen any other woman smoke. She looked so cute puffing away at her pipe, all the while keeping up an incessant conversation. We were delighted when she drove through the gateway, and we never left her a moment, hardly, while she was with us, and we considered it a treat to say our prayers at her side at night, for she would pat our heads, tell us we were good children and were bound to be splendid men and women,—that is, if we always minded and went to school.

It was she who told me about the early days of the United Empire Loyalists, but that would make a book in itself.

She was sixteen when she married, and Grandfather was eighteen. This happened shortly after he drew his farm. It was some twenty miles from Lake Ontario, and in the fall he located it and erected a one-room log cabin. But he had no door or windows for it, or flooring, so he left it in this crude condition, came home, married her, and in the early spring he and she started to take possession of their estate with all their wedding presents and other possessions. These consisted of a yoke of oxen,



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a sleigh, a table, and a few chairs, a stove, bedding, dishes, a plough, an axe, a saw, and the like.

It was late in the afternoon when they arrived at their home in the wilderness. There being no door or windows, the snow had drifted in and this had to be shovelled out as a beginning. They brought with them some boards to make a door and window frames, and these they placed on the ground as a floor for the time being. They set up the bed and the stove that evening, hung quilts over the door and tacked sheets over the windows. Then they cooked supper and went to bed.

Imagine it!

Those were the kind of people that were our ancestors, we who are of the old Canadian and American stock.

No wonder when we reached the Wilton Cemetery that I stood with head uncovered reverently before the graves of my grandparents. They were all there in a group, and my mother's parents were exactly the same kind of people except that they were English, having come to Canada from the old Puritan Colony at New Bedford, Mass. But I looked with particular and loving reverence upon the gravestone of my grandmother and read, among other words, these: "Catherine, wife of John Shibley, died March 7, 1887, in her ninety-sixth year."

She was the mother of ten children, nine of whom grew to manhood or womanhood. Each of the sons was given a farm and each of the daughters her household furniture as a wedding present, and this old couple, John and Catherine, had started their domestic career exactly as I have narrated.

The Chinese and Japanese are right. Man should do reverence to his ancestors.

But we had paused before the old homestead when I began talking about Grandmother, and we shall go back there and continue our journey, for I want you to approach the cemetery as I did and with somewhat the same mental impressions.

Remember the sunrise, the pulling out and lifting of the fog banks, the gentle sorrow at parting from our dear friends, the trip down the historic road past the royal farms, and keep in mind that this was a beautiful summer day in harvest-time: farmers at work in the fields, the air filled with the melody of the reaper and the whetted scythe, humid with the birth exhalations of a million butterflies, droning with the wing-beat of honey bees rushing tirelessly about. Conceive pictures of rustic beauty on every hand: young women on the milk stands washing the bright cans just returned from the cheese factory, mothers standing in the doorways of farm houses with infants clutching lov-

ingly at their faces, children seated in little school houses, busy trying to forget the loveliness of the world outside, little aproned misses and barefooted boys; and our livery team jog, jog, jogging along, touched with the whip only when it is necessary to remove a fly.

Then if you have absorbed all these influences, you are fitted to arrive with my wife and me at the cemetery hill and overlook the peaceful field of the dead, sloping to the south, its fences hedged with late roses, the entire field spangled with flowers.

My first thought as I looked over the monumented and flowered field was that if one has to die, it is well to be buried in such a sylvan spot, where there is such an immense serenity in nature, so absolute a peace.

But I forgot about the poetry of the day and the scene as I paused at Jack's grave.

It is fated that we shall have, each one of us, one spot more tender than any other in our hearts. When the thought of Jack, my brother, my playfellow, my confessor, my truest friend, who died when he was only thirty-six, in the prime of his greatness of character and of his success, and who lies here in this Wilton Cemetery just on the other side of the stone where I one day shall lie,—when the thought of him comes to me, my tender spot is touched.

There are other loves in life, but no love such as the love of brothers of near age, who slept together in the same cradle, danced together on their father's knee, fought together as school boys, back to back in a deathless alliance against the world, who as youths roomed together in cheap boarding houses, dreamed together of success, and struggled for that success later on side by side.

I wish to write, as a tribute to him, that he possessed the most attractive personality of any man I have ever known. He was not perfect by any means, but he was entirely lacking in petty faults. He had a grand way with him. He carved a fortune out of the air and laughed at the fantasy of it. His chief delight was to give to those he loved. When he was a parcel boy in a dry-goods store getting \$2.75 a week, he brought every week a present to his mother. This was characteristic of him throughout his life. He had a genius for money-making and he cared nothing for money. He was ambitious to the verge of absurdity and he killed himself by hard work. He possessed a craving for power I was never able to appreciate, for to my mind power and fame are the sirens that lure men to death. I want none of them, but Jack did. He wanted to be a great financier, to dominate men, and he would have gone far if he had had the

strength. But Mother Nature is pitiless when we transgress her laws. She mocks at ambition when manifested in her children. She is no respecter of fame. She pulls down those who seek to climb too fast, as she pulled Jack down to her bosom in this Wilton Cemetery. He was two years younger than myself, but he has most influenced my life of any one I have known. There are times when I would be selfish and say "No" to an appeal for help. There are times when I would sag back in the traces and say to myself, "What 's the use?" Times, too, when I am tempted to be content with small, safe enterprises rather than attempt big, hazardous things; and at all such times Jack comes to me and I would be ashamed not to write the check, not to keep going ahead manfully, and not to follow along the road he loved, the broad highway of business adventure.

His presence is uncanny at times. He had a sharp, quick way with him, and used always to pronounce my name with a jerky rising accent when he called me. Night after night through all the years since his death I awake from sleep with a start, roused by that sharp call of his, a call always as if he were in trouble and needed me.

I know this beautiful day that he is not in trouble, wherever that wonderful soul of his is. He is of the elect young men who die in the

full flower of their years, and such souls the Lord God must delight to associate with.

I am a passionate lover of life, but I have never feared death. Life is very beautiful, but death also has its charms. Socrates expressed better than any other philosopher the delightful possibility of the hereafter. My thought is to take our fill of life while we have life, and we shall then be most ready for death when it comes.

And it will come. One of these days I shall lie here with Jack and my father and mother, my grandparents and all the other Shibleys and Warners. Folks will come along and read my name on this granite boulder and they will pass on. Not one of them will ever feel as I have felt, or think as I have thought, or realize how much I enjoyed living. Nor will they care. They will be living their own lives, with their own impressions and thoughts, and then they will lie here also or in some similar spot, but nature will remain. There will be sunshine and song of birds and hum of bees and odor of flowers and ripple of water, day after day without end, for myriads of years.

Yet, how intensely they who died had lived! How much they loved! How sweet to them was the breath of morning and the laughter of first-born children; how they delighted in life!

And there was my mother's grave.

I am an optimist as to the future of mankind because I knew my own mother so well, and because I believe there have been, are now, and will continue to be, millions of mothers as sweet, as gentle, as unselfish, and as pure as she.

Mothers of men! I wonder sometimes if women realize how much men reverence motherhood. This reverential respect is the holiest of all their thoughts. Men kneel in awe before the enshrined Madonna of the world. To them she is the apotheosis of all beauty, of all goodness, of all purity, of all sacredness. They realize that their natures are too coarse to conceive the sublime fervor of a mother's love, but men are keenly sympathetic and tender-hearted, and they appreciate this love.

It is a purification of one's self to think of one's mother. It is like going down to bathe in the pool of Siloam.

My mother was a mild, soft-spoken, quaint little woman, as gentle a human being as ever drew breath. She had humor and she loved beautiful things. But her opportunities in life were few. She never heard grand opera or a symphony, though every nerve in her body was tuned to music. She had few, if any, luxuries, her whole life long, and yet hers was a nature that craved such delights.

She was at least fifty-five years of age before she even had the opportunity to go to a theater. Jack and I took her the first time, and we were about as green to the mysteries of theatrical sensation as she. She sat between us, holding a hand of each, and she revelled in sensuous enjoyment of the play. I felt every vibration of her body.

All my thoughts of my mother are pleasant thoughts. If she had only lived until we boys had got on our feet so that we could have given her a good time in her old age! How often I have wished this! For instance, suppose she could come to visit us at Aspinwall Island as Grandmother Catherine used to visit my father? What joy that would be!

But that cannot be. She lies here in the Wilton Cemetery, by the side of the man she loved, and I dream my dreams. "Well, Mother mine," I say with resignation, "there was not much to this great world beyond the fields, after all. I have gone up and down it. I have tasted most of the pleasures of life, sometimes just for your account, and, believe me, they were not wonderfully sweet. I will tell you all about them sometime in the future when we meet in the Land of the Blue Bird. We shall talk it over, and I am inclined to think we shall agree that those were the best days when you sat in your little rocker

by the kitchen window, knitting and listening to the song of your husband while driving his team through the yard. That old kitchen was lovely with sunshine in the long summer days, was it not? And how dainty was the perfume from your sweet apple tree near the window at which you always sat!"

There was a song sparrow that day in the tree whose branches reached out over my mother's grave. It was perched on the very top of a small branch that swayed up and down, and the bird swayed and sang the song of its heart. It aroused me from my reverie, and I moved onward, reading the names of men and women I had known when a little boy. Here were all the old neighbors: the good woman who used to give me a honey sandwich whenever I went to see her; the old man who used to drive half lying down in his buggy because his spine was weak; the man who used to build the fires in the school house, and the preacher who scared me with sermons about Hell.

"Friends," I said to them mentally, as I sat on a mound on the hill, and looked down over the graves, "the world is going on just the same. There is the same joy and the same sorrow as when you were here. There is love and laughter and anger and despair. The rain falls in the spring and the harvest is blighted, or the

fields sway golden with yellow grain. You have merged with the mysteries and we who live know so little of life. The chain is pulling, drawing us down to you. Let us be worthy, as you were worthy, to lie here year after year without end, our names proclaimed to all men as having lived, done our life work, and died, men and women whose children shall want to sleep beside them when their tale of days is told."

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ELIZABETH

CHAPTER VI
THE WOODCHUCK

AS I have related, one of the most picturesque features of Aspinwall Island is an immense boulder about sixty feet from the southeastern corner of the cottage, and around which John Antoine has made a bed of dwarf nasturtiums. When we arrived at the Island on July 2, a year ago, these nasturtiums were just commencing to bloom and we saw that the bed of flowers would be very beautiful.

The following morning, as I sat on the piazza smoking my pipe, enjoying the warm sunshine and listening to the birds singing as they flitted among the branches of the great basswood tree immediately before me, I noticed a woodchuck slowly steal forth from a cleft in the boulder. He was a fine, handsome fellow, evidently a young one, as his hair was bright and unfaded.

I called to the Lady of the Island and pointed him out to her when she reached my side. He was seated on his haunches eating grass-blades in a dainty manner. She was delighted with the

woodchuck and thought he would bring us good luck.

When John arrived in his dugout, I told him about the woodchuck and showed him his nest in the rocks. John was surprised. He had not seen the chap and told me he must have come over from the mainland within the last day or so. Then he shook his head doubtfully. "We shall have to get rid of him," he said, "or he will destroy the nasturtiums."

"He won't eat the nasturtium leaves," I said. "See, none of them so far are touched."

"He likes nasturtiums," John insisted, "and has come over to live here for that very reason."

"Well," said I, "let us wait and see."

The following morning no nasturtiums had been interfered with and I felt certain we should get on finely with the woodchuck. He seemed a fearless fellow, for he went about his business without paying much attention to any of us, and in the afternoon he slept with his head projecting from the rocks, lord of his domicile and unabashed.

But the following morning havoc had been wrought among the nasturtiums. A place about two feet square had been nicely trimmed, and I knew that the woodchuck was guilty.

I realized that we had to decide at once be-

tween the animal and the flowers. Then I moralized upon the situation. The woodchuck was undoubtedly well within his rights. He had taken a trip of adventure, swimming from the mainland to Aspinwall Island, and he had discovered there a beautiful nest in the rocks, and just before his door, planted by his good angel, toothsome leaves in abundance. So he rejoiced and was content. He had been born into this world for no other purpose, so far as he could see, but to eat and sleep. Therefore he had a right to eat and sleep. He was not a destroyer of his kind, but a vegetarian, and he had no ill will against anything in creation. He saw me sitting on the piazza or walking about the Island. "He is neither a dog, a fox, nor a wolf," he reasoned. "He has scented me but he does not bother me. He has his home in the cottage just as I have mine in the rocks. He does not eat woodchuck, so why should I fear him?"

He did not realize that nasturtiums were not a natural product of the earth immediately about the boulder in which he lived. He did not know that John Antoine had lugged the soil in this flower bed from a muck swamp on the mainland with much sweat of his brow, and that Mrs. John had planted seeds in this bed one by one, bending over laboriously to do this. There was

the sun, his to enjoy; the water, his to drink; leaves and roots, his to eat; all were alike to him, the gift of God.

Now, there was no way on earth for me to reason with this woodchuck on the question of his rights and mine. He was doing me an injury, even if he was unaware of it, and I decided that he must go.

My wife and I talked it over and we came to the conclusion that the best way to evict him was to get between him and his home in the rocks and then chase him from the Island. John joined in the conference and agreed with us that this was the best method of procedure, although he did think the quickest way to settle Mr. Woodchuck was with a shotgun. We would not hear of this. Why, there he lay while we talked, sleeping innocently in the sunshine on his own doorstep.

So we manœvered. The day previous we could have placed ourselves between him and the boulder half a dozen times, but this day he did not emerge from his home further than its portal. He was gorged with nasturtium leaves.

The next morning we found another meal had been taken from the nasturtium bed, and when John came over and saw the devastation his brow darkened and I saw he was grieved, for this bed was the joy of his heart.





AMELIA AND THE NASTURTIUMS

Larry and I were to go for the milk in the *Peter Pan*, and I told John to keep a close watch on the woodchuck and circumvent him, if possible. So we left him.

On our return we found John cleaning out the punt, which he had hauled up on the beach near the boat house.

"I got him," he said laconically.

"Did you?" I inquired eagerly. "Did you drive him from the Island?"

"No," he returned. "He 's in the bow of my canoe yonder."

I walked over to John's dugout and in the bow I saw the woodchuck. He was lying on his back in a half-sitting posture, and his forefeet were crossed over his chest just like two little clasped hands. A clot of blood lay at the very tip of his nose.

"Why, you 've shot him," I cried, with a genuine feeling of grief.

John grinned. "You see, I had to," he said. "He just would n't come out, but lay there in his hole and watched me as I raked the lawn. So I got the little rifle and I caught him exactly between the eyes. He never moved."

It was done. I think I can truthfully say that never for a moment did I ever think of killing that woodchuck. If he had eaten every nasturtium plant, I should not have killed him. I in-

tended only to drive him from the Island. I had a right to do that because he was destroying property of mine on which labor and thought had been expended, and there was plenty of room for him and quantities of provender on the mainland.

I sat in the big rocker and thought deeply. A sin had been committed on this beautiful Island, and God knew it just as I knew it, and I realized that I was responsible for that sin. If I had forbidden John to kill the woodchuck, he would not have disobeyed me. I was the lieutenant of the Creator as far as His little creatures on Aspinwall Island were concerned, and I had allowed one of the finest of these little ones to be slaughtered.

It was only the first week in July. Spring was still manifest. How sweet was the perfume of the air! How genial was the sunshine! It had been such a long, cold winter, and the woodchuck had not dared to come out even on Candlemas day. He had so delighted in the toothsome roots when the frost left the ground. He had shed his old fur and polished up his claws. He was a young brave ready for love-making when he should meet his mate. All the long summer was ahead of him, and that glorious autumn-time when the earth would be filled with tubers. The paradisaical joys of the feast in

the turnip patch by moonlight, the delights of the corn-field, all these were before him.

Then out of the silence came this wireless message, impacting coldly and clearly upon my intelligence, "That woodchuck was beloved of Me, the Creator of all things. He had his right to life within the laws of Nature, just as you have your right. He did nothing to deserve death, and you know that he did nothing for which to forfeit his life. I hold you responsible for the loss of this creature which I loved."

But the woodchuck is dead. He lies there in the bow of John's boat, his forepaws crossed over his breast, like a baby asleep. And the sun is smiling and the birds are dancing in the trees. I am humbled in the presence of the Creator, for I was my brother's keeper and I neglected to protect him.

And grief for the untimely death of that woodchuck is still in my heart.

CHAPTER VII

THE BLUE SQUAB

THERE is a pair of swallows which live in the boat house. They have roomed there each summer for years. In the daytime they sit side by side on the edge of the break-water, preen themselves, yawn and loaf in a thoroughly contented way. They rear their young, start them off in the world with their blessing, doubtless, and then return to the felicity of connubial companionship.

On the rocks along the shore north of the boat house an old lady teeter-tail snipe has established a lookout station, from which she observes the movements of everybody in her vicinity, with the object of giving prompt warning to her young, who travel up and down the beach and in and out of the willow bushes. She is a very timorous creature and shrieks at the first sign of danger, and this has become such a habit with her that even when no one is about except Larry and myself, smoking in the doorway of the boat house, she chatters and scolds

like a garrulous nurse-maid whose charges play along the paths in a city park. Then, tired of this, she settles down on a boulder to rest, and mumbles in her sleep. I have watched her do this many times through a pair of marine glasses.

There is nothing in nature more cunning than one of these baby snipe. One day, while its mother was off guard, one of these little chaps wandered up on the Island and was trotting about having a glorious adventure, when a number of us came down the path to take a ride in the motor boat. Seeing us, it was in a panic immediately, but instead of rushing for the shore, it crept in behind the head of a boulder and played 'possum. There it lay huddled up by the gray stone, its eyes wide open, but never moving an eyelid. One of the ladies took it up in her hand. Its heart throbbed at a great rate, but it showed no fear. It still maintained its rigidity of body. It was placed on the sand near the shore, and the moment we left it alone it started for the willow bushes, crying for its mother, a thoroughly frightened little snipe. It will hesitate to wander abroad another time.

Birds are such quaint creatures, and so marvellously intelligent. They have such dangers to encounter in life, and yet they seem always

so happy and debonair. Nature does not coddle even the most gentle and beautiful of her creatures. I often wonder if bird lovers are foolishly sentimental about their feathered friends. Hunters laugh at us, and these hunters are delightful people in the main, sturdy out-of-door folk, who think there is no pleasure equal to shooting quail or partridge over a good dog. I could not do it. Whether it is a weakness in me or silly sentiment, I do not know, but I simply could not bring myself to fire into a flock of quail.

One day John and I were out on a tramp over the hills to the east. He was leading and I followed, lost in thought, when I observed him push out his left hand slowly behind him, and I knew he wished me to stop. As I did so he crept up to some bushes by the path, parted them carefully and looked in. Then the same hand indicated that I was to creep up and look also. As I peered over his shoulder, I saw fully a dozen young partridges huddled together, their eyes fixed upon us. John had stalked them exactly as does a pointer. When we leaned backward, the birds rushed through the bushes and flew away with a whirr of wings. That was a delightful incident in our tramp.

We are creatures of impressions. I shot a red squirrel once as it sat on the limb of a hick-

ory tree eating a nut. I was quite a small boy, out with my first gun, and I blew that beautiful red squirrel all to pieces. It made me sick and I swore then and there never again to go hunting.

But the blue squab in the loft above the pig pen impressed me most.

Some years ago I was visiting a friend in northern New York State, and we arranged to take an automobile run some twenty miles into the country to look over a canning factory in which we were both interested.

When I awoke on the day of this trip, I was pleased to find the sun shining brightly. Its amber rays, peculiar to early October, crept far into the room, intent upon making amends for the gloomy weather of the preceding day.

As we bowled along the State road, we looked over the fields right and left, observing the condition of the farms. The harvest had been gathered in greater part, and now only shocks of corn and buckwheat and such vegetables as cabbage and pumpkins were in evidence. Apples were being picked. We saw great heaps of this fruit in many orchards.

"It has been a good year," I said to my friend, and he smiled as he answered, "God is always good to us in northern New York."

At that moment we passed a large flock of

turkeys along the road, and he called my attention to them.

“Toothsome chaps, those!” he said with zest. “They will be fat and nice for Thanksgiving time.”

Just a hazy film of a thought passed through my brain as he made this remark. It was somewhat as follows:

“Thanksgiving time, that ’s in November, and this is October. Those proud young turkeys are under sentence of death, wandering in the amber autumn sunshine,—under sentence of death.”

This melancholy thought fled, however, as I listened to my friend tell me about the people who lived on the farms we passed,—splendid, God-fearing, intelligent people, all of them,—thrifty people who had money in the bank,—a high type of American citizenship.

His words pleased me. I was glad that my fellow-men had made such wonderful advances in civilization, for it was only a comparatively short time ago, a little more than a century, when the savage Five Nations hunted over these fields and celebrated their barbarous rites on many a spot where now stands a Christian homestead.

Many hundreds of people were at work at the factory when we reached it. The manager told

us that they had already put up over one hundred and fifty thousand cans of peas, and almost an equal amount of string beans. They had had more corn than they could attend to, and now they were busy with tomatoes, pumpkins and beans. As we walked through the storehouses we were told they held over four hundred thousand cases of canned goods, each case holding two dozen cans.

“What a lot of food for the people!” I thought. It was good food, too, canned under the most modern sanitary system, and all gathered from the soil, Nature’s reward for man’s labor and intelligence.

The manager then suggested that we visit the two-thousand-acre farm near the factory, which the company owned, and we spent half an hour travelling in the automobile among the fields. Everything was gathered but the pumpkins and squashes. There were acres upon acres of these, lying thick upon the ground.

Presently we came to the farm buildings and to the cottage near them, where the manager lived during the summer months. He had not yet moved his family into town, and we found his wife and two of his hired men making grotesque lanterns from pumpkins, in preparation for a harvest party they were giving to their friends and neighbors the following evening.

They sat on the kitchen stoop in the noon sunshine and a rosy-cheeked child played among them. It was a charming picture. We were invited to have a drink of fresh cider and to eat snow apples, just taken from the trees. The manager's wife insisted that we take lunch with her, and we gladly consented, for it was delightful out there among the red barns, with the smell of ripened fruit in the air, and that wonderful amber sunshine pervading everything.

I took the rosy, fat baby on my lap and caressed it. "You are a lucky fellow," I said to the manager, "to have such a beautiful place in which to spend your summers, where everything is full of life and Nature is so lavish of her gifts."

He replied that he was absolutely happy. He had great care and responsibilities, but they held him down to his place in the world. He loved to see growing things about him. He loved animals particularly, and this suggested to him that he show us some Arkansas mules which he had purchased that year to replace horses on the farm.

We went to the barn to look at those mules. They were giants, many of them standing over sixteen hands high, and with such long faces! I rubbed their noses caressingly as I passed them. Coming out at the rear of the barn, we

heard the grunting of pigs, and the manager asked us if we would like to see the hogs, hundreds of them, in the sties near by.

As we leaned on the fence watching the pigs, which were lying about in every position, in sensuous enjoyment of the sunshine, grunting good-naturedly at us, I heard my friend say to the manager with a laugh as he pointed to the pigs: "They will all be in pork-and-beans cans and scattered throughout the United States presently."

"Yes," the manager replied, with a yawn, "we 'll have 'em all canned by the middle of November."

I confess this jarred me. The incident of the turkeys was only a vaporish impression, but I had just been patting one red pig on the head, and he was a mighty handsome pig. Golden bristles were mingled with the coarser red along his spine and his eyes were expressive and decidedly friendly.

That pig and I could have established a warm friendship had we greater opportunity to look into each other's eyes. He was rather a little fellow, too, slim and shapely.

I felt my heart come into my throat as I heard the remark about the pork and beans, and I turned away from the red pig with a sigh.

As I did so I heard the flapping of wings, and,

looking up, I saw, seemingly, thousands of pigeons on the roof of the sty.

“We raise our squabs in the loft above the pigeon pen,” the manager said, adding, “Have you ever seen a squab house?”

We replied instantly that we never had and were invited to follow him up a ladder into the loft above the sty. It was a dusty and dirty place we saw when we emerged from the trap door into the loft. Instantly the pigeons flew forth and we were left sole occupants of the place, as I thought; but presently I was aware of a pair of eyes looking wonderingly at me, and I saw a half-feathered young pigeon in one of the many boxes about the room.

The manager saw him also and remarked, “There seems to be only one squab to show you.” He showed us, however, several nests on which the mother pigeons had been sitting when we entered. There was also one nest of little furry creatures just out of the shell.

I was interested, however, in that solitary squab with the fixed, pathetic stare, and I drew near to its nest and looked at it. The crest of its head was still covered with pin feathers, but its wings had almost perfected themselves. They were a gray blue of most delicate shading, and I said to myself, “That will be a very beautiful pigeon when he grows up.”

He could not fly yet, and, of course, had never left the nest, but just sat there looking forth at the little world in the dovecote, forming those charming blue feathers, gradually growing larger and stronger. He could see, beyond the holes which served as windows to the dovecote, a peculiar, sparkling yellow radiance that never entered where he was.

He did not know what that was out there moving upon the face of things, but I felt that he was assured that presently he would fare forth through the windows out into that yellow glory and revel in it, as he tried his wings, and that he would mount up in it and glorify his Creator in an ecstasy of flight.

I could see all this in the blue squab's eyes. His surroundings were rather sordid, decidedly dirty and ill-smelling, but just beyond the windows were purity and sunshine, and he was resigned to wait. I smiled internally as I thus thought out the destiny of the blue squab, for surely it was a beautiful one, to fare forth from so dark and foul a place into sweetness and sunshine, and fly up above the trees and voyage over broad fields and make love on the roofs of tall barns.

My friend and the manager had stood some distance from me as I thus speculated on the destiny of the blue squab. They now ap-

proached me. "He will be ready for the table in a few days now," the manager said, looking at the blue squab, which continued to regard us with a fixed stare.

"What!" I cried. "You don't mean to say that what we call squab are pigeons as young as this?"

"Why, yes," he returned, and looked at me as if wondering at my ignorance, "the squab you eat at the fine hotels are seldom over a month old. If they fly even a little, they become tough."

"But, man," I said passionately, "look at this helpless creature. It is not food. It is just incarnated childhood. It 's a baby creature. See, its feathers are formed only on the wings, and you say in three or four days it will be ready for the table."

"That 's true," he answered. "He 's a good, fair specimen, too, that blue squab. He will make a delicate morsel for a chorus lady." Then he laughed.

As we descended the stairs he said, with a shrug of his shoulders, as if he, too, had had some pitying thought, "They don't get a run for their money—squabs don't."

We had a delicious luncheon and presently were rolling homeward between the autumn fields. I took the train an hour later for New

York, and tried to concentrate my mind on a book that had been given me to read, "Crime and Punishment," by a celebrated Russian author.

I did not make much progress in the story of the sickly-minded boy who killed an old woman for money, because the eyes of that blue squab came between me and the printed text. I could see it as I see it now, seated there in its straw nest in the dovecote, looking fixedly forth, with the push of ten million years behind that stare.

Nature, after an evolution so long and tiresome that the human mind cannot conceive it, had perfected the rock pigeon, the common ancestor of all the pigeon family, a marvellous work, worthy the admiration of every intelligence.

She had set myriad cells working in harmony, bone cells, flesh cells, blood cells, brain cells, countless numbers of them, and now these myrmidons of hers were hustling to get that blue squab out into the sunshine so that he in his beauty and delight of life might glorify God; and these cells had toiled night and day unceasingly, absolutely in ignorance, however, that just at the moment of transfiguration, just when perfection was reached, a warm-hearted gentleman like my friend the manager would enter the dovecote, and without an unkind

thought in his mind, twist the neck of the blue squab and silence forever all those life cells, and God would look in vain for a certain blue squab of whose birth He was well aware, filled with triumphant life, mounting up to Him on pale blue wings, tinted most beautifully.

When I see squab on the bill-of-fare hereafter, I shall think of those sad eyes that will never come to a realization of life, and to say the least, I shall hesitate.

CHAPTER VIII
THE BARKING SNAKES

ABOUT two miles northwest of Sharbot Lake, on a somewhat higher elevation, lies White Lake, so called because its bottom, where visible, is composed of white silt or marl. A tiny creek connects these two bodies of water, but I did not know this creek was navigable with a canoe until John Antoine told me that Pete Sharbot used it frequently when he went salmon fishing in White Lake.

It appeared that White Lake is a deep pocket among the rocks, undoubtedly an old crater, and that in the cool depth, one hundred and fifty feet below the surface, live salmon of heroic size. John himself had never caught salmon in this water, but Pete Sharbot had been very successful there. Pete had told him of the wonderful fish he had brought to the surface in White Lake,—giant salmon so powerful that when they felt the sunlight strike their eyes, they just gave one heave and a roll and away they went. It seems Pete Sharbot made

a specialty of fishing and trapping in White Lake, and had told John so many convincing tales of the attractions of that body of water that the latter showed a trace of interest, and even suggested to me that it might be a good idea for him and me some fine day to take the canoe and a minnow pail stocked with choice bait and capture a few of those large salmon.

Finally the day came, and about eight o'clock in the morning John and I were paddling through the lily-pads of the little creek, in some places shoving ourselves through the ooze that formed bars in the stream. As we crept along, the silence was broken by the snort of surprise made by big bull-frogs here and there, as they became aware of our approach, and dived into the water. We stole up on one veteran, fast asleep on a bunch of lily-pads, and I was just about to pat him on the back with the paddle when he opened his eyes, ejaculated a frightened plop-plop, and splashed into the creek. I turned and looked at John, who had the stern paddle. A smile of exquisite enjoyment lit up his swarthy face. "He knows me," he said softly. "I have almost had him in my bag half a dozen times."

It was fascinating paddling up this tiny stream, following its many twists and turns, past the spawning grounds of the pike, through

little pools where polliwogs flourished, among reeds on the top of which bobolinks swayed and sung, near logs where mud turtles dreamed away the hours basking in the sun, a regular holy of holies of the wilderness.

When we reached White Lake I fished and John paddled. We chose the likeliest places, and we tried various depths, John, as always, observing the shores and the run of the reefs, but we never got a strike. For two hours we circumnavigated White Lake, crossed and re-crossed it, but Pete Sharbot's big salmon would have none of us. So we searched for a spot to land and have our luncheon. This spot we discovered on the north shore of the lake beneath a broad-limbed white pine tree. I really was not disappointed in the least because I had not caught a salmon, for the morning had been so delightful. We made tea and ate what the maids had given us with relish and appreciation. Then I lit a cigar and stretched myself out on the pine needles on my back with my head on my cap and smoked, at peace with the world and enamoured of life.

John never smokes. He did years ago, but gave it up because, as he told me once, it caused him so much annoyance. When he had his pipe with him, he would discover that he had no tobacco, and if he had tobacco, it usually hap-

pened that he had forgotten his pipe. Then, again, he had found himself in the woods with both pipe and tobacco, but no matches. This disgusted him, and he decided to rid himself of this cause of mental irritation. Serenity of mind John esteems as man's greatest blessing.

So I smoked and dreamed while John sat looking across White Lake and listening to the many voices wirelessing constantly.

After a while he broke the silence by remarking that he had not visited this lake since Simon Badore and he had been up here hunting "ginshun" root.

"What 's 'ginshun' root?" I asked absently.

"It 's a valuable root which grows in the forest," he replied slowly. "Folks tell me they send it away to China or some such land where the people use it in medicine. I don't know. When I get together a few pounds of it I send it to a man who runs a drug store down in Kingston, and he gets rid of it somehow or other. I have found a powerful lot of 'ginshun' root in my time, and Simon Badore could nose it out too. You see, you got to have an instinct to find 'ginshun' root, just like that foreign dog has who finds the little onions."

I lifted my head with the neck muscles and looked at John. "Where did you ever hear of a dog like that?" I asked him.

"Why, Reuben told me one day when he was a-fishing," John replied gravely. "He said this here dog had such a fine sense of smell that he could sniff out them little onions, although they grew a foot or more under ground."

"Oh, I know," I cried. "Roby was telling you about a French truffle hound. That 's the truth. There is such a dog. You see, these truffles grow deep in the ground in waste places and they give no evidence of their presence. But the French people love them as seasoning with certain dishes, so for generations they have hunted for them, and this particular dog has developed the sense of pointing a truffle just as a bird dog does quail. And do you know, John, there is another animal that knows how to find truffles even better than the French peasant or the truffle hound."

"Well, now," John exclaimed, "you don't tell me! And what like of animal is it?"

"It 's a beetle," I returned, proud of my knowledge gained from one of J. H. Fabre's stories of insect life—"a little old mother beetle which, when the time comes to lay her eggs, trots around until she finds a spot which she knows is directly over a truffle some fifteen inches below, and then she lays an egg on that spot."

"Well, well, I declare!" John muttered, compelled to express his interest.

“Then she goes away,” I went on, “absolutely certain she made no mistake, for it would be death to her child if that truffle proved not to be there. In due time a little beetle is born, and it, too, knows about that truffle, for it immediately begins to dig and it never stops digging until it bores its way down to the truffle, on which it feeds until it is grown to maturity and ready to come up and have a look at the world.”

“Well, well, I want to know!” John said with interest. “It ’s a wonderful world. It surely is.”

I replaced my head on the cap and smiled internally at the interest John showed in my story about the truffle beetle, and I thought what a little view he had of life. What a delight it would be to him to read or have read to him such books as “Life and Love in the Insect World,” the “Life of a Spider,” or that charming prose poem, “The Life of the Bee.”

I had almost lost consciousness when I was aroused by John’s voice. “There ’s things happen which we don’t understand,” he was saying in his gentle, liquid drawl; “and I said them very words to Simon Badore as we stood on the shore of Little Depot Lake and listened to them snakes bark.”

“What do you mean, bark?” I asked, incredulously.

"I admit it. It sounds queer," John went on, "but I'll tell you about it, for this talking about 'ginshun' root and that there truffle hound brought it to my mind.

"Some few years ago, when I did n't have to fear the rheumatiz as I do now, Simon Badore and I went into the Depot Lakes country hunting 'ginshun' root, for it was a good price and skins were off. Simon was a fine fellow to travel with. He was so quiet and he had such a way of nosing out 'ginshun.' One day we was a-looking in the swamp lands near little Depot Lake when we heard a beagle hound give tongue. I cocked an ear and listened. So did Simon.

"'What 's that?' I said.

"'Sounds to me like a hound giving tongue,' said Simon.

"'Like a beagle hound,' I says.

"'You 're right,' he says. 'It 's a beagle, sure.'

"'But what on earth is a beagle hound doing back here in this wilderness,' I says, 'this not being the hunting season and not a human being in sight, except you and me, for forty miles.'

"'Well, that gets me, too,' Simon says.

"'We stood and listened, and of all the tonguing we ever heard that was the saddest and the lonest and the most anguishing.

“‘That dog is suffering pain,’ said Simon.

“‘He ’s lost, sure enough,’ I returned. ‘Let us shout.’

“‘So we shouted as loud as we could, and I tell you Simon Badore could do some shouting in those days. He had been lost in the woods himself and his voice was trained.

“‘But the dog did n’t hear us. He kept right on whooping that mournful whoop.

“‘Simon thought he must be over on the hill, on the far side of the lake, and this seemed likely to me, so we concluded to give up hunting ‘ginshun’ root for that afternoon and go look for that beagle hound.

“‘We had to go round an inlet at the south end of the lake, and it was some journey, but all the while as we travelled we could hear that dog and we felt it our duty to find him. I was a better walker than Simon and was some distance ahead of him when I came out into the open at the head of the inlet, and I heard that hound as if he was almost under my feet. So I climbed up on a log and looked, and when Simon came up I motioned him with my left hand to step softly, which he did, being an old hunter. When he crawled up beside me I pointed out into the water where the barking came from, and what do you think we saw? Well, I ’ll tell you, and Simon Badore will swear

to the truth of every word. We saw, half out of water and half in, a snake lying on a half sunken saw log, a snake as big around as your leg and fully eighteen feet long, with his head a-waving back and forth through the air and giving tongue exactly like a beagle hound.

“ ‘Would you believe it?’ Simon whispered to me.

“And then we saw the head of another snake come pushing up along another sunken log with its mouth wide open and gurgling like it was choking to death. It crawled up its log till we could see it was fully as big and long as the other snake, and lifting itself about four feet in the air, it swayed and choked most horrible.

“Simon and I stood and looked, trying to make out what was the matter with them snakes. They never noticed us. One was suffering something terrible, there was no doubt about that, and the mate which was doing the barking was a-giving tongue in sympathy. We saw that plain enough.

“Suddenly the suffering snake laid its head flat on the log and give a rippling heave. It shot a big catfish out of its mouth as much as four feet before it struck water, and then we knew what had happened. That snake had swallowed one of them big horned pout as lives down in Little Depot Lake, some of them weigh-

ing nigh twenty pounds, and got the horns cross-wise in its throat."

"Did the barking cease then?" I asked. I was now leaning on an elbow looking intently at John.

"It did," he replied. "Them snakes just slid off into the water and disappeared."

For some time I never took my eyes from John's face. He sat with his hands clasped on each other in his lap, his eyes following the flight of a kingfisher that was operating near us. I had known John a great many years, and he had never worked off one like that on me before.

Surely his mouth will break into a smile after a bit, I thought, and there must come a twinkle in his eye.

But, no; John followed the plunges of the kingfisher and looked as disingenuous as a child.

"This is a very beautiful day, John," I ventured.

"Yes," he drawled, with that rising accent that I love.

"Everything about us is so peaceful, so pure, as if this were the place in which Truth lived," I continued.

John made no reply.

"And yet, John," I went on quietly, "Peter Sharbot did not tell you the truth about the fishing in this lake."

“Well, Peter is a great talker,” John said, after reflection.

“We surely would have had at least one bite if all those salmon he told you about were in White Lake,” I said.

“It would seem so,” John returned.

“I don’t like people who tell big stories, do you?” I inquired, innocently.

“Well, I never think about it much,” John said, as he rubbed his hands slowly together. “Old Pete Charles would lie once and a while, but Francis Sharbot was a truthful man and Peter was born truthful. Pete Charles was only a kind of relation. I notice people generally tell you the truth. I ’ve always believed in saying what was so and nothing else. I hold a point of honor in it, being brought up not to tell lies, and when I was a younger man I ’ve fought oftener for being called a liar than for anything else. I would not stand it now, either. A man likes to think well of himself.”

I coughed nervously and relapsed into silence. John meanwhile gathered up the luncheon utensils and stowed them away in the canoe.

We tried for black bass in the afternoon, but even they would not bite, so I sat on the bottom of the canoe facing John as he paddled and thought of those barking snakes.

“I did n’t know that snakes ever grew so

large in Canada as those you saw at Little Depot Lake," I said cautiously, just to feel my way.

"There 's some powerful big snakes at the Depot Lakes," John returned.

"And they bark just like a beagle hound?" I asked timidly.

"That 's what I told you me and Simon heard them do," John replied with conviction. "They give tongue just like a beagle hound."

I dropped the subject.

When we reached home I told the barking snake story to Roby and Larry with delight, and I warned them not to jest with John with reference to it. They were both certain that John had relapsed into a poetic mood owing to the weird beauty of the day and the lonesomeness of our place of luncheon.

"Barking snakes!" Larry cried, with manifest incredulity. "Who ever heard of a yarn to beat that!"

"But you must admit," Roby remarked, "that John is clever. I never believed he was possessed of so well developed a vein of quiet humor."

The next day Roby went fishing with John and drew the barking snake story from him in a masterful way. John related it to him word for word as he had done to me.

Roby was as plainly dumfounded as I was.

It so happened that the Badore brothers came to the Island a few days later to repair the break-water, which had suffered from the ice that spring, and among them came Simon. About one-thirty, John not yet having returned from lunch, Roby and Larry and I stood watching the Badores heave ponderous stones as if they were ninepins, when an inspiration came to me.

“Simon!” I called.

“Yes, sir,” Simon replied, not dropping the stone he was carrying, but resting it on his knee.

“Simon,” I said, “John Antoine was telling me the other day of an experience you and he had some years ago at the Little Depot Lake with two barking snakes.”

“Yes, sir,” Simon said, nodding his head and still holding the stone.

“Well,” I went on, somewhat embarrassed by the calm assurance in Simon’s face, “barking snakes are not an every-day occurrence.”

“No, sir, they ’re not,” said Simon.

“What did they sound like?” I inquired.

Simon gently placed the stone on the break-water as if fearful it would smash, and slowly filled his pipe.

“John Antoine and I was a-looking for ‘ginshun’ root back at Little Depot Lake,” he began, deliberately.

“Yes, I know,” I interrupted, “and you heard some barking going on.”

“Yes, sir,” Simon continued earnestly, appealing with his eyes to his brothers, who had now gathered about him. “We heard a barking just as if a beagle hound was a-giving tongue, the saddest, most melancholy whoop I ever heard, and I says to John Antoine, ‘John,’ I says, ‘there ’s a lost dog over there on the hill beyant the lake, and yet it ain’t the season of the year for hunting in these parts.’ John allowed it must be a lost dog and one suffering pain.”

“John told me all that,” I said, impatiently. “Tell us about the snakes.”

“Well, sir,” Simon coughed and continued modestly, “John, being a powerful walker, got ahead of me and reached the place of the barking first, it being a little cove at the south end of the lake. When I came up, John was standing on a big log a-waving to me with his hand to step quiet, which I did, and climbed up beside him. There they was, two snakes on two half-sunken saw logs, one well out of water and the other with only its head out, and both were wailing something horrible.”

“Wailing?” I cried. “John said barking.”

“One was barking all right and no mistake,” Simon replied with spirit. “The other was just

a-yelping or a-coughing, it would be hard to say which, seeing he had the horns of a bull-head sunk in his gullet. I tell you I never seen a brute critter suffer worse than that snake suffered till he spit out the bull-head—I never did, boys—honest, I never did.”

“It must be awful to get a bull-head stuck in your throat,” the youngest Badore remarked with awe.

“I tell you, boys,” Simon said, looking his brothers gravely in their faces, “it was the pitiablist sight I ever saw.”

“How big would you say those snakes were?” Roby asked.

Simon paused and thought intently for a moment. Then he turned to his brother William Nelson. “William Nelson,” he said, “am I expert at scaling a saw log with my eye, or ain’t I?”

“Simon,” William Nelson replied, looking at his older brother proudly, “you ’re a human machine, that ’s what you are, and Jerome Thomson will vouch for it to any man.”

“Well, then,” Simon went on, as if assured on the delicate point of judgment of the human eye, “I sized up them two snakes. The chap that did the barking would have scaled a scant twenty feet in length by ten inches at the middle. He was a wroncher. The feller with the

bull-head in his throat was shorter by possibly a foot six inches and was eight inches across the stomach. But he had contracted with suffering."

I turned and looked reproachfully at Roby. He had sunk into himself in self-abasement. As for Larry, he chewed a straw and tried not to think, for at this moment John rounded the break-water in his dugout.

"I was a-telling 'em," Simon called to him, "of the time you and me heard the barking snakes at Little Depot Lake."

"Yes?" John returned with that tantalizing rising drawl.

CHAPTER IX

SOME GOOD THINGS TO EAT

ROBY tells a story as he alone can tell it in his liquid Southern style, to illustrate the reverence of the negro for certain names which he considers sacred.

“Half a dozen niggers in south Georgia had been hoeing corn all morning and the day was mighty hot. Long come noon they seated themselves in the striped shade of a rail fence to eat their dinner, which consisted simply of bread on which had been poured a little West India molasses. They consumed this food with set faces, for life that morning had seemed powerful pesky and worthless to them. Finally, as the others were lighting their corn-cob pipes, one fat nigger wiped the molasses from his lips, showed his gleaming teeth, and said with an inspired smile, ‘Speakin’ of good things to eat, give me a nice, fat ham bone, a-roastin’ in the pan with plenty o’ cloves stuck in the brown hide of it and the juice a-drippin’, drippin’ down.’

“This delectable vision inspired another nigger, seated on one heel in the fence corner. ‘Ham bone is sure good,’ he said, with a comprehensive lick of his lips, ‘but give me a nice, juicy chicken a-cookin’ in a pan, with the yaller fat of it a-blobbin’ out and a-blobbin’ out and a-oozin’ down the side as you stick a fork in him.’

“‘Huh!’ cried a little nigger on his knees in the soft soil, ‘you-all can have your ham bone and your roastin’ chicken, but give me a nice, fat ’possum.’

“He had no sooner uttered the word ‘’possum,’ than a tall, melancholy nigger reached over and with a back-handed blow sent him heels over head out into the corn-field.

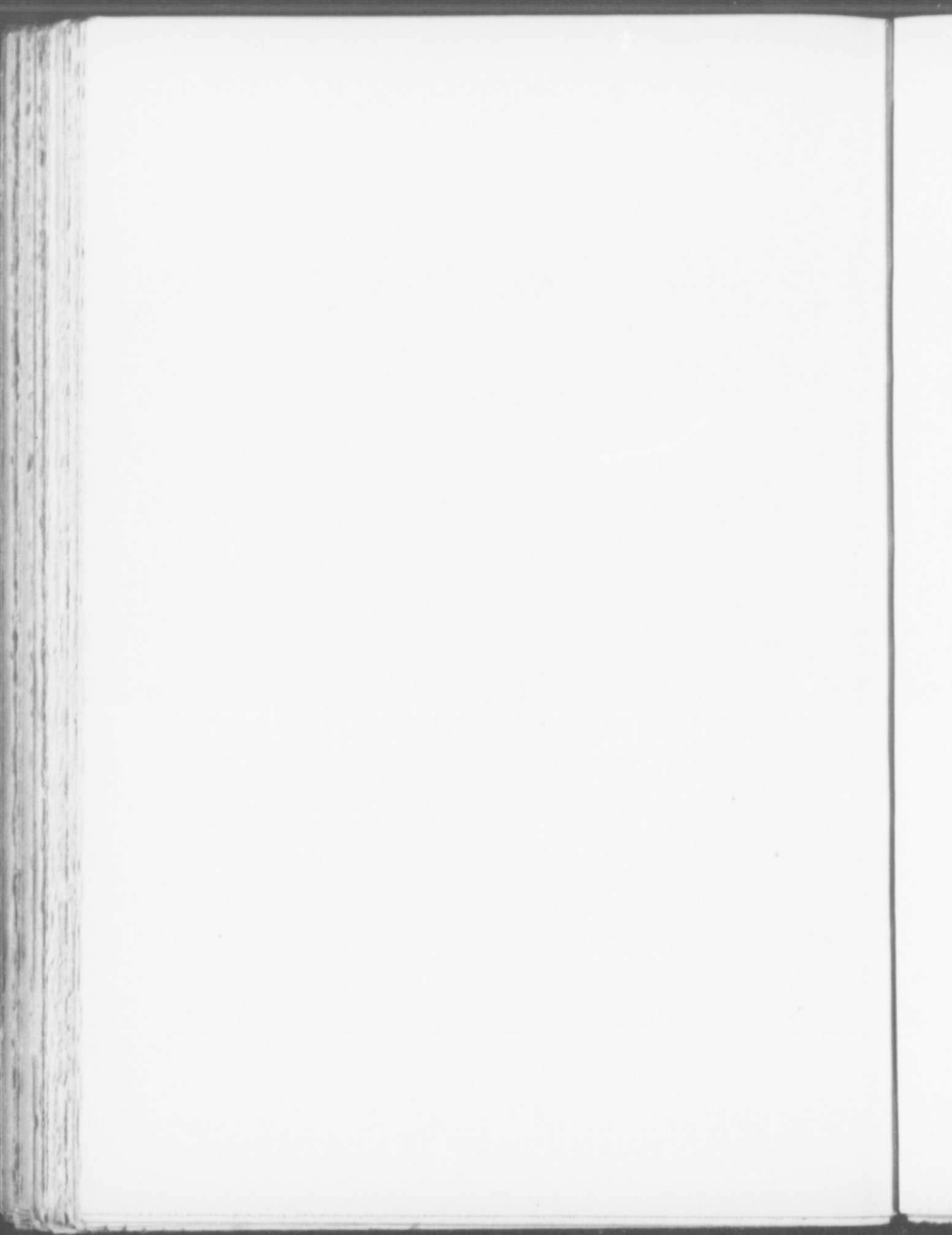
“The little nigger rose quickly to his feet and with tears of rage in his eyes sputtered as he spit the earth from his lips, ‘Say, nigger, what for you hit me dat way?’

“‘Boy,’ replied the melancholy nigger, in deep, mournful tones, ‘don’t you nebber name dat greasy word unless you got him wid yer!’”

I feel somewhat as that sad-eyed nigger must have felt, in approaching this subject of good things to eat at Sharbot Lake, for I am seated at my desk in the Wall Street district, and I feel greatly depressed. As I look over my left shoulder I can see past the corner of Lord’s



"SOME PIKE"



Court Building, over and above the building of the Farmers Loan and Trust Company, an obloid of blue sky in which the sun is shining. It is April. The air is warm and Kipling's red gods have been calling to me all day long. I went over to the Bankers Club for lunch and yawned over the bill of fare. It took me five minutes to make up my mind what to have. I decided on shad roe and bacon, and for dessert, fresh strawberries. Neither tasted good to me. So I got to thinking of Sharbot Lake and good things to eat, and decided to write this chapter.

One morning the Star Boarder and I went fishing, he for salmon with Herb Smith, and I with John Antoine for black bass. It was to be a picnic day. Larry was to bring the Gentle One and my wife with the trimmings of the lunch up to Cheese Island in the *Sharbotina* about one o'clock, where we were to join them, and Herb Smith was to broil a few of the fish we caught. It was a beautiful day, and every piscatorial sign was favorable. John and I did not get started until nearly ten o'clock, there being the usual thousand and one things to do at Aspinwall Island.

But John and I did not bother about this. We would fish along the shore all the way to the upper lake, and this would bring us over some fine black bass territory. So we started. When

we had circumnavigated Campbell's Island twice I realized that I had not yet had a bite, and we shifted to a shoal where one could always pick up half a dozen nice broilers. For some reason or other the bass were not on or about the shoal, so we moved onward toward the upper lake, feeling confident we should get all we wanted on the weed bed between Orford's Point and the Doctor's Island. On the way I discussed with John the vagaries of black bass and their gipsy habit of wandering.

"My own opinion," John said, as he rowed slowly, "is that black bass hold an election each summer to see who shall be their governor-general for the coming year, and that for a week or so before this election they are mighty busy moving about electioneering and influencing votes. Consequently they pay no attention to shiners dragged past their noses."

"Where do you think they hold the election?" I inquired.

"I believe they gather in the deep water to vote, perhaps at some big sunken rock," John replied. "And do you know, I should n't be at all surprised if this was election day."

"Well," I said, roused out of smug confidence in my ability always to catch a mess of bass at any time under any conditions, "if this is so, what shall we do for lunch?"

"Perhaps the other folks will catch a few salmon," John returned.

"Catching salmon enough for lunch is a weak reed to lean on," I ventured dismally.

John rowed on in silence, keeping a watchful eye on my line, hoping against hope that he might possibly be wrong in his election day theory. Presently we entered the upper lake and reached the weed bed off Orford's Point, but we had no better luck there, and I looked at my watch nervously. We could see Herb Smith and the Star Boarder trolling for salmon in the deep water some distance west of us. They seemed to be doing little, if any, business.

"Come, John," I said impatiently, after a bit, "let us try the old sunken log. There is nothing doing here and we must have some fish for lunch. Pick me out a nice, active minnow, and we shall see if we can't rouse a little interest in the black bass tribe."

We tried the old sunken log that had never failed us before. I dragged the bait in under its black head, which was just above the water, and round about it, but without the least result.

"It must be election day, sure," said John.

"Oh, bother your election day," I returned. "We 're going to be plain skunked this morning, and that is a disgrace that never happened to me before."

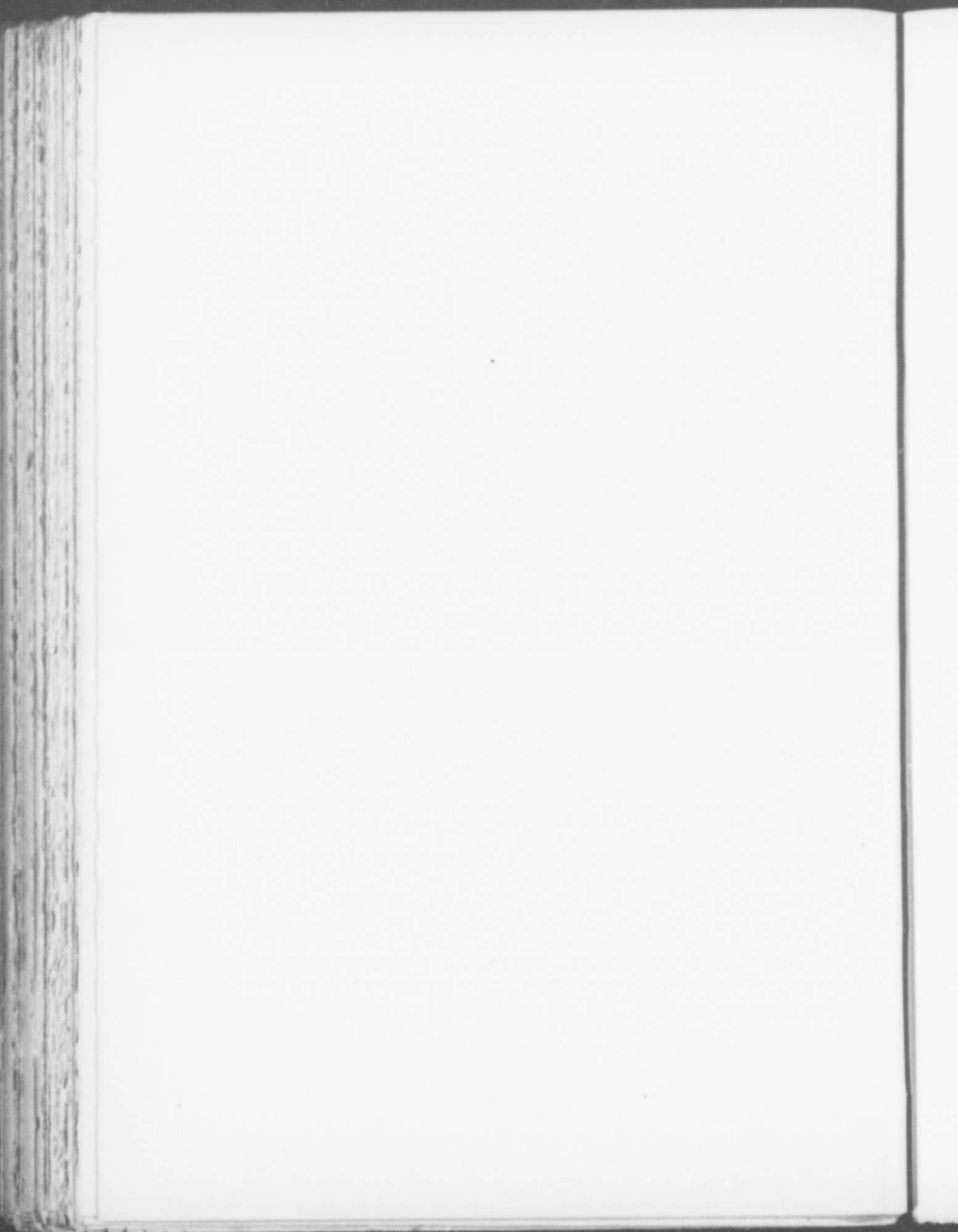
“Well, well, it 's a caution, it sure is,” John said slowly, looking about him for some sign of a fish breaking water for a fly. “It 's a pity Jane ain't here, for she never failed yet.”

I smiled as I thought of Jane and her snitching proclivities. Jane was the wife of a friend of mine. Her husband called her “Dot,” but I always addressed her as Jane because she reminded me of a sister of mine of whom I was very fond. A happy, whole-souled, singing creature, this Jane friend, old-fashioned, primitive in her instincts, a good cook, a mother of several children, a woman who believed that her husband was the best man and the most talented that the Lord ever made, one who looked with scorn on ladies to whom fashion was a first and home a second consideration.

Jane loved to fish, and especially to catch fish. It interested her greatly if a bass ran away with her line, but once she had checked him there was no fooling in the way she handled that fish. Her one idea was to get him in the boat as quickly as possible, and she simply rebelled at having to throw one back for being under the legal size. And she was lucky. John considers her the luckiest person he ever rowed, for she has time and again fished over ground that another boat had given up as no good and made a fine catch.



THE SHARBOTINA AND THE PETER PAN



I called Jane a fish snitcher and tried often to shame her into letting the bass play awhile before landing them, but my ribald remarks had no effect on her self-esteem. She averred that she knew what she was doing. She set out to get fish, did n't she? And she got 'em, did n't she? That ended the argument.

Vain as I was of my own ability as a black bass fisherman, I longed for Jane when John mentioned her name, for I really believed that she had a charm peculiarly her own.

However, Jane was at home attending to her family duties, and wishing was fruitless. It was now twelve-forty-five, and we heard the purr of the *Sharbotina* as she came through the gap. The ladies waved to us as they passed, while John and I hung our heads in disgrace.

We were skunked. That was all there was to it. So we gave up and John rowed over to Cheese Island, where the picnic was to be held.

When we told our tale of failure the ladies were much disappointed, but the Gentle One, not knowing the ways of salmon, assured us that her husband would have plenty of fish when he came in, and at that moment the other boat drew near.

"How many fish did you catch?" the Gentle One called.

The face of the Star Boarder was beaming,

and as he reached for the fish box I reprimanded myself for having thought so uncharitably of his abilities.

He drew out the box and then held up for our inspection a baby salmon, weighing possibly three pounds.

"How many more have you got?" his wife shouted again.

"That 's all," he replied, and he hailed me.

"How many bass did you catch?"

John shrunk into himself as I replied, "Not a darn one."

His face expressed dumfounded consternation. But when he had landed and had a drink of ice-water, and his wife had powdered the end of his nose, which was aflame, he cheered up and cried in his usual hearty way, "Well, Herb, broil the salmon for the women folk and we shall make a lunch on hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches."

I again lowered my head, not daring to look my wife in the eyes; for that morning, when she had discussed what she should bring in the lunch basket, I had told her above all things not to bring hard-boiled eggs, that we should have plenty of fish, that our friends could have hard-boiled eggs at home and should not have hard-boiled eggs inflicted upon them every time we had a picnic.

So when it was discovered that there were no hard-boiled eggs in the basket, Larry suggested sarcastically that he run over to the village and get some canned tongue or sardines.

“Go and stay there till the Toronto mail comes in,” I retorted. “We ’ll make out somehow.”

There were bread-and-butter sandwiches in the basket, a couple of thermos bottles of coffee, half a dozen doughnuts, three or four blueberry cakes, a package of sliced bacon, another of butter, and a multitude of knives and forks, plates, cups and saucers, salt-cellars, pepper-shakers and napkins.

As the meager supply of food was spread out on a table-cloth, we all simultaneously began to get hungry. Herb Smith meanwhile was broiling the little salmon on a fireplace near the shore, and we sat about him, inhaling the fragrant odor of that salmon and the bacon that had previously been fried, every moment getting hungrier.

I tried to while away the time by telling my companions John’s theory of the election among the black bass people. They were greatly amused until Herb Smith said solemnly to John as he turned and rebuttered the salmon above the fire, “John, I believe you have struck on the exact truth of it. I allers wondered what hap-

pened to the black bass at this particular season of the year, when they would n't bite under any inducements, and now I know. They 're off to the deep water voting for a governor-general. That 's just exactly what they are doing."

"Oh, pshaw!" cried the Gentle One, incredulously. "How ridiculous!"

"There ain't nothing ridiculous about it," Herb returned, keeping his eyes on the salmon. "Fish is funny people. When you know their ways as I know them, you won't wonder at anything."

"For heaven's sake, is n't that fish cooked yet?" the Star Boarder broke in. "I 'm famished."

"Pretty soon," Herb replied. "But do you notice how he is a-shrinkin' up?"

I should say he was shrinking. He was now not more than the size of a one-pounder. I never saw a fish shrink so, and the bacon too, that seemed plentiful, was now all shrivelled up on the plate.

The ladies sat side by side on a log, each with a napkin spread on her lap, and on this a plate waiting for the salmon. When Herb was ready to serve it, they protested that they would not eat it alone. We must share in it, and the Star Boarder and I consequently fell heir to a portion each, but what a portion! Simply a bite

and a swallow. That salmon was delicious and I decided to try the skin, which looked nicely browned. I had never eaten the skin of a salmon before, so I bit into this gingerly.

“Say,” I cried, “eat your piece of skin; it’s as sweet as a nut.”

The others hesitated, but hunger was gnawing at their vitals and they took the chance. They found it all I had declared it to be, and chewed the skin with relish.

Meanwhile John and Herb, seated on the shore at our feet, were trying to eat the little thin bread-and-butter sandwiches with nonchalance, just as if they were not the least bit hungry. I noticed John drank lots of water. That Indian has the manners of a chevalier.

Then the sandwiches disappeared, and the doughnuts and blueberry cakes likewise faded away, but we were still famished. I looked out over the lake with resentment in my heart against the black bass, and swore that in future it should be war to the death between us. I felt that I had been too lenient altogether in throwing so many back in the past.

But Herb Smith was in a vicious mood. I saw that as he lit a cheap cigar and brooded over the empty pan. “This fresh air is wonderful for creating an appetite,” he said, reflectively. “Most of the people I row like fish,

for it 's new to them, the kind we get here. Take, for instance, a plump two-pound bass, skin him, remove the bones, spread him out on a broiler like this one I brought along to-day, pepper and salt him both sides, then as you hold him over the fire spread butter over him slowly so it will soak in. Then turn the other side up and repeat with the butter. Cook him until he is nicely brown and serve piping hot. Most folks eat him with their fingers then."

The Star Boarder was licking his lips as Herb talked, and the Gentle One still sat with her plate in her lap, as if out of the heavens there might come manna, while my wife sat immersed in sorrow over the inhospitality we had exhibited to our dear friends. John looked as one charmed by the discourse. I attempted to smoke, but there was no foundation to smoke on, and I threw my cigar away.

"Personally I don't care much for fish," Herb went on. "The ideal meal to me on the shore of a lake on a bright, sunny day, such as this, is broiled chicken. You see this fireplace? Well, I 've broiled many a chicken here and I thought maybe that is what you would want me to cook for you to-day."

I writhed internally.

"You see," Herb continued, mercilessly, "it 's a deep fireplace. The first thing I do

when I land is to start a rousing fire in it so that all the stones get hot; and when the fire has died down, leaving only a bed of coals, I put on the chickens and let 'em sizzle slowly, buttering and salting them much as I do the bass. The butter soaks in and a firm film covers the flesh of the chickens, holding in all the fatty juices. They get a golden brown after a bit, and when served have a smoky flavor that is very appetizing."

"Don't you ever cook steak on the shore?" the Star Boarder asked, with food lust in his eyes. "I should say a big, juicy porterhouse steak broiled in the way you describe out here in the open would go fine."

John took another drink of water and the Gentle One sighed deeply.

"No, I don't remember as I ever did cook a steak on the shore," Herb replied thoughtfully. "It would be delicious, there ain't a doubt of it; but we don't get real, good, heavy meat back here. Deer steak, however, we have a-plenty of. Take a steak from a fine young buck and cook it in the woods on a bright, sharp October day after you have been tramping over the hills all morning, and say, that is some food—eh, John?"

John jerked up his head quickly. "Elegant!" he replied, and moistened his lips.

“But speaking of good things to eat, the best food I ever had outdoors was barbecued lamb, the way that Southern feller, Albert Howell, who came up with Roby one year, showed us how to do,” Herb exclaimed with enthusiasm.

“How was that?” the Star Boarder inquired weakly.

“You remember it, John, don’t you?” Herb inquired.

“Sure, I do,” John replied. “That Albert, he was a rare one.”

“You get a lamb—you must have it fat,—a fat, young lamb,—and you dress it just as you see fancy butchers dress the lambs they hang up in their shops for exhibition, with the fat all rolled inside the carcass and veiled over the body like a mesh. The day before the barbecue you dig a shallow hole about six feet long, with a hard clay bottom, if possible, and early the next morning you build a big hardwood fire over half of this hole. While this wood is burning down into coals, you skewer the lamb with a long skewer in each leg so as two men can hold it over the fire and turn it now and then. Then you rig a couple of stones at each end so that the skewers can rest on these stones, and the lamb cooks very, very slowly over the ashes. Also the day before you must make the barbecue sauce and put in this sauce all the seasoning

and hot sauces that ever was invented by the mind of man. You must have lots of this sauce, for, all day long while the lamb is baking, you must flick this sauce on it with a switch of twigs or splints. Then you and your helper watch and work hour after hour, taking a nip of Scotch now and then when you get thirsty, until the lamb has been over the fire a full eight hours. Cut up then and serve hot, and if it don't melt in your mouth, don't ever speak to me again."

"It will, I swear it will!" John cried in ecstasy.

"Say, what are you men talking about?" the Gentle One exclaimed. "I never heard such conversation, and I 'm simply starving to death. Elizabeth, let 's go home and have an early supper. I can't stand this any longer."

But John was not yet ready to awaken from his dreams. "Once," he began slowly, "me and Pete Charles was a-paddling up to the village and we stopped off at Crusoe Island for a drink of water. This was when the old folks was alive and they was both sprightly."

"Whom do you mean by the old folks?" inquired the Gentle One.

"Why, old Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, of course, as always lived on the island in the summer-time. They used to come as soon as the ice went out and stayed till the last flowers was dead.

My! but that woman did love flowers just the same as old Mrs. Winkle, and all she had to do was to rub her hand over the ground to make 'em grow. Well, as I was going to tell you, me and Pete Charles stopped off at Crusoe Island one day for a drink of water and we found them just getting up from the dinner table as we stepped on the porch. Old Mrs. Robinson she came to the door. 'Hello,' she says to us, 'you two men are just the ones I 'm a-looking for. I 've got a job for you to do.'

"Pete Charles he wagged his head back and forth, and shook his shoulders, a-pivoting on his hips, but never said a word. She knew, however, what Pete's waggling meant. It meant that he was ready to do anything she asked, from beating a rag carpet to helping bury the dead. Pete had a failing toward shooting ducks and partridges ag'in' the law just to bring 'em in to these old people, for he was mighty fond of them, knowing too that the old man always had a nip of something good in a cupboard in the boat house.

"I stood and looked at her, not being much of a talker myself, but just as ready as Pete to help 'em out. But she just stood in the doorway and laughed, while old Mr. Robinson he looked over her shoulder and grinned at us. Then she says, 'Now you two men sit down on

the stoop here,' and when we did it she gave us each a knife and fork and a plate. Pete and I knew by this time that the job was not going to be a very mean job. Well then, sir, she goes into the kitchen and comes out with a big iron pot and sets this pot down on the stoop between me and Pete, and says to us, 'Lay to, boys; there 's the job ahead of you.'

"We eyed the pot, from which a creamy vapor was a-rising and a smell that searched the hidden corners in our stomachs, for me and Pete was generally hungry them days, being always in the open air.

"Well, Pete looked in the pot and so did I, and we both give a good, long smell, and I tell you now I never smelled such a delightful smell as come from that pot. It was a pot-pie, but such a pot-pie! In the very middle of it was two partridges, one of 'em still whole, and around these two partridges was the bodies of half a dozen black squirrels floating among islands of yellow pot-pie. The old folks had hardly eaten any of it and so me and Pete pitched in. We had to manœuver carefully 'cause the flesh just fell away from them partridges and them black squirrels when you touched 'em. Pete 'u'd look at me every minute or so and drop an eyelash, showing he was in perfect bliss. Yes, I 've had good things to eat

in my time, but never nothing to touch that pot-pie me and Pete Charles ate on the stoop with old Mr. and Mrs. Robinson a-lookin' on."

The Star Boarder was looking out across the water with a stony stare in his eyes as John finished his tale. Our suffering had passed the crisis and we were dulled by despair. I cannot speak of the mental process of my friends, but as Herb and John talked, my mind in maddened frenzy ran over all the years I had lived and opened up cells of memories pregnant with toothsome and olfactory delights. In particular I remembered a cherry pie, and moistening my lips I said, "We once had a cook who could make cherry pie that would melt—"

"Let us have no more of this," my wife interrupted with emphasis. "We are torturing ourselves like Flagellants, and here comes Larry from the village. Let us go home, and I promise that never again shall we be caught out at a picnic without plenty of hard-boiled eggs."

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LOOKING WESTWARD

CHAPTER X

A SHARBOTIAN NIGHT

EACH summer I pitch a tent on the ridge along the eastern shore of Aspinwall Island and two of John Antoine's children bring from the mainland bags of balsam boughs which they spread a foot thick on the ground covered by this tent. In the middle of the tent, half buried in the fragrant evergreen boughs, is placed a white enamelled bed and there I like best to sleep during the warm August nights.

If I lie on my right side, I can look out through the front opening, on moonlight nights, across the Island to where the new moon plays in the water with Arcturus and the other western stars. If on my left side, I look through the rear opening across the broad lower lake to the wild hills that form its eastern boundary. So night after night I roll and look, charmed with the beauty of the stars and the shadows until I am in such a condition of wakefulness that sometimes, on exceptionally brilliant nights, I arise, don a woollen bath-robe, and seating my-

self on the shore, surrender my thoughts to the influences of the night.

I confess that at such times I relapse into paganism, for in some previous incarnation I must surely have been a worshipper of strange deities, especially of the lesser gods of ancient Greece who danced in the glades to the piping of Pan. I cannot account otherwise for these instinctive tendencies. They seem part and parcel of my appreciative love of Nature, and it does not seem possible that in this short commercial life I have lived my senses could have acquired such a harmonious sympathy with her moods, her sounds, her colorings and her fragrances as they possess. Therefore, I delight in the childish thought that in the old days I was a shepherd in Arcady, a mortal playfellow of Daphne, who delighted in woodland spots; of Proserpine, daughter of the soil; of Aristæus the bee-keeper, and possibly of Aurora, goddess of the dawn.

I read in books that Pan was dead and for years I was tempted to believe that the poets were right, that Apollo no longer guided his fiery stallions up the morning sky, that Diana had ceased to follow her hounds through the groves, and that romance had given place to stolid common sense. And then I came to Aspinwall Island, and on such a night as this

I came to a realization that Pan and Ceres, Bacchus and Ariadne, and all the glorious lesser gods and goddesses will never die in the imagination of such as love sylvan places and delight in the harvest.

Perhaps these charming deities of Greece were merely mental pictures with which the minds of the artistic ancients decorated the walls of the terrestrial Pantheon in which they worshipped Nature, for in reality she was their one God, and these others only intercessory immortals through whom they sought her favor. But this is only a fancy. They were indolent worshippers, those pastoral people, and they doubtless considered it too great a mental effort to attempt a concrete conception of Mother Nature and to raise altars to her as a personified divinity. They chose rather to have their god of the sea, their god of the winds, their god of the sun, their god of increase, their household gods and their sylvan gods, and evidently they never consolidated them into one as did the shepherds of Judea. Cloud-compelling Zeus and the other Olympian gods seem to have been mere monstrous fancies with little human interest, and it is known that these mighty ones did not enter deeply into their lives.

Having so greatly admired the ancient Greeks, I have wished, as I sat on the shore in

the white moonlight in a pagan mood, that they had conceived a great, true, humanistic God, a God representative of all the aspirations and desires of mankind, for I have thought how much it would mean to men and women now if during the past centuries there had been established in this world a truly sympathetic natural religion in which no superstitious rites were blended, a religion that would have been to mankind what mother love is to the individual, a religion without awe or fear or prejudice. And, finding no such God in the past, I have endeavored to conceive a divinity of whom Nature was the manifestation.

The attributes of such a deity would be based on and moulded by well-established, fundamental laws, such as the law of attraction and repulsion, the law of natural selection, the law of adaptation to environment, the law of heredity and the other laws of evolution.

There are certain manifestations of these principles or laws that any of us can see in operation and understand. We know that the tree, which is one of the most remarkable of living things, endeavors constantly to attain to strength and beauty, and, granted the right conditions, we realize that it will fulfil the primal requirements of its existence. We see the soil itself, crude and coarse as it is, constantly mov-

ing to beautify itself by hiding away dead matter under a layer of turf or moss; we see that it decks itself with flowers and fragrant plants to make itself attractive, and let us not say that some Supreme Being by His arbitrary mandate causes these mosses and flowers to grow, but rather let us appreciate that the soil itself is a living thing and has in itself these principles of beauty, striving always to express them.

This striving for strength and beauty is characteristic of all animals and of all human beings. If any fail, and many do fail, it is because of inherited weaknesses and because the banal influences of their environment overpower them.

Therefore, he who comes to a conception of a God of Nature, will worship strength and beauty as divine attributes. Strength is health, and the body of a living thing cannot attain to perfect health without the strength to overcome and to persist, for life is by its very nature a warfare of antagonistic organisms. Existence in any form is simply a chemical action in which titanic forces are arrayed against each other. The man, the brute, or the tree in which the elements of strength and beauty consolidate and triumph, succeeds. All others are failures in so far as their physicality is concerned.

Man has lifted himself above the doom of the lower orders of existence by the develop-

ment of a high intelligence that enables him to make a success of life even without physical strength and beauty, but this is a success giving little personal gratification. He who radiates light on his fellow-men consumes himself. The man of sorrows in every age has poured out the wine of his happiness to quench the thirst of the unfortunate, a thirst which will never be satisfied.

But while prophets come and go, Nature proceeds tirelessly, covering her dead with mosses and flowers, striving for beauty, eternally consolidating her forces in the attainment of strength. Is man wiser than she, the Mother God?

Nature is a builder, not a destroyer. In the building of what she has designed, much seemingly is destroyed, but the attainment is constructive. She does many a little wrong to make a great right.

And love is the trowel with which she builds her temples. Love is her master workman as well as her instrument. It is her creator and her means of creation. Love is the local divinity of strength and beauty.

It was meant that men and women should adore Love, and in the classic ages they did worship Love and they built temples to the god in which were altars whereon were laid flowers

in sacrifice. But a sordid clannish race arose in the world preaching the religion of a Supreme Being who made Love a menial of the marriage rite, and this beautiful Love of the ancients became a creature of the law, "Increase and multiply and replenish the earth."

Why should men increase and multiply and replenish the earth? To provide shepherds to watch sheep? To fill the ranks of the fighting men? To furnish slaves for the masters? To furnish females for these men?

I cannot believe that Love was ever intended as the vassal of a God who bred men to build Him hecatombs. Love is a creature of the sunshine and the summer night. Love is the fairy spirit which blows the pollen of the rose to the rose, that inspires the songs of the birds, that stirs the male fish to ecstasy as he moves over the spawning-bed, that fires the heart of the young men and the maidens. He is what the Greeks knew him to be, not the Caliban of the Jews.

We know this to be true, at least all lovers do. They are all friends of Pan and his entourage of nymphs and fauns who danced engarlanded in the Arcadian glades, for love to them is poetry and rhythmic movement and song.

But Love is only one of Nature's satellites. There is Imagination, another delightful pur-

veyor of happiness. It is difficult to tell how this creature of Nature operates, but it is pleasant to think of Imagination as of a humming-bird on poised wings visiting for a drop of memory each cell of the brain, as the little bird visits the flowers.

We have two humming-birds at Aspinwall Island which have made their summer home with us for years. We never tire of watching them hover over the nasturtiums, probing deeply to the heart of each flower for an atom of nectar. There is no more charming expression of life than one of these tiny creatures. They have given me this idea, fantastic, it is true, but revealed to me by that mysterious humming-bird my imagination.

Suppose that you abandon your thoughts for a moment to the rule of this metaphor, and seat yourself beside me on the shore this wonderful summer night in a mood of exaltation like that of Æneas upon his settlement on the banks of the Tiber, when "he invoked the God of the place, and Earth as the first-born child of the Gods, and the Nymphs, and the unknown Gods of the rivers, night and the rising stars of night."

You sit fascinated by the silent influences. Suddenly Imagination comes, drives its bill deep into the corona of a thought, and you no-

tice that those white birch saplings over on the eastern shore are really not trees at all but dancing creatures. Surely they are not nymphs, sweeping round and round in a hand-clasped circle? Why, of course they are not. They are merely white birch saplings, but you begin to think of those sylvan deities of Greece and presently you see the fair Lady of the moon, who has now backed round the corner of the Island and is looking at you; you see this full-throated siren press back her head and throw out her heavy tresses for all the lovers keeping night vigil to see. And you say, and you smile as you say it, "What a wanton she is!" Just so she smiled and let loose her hair for all men to see before Pericles conceived the Parthenon; and as you laugh in her face this night, just so laughed Horace seated on the lawn of his Sabine farm two thousand years ago, for you remember that Horace adored and thought he saw the old gods, and the following lines come to you, the humming-bird piercing a cell on the instant:

"Bacchus I saw remotest rocks among,
(Believe it, unborn ages), ivy-crowned,
Teaching to listening nymphs mysterious
song;
Goat-footed fauns with pointed ears stood
round."

And, thinking of Horace, you will think also of Sappho and whisper to yourself his charming lines in praise of her, which are unforgettable:

“And love still breathes where Sappho sings,
And still the soul of rapture clings
To the wild throbbings of the Æolian
strings.”

That humming-bird imagination will still tirelessly probe brain cell after brain cell, and as you sit in an ecstasy of thought, all the poetic past will live again and you will dream with your eyes open as does a god.

There is white magic in the moon. I see it has affected a crane which stands on a flat rock out in the water before me; for instead of attending to his fishing he poses with uplifted head in statuary adoration of the Queen of Heaven.

Let us raise our eyes also until in the apex of the firmament we see Vega and her obloid of satellites. Just across the way from her is the Northern Crown, and down the southern sky a way is the Scorpion. And as we lift our heads let us lift our thoughts up among the stars, and beyond the stars we see to the invisible stars, and search out the God of our good,

practical Mother Nature, the God of all the suns and all created things. We shall not behold Him, but He is there. He is where the farthest flung beam of the most distant sun impinges upon its horizon, and He is here in our souls saying to us, "You are fantastic creatures, but you adore me and I love you."

Let us to bed. But stop a moment! See the vapor settling down as if to rest in Babcock's Bay, pressed down by the moon rays. See the little stars looking at their reflection in the mirror lake. Listen to the crooning of the summer breeze as it moves through the pine trees. Inhale the thousand and one fragrances.

This is only one night of the midsummer nights at Aspinwall Island, but throughout most of them we are sound asleep.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHILDREN OF THE LAKE

THE wilderness is never satiated with the sensation of living. The lover of Nature is impressed with the strenuous youth of the forests, the fields and the waters. Nature abhors age when it becomes unsightly, decayed, useless, concealing it cunningly with mosses and vines or in death burying it quickly. Her scavengers and undertakers are very efficient.

She glories in pretending that she is only a year old, singing and dancing on the hills each spring, fluttering her new robes in the wind, determined to make the other gods believe that her blushes, her dimples, her laughter, her songs and her vivacity are those of youth.

Life here is the great adventure, not death. There is no lure in the mystery that hides beyond the portals of the latter, appealing sensuously to the wilderness and its creatures, human, animal and inanimate.

When one has touched all sides of life, exhausted its possibilities, rang it as Quasimodo

rang his bells till every vibration has been sounded, when the Present treads in the footsteps of the Past, and there is no longer any new thing under the sun, then death remains the only sensation unexperienced, and, realizing how commonplace life has been, some call death the great adventure.

But I shall never so misuse this term. There is but one great adventure in life, and that is the beginning of an independent existence. The coddled child and the caged animal never experience it. It is so delightful, so pathetic, so altogether wonderful, this great adventure of stepping out of the egg, out of the cocoon, out of the nest, out of the home, and going it alone. It fascinates the observer.

There was a song sparrow last summer who made her nest and hatched her young near the large flower bed back of the boat house. She had only one baby and I watched every development in the training of that little bird. I saw it the first day it walked abroad. It did not go more than two feet from home, contenting itself simply with sitting still, breathing the fresh air and letting its mother feed it. The next day it travelled fully twenty feet from home and saw the lake through the bushes, and the following day it fell over an embankment and I saw it, trembling with excitement, seated among the

stones on the shore of the lake. Its mother sat on a boulder and scolded it for its temerity, but it paid no attention to her—it was so fine there in the warm sunshine. She told it to come back home at once, but it never moved. Then she went away and returned after a bit with a mouthful of moths. It was hungry and those moths smelled invitingly, but the mother permitted it to have only a smell. She jumped on a little rock and it scrambled after her. Then she let it have another smell. From this rock she hopped to a boulder. The birdling looked up at her and hesitated. This was a mighty hop for so little a bird, but it tried it and landed successfully, receiving as a reward simply another smell. Then I saw what the old bird had in mind. She was tempting the baby back home. It took fully half an hour for the little song sparrow to reach the smooth grass near the flower bed, and, once there, the mother fed it the moths.

Then there were the swallows which made their first flight out through the boat house doors, over the water. That also was truly a great adventure.

Larry and Jane and my wife had been watching these swallows for some time. The nest was on the beam under the roof of the launch house and there was no way that the little swal-

lows could strike out into the world unless they flew over the water out to the break-water. They knew this well enough, for we saw them sizing up the situation day after day. They grew so large that they fairly crowded one another out of the nest, there being four of them, but they dreaded to make the attempt.

Finally we found three of them seated on a rock at the rear of the boat house, preening their feathers, fully assured of themselves. But one was missing and we were afraid for some time that it had been drowned, as it was no longer in the nest. That day, however, when we were about to enter the *Sharbotina* to go for the mail, we discovered the missing swallow in the bottom of the launch, into which it had tumbled luckily. It was a very much frightened little bird. Its first venture from the nest had been a failure. We placed it on the break-water, where it was still sitting when we returned. The following morning we witnessed an interesting scene. The little swallow flew several times from the break-water to the shore, while its mother sat on the roof of the boat house and watched. Presently, feeling vain of its powers of flight, it flew directly out over the lake, and with a scream of warning the mother flew swiftly after it. She took a position directly beneath it, turning as it turned. Suddenly the

young swallow dipped as if it had lost control of its wings or its strength had failed, but the mother bird was beneath it and they flew to the shore, the daring adventurer resting on its parent's back.

Such scenes are a daily occurrence in the bird world. The dangers of childhood and youth are so many that no wonder the parent birds look old and worn out by the time their young are able to look after themselves.

It is even more interesting to observe the development of children in such a lonely place as this. As a rule, they are exceedingly wise in taking care of themselves. They take few chances, and while playing about the water continuously, are seldom reckless. They have a wholesome respect for the elements and are generally safe in the kitchen when a storm breaks.

They are notoriously clannish and home-loving, these wilderness children, no matter how humble their home may be or how frugal their fare. They wander about in little groups all day seeking adventure, barefooted, clad in the simplest garments, and always most attractive when least dressed up.

One morning the Star Boarder went with Larry in the *Peter Pan* for the milk to a farm house at the lower end of the lake, where its waters flow in a narrow stream beneath a crude

log bridge into Elbow Lake. As he was seated in the boat waiting for Larry and hidden by the bushes on the shore, he heard the voice of a child singing, "I 'm a happy girl, I 'm a happy girl," and looking over his shoulder he saw a mite of a barefooted child going across the log bridge, swinging a little tin pail in one hand and holding her face up to the bright morning sun as she poured out her happiness to the day in the improvisation, "I 'm a happy girl, I 'm a happy girl." He watched her as she disappeared into the forest beyond the pasture field, still singing her morning song, and was so impressed with the fact that he had actually seen Pippa pass and heard her sing that on his return to the Island he described the scene to us with the greatest enthusiasm. Nothing on earth that he had ever seen or heard had been more charming, more picturesque than that quaint little rustic child, singing of her happiness.

These little children on the rocky farms about the lake have highly developed the ability to entertain themselves. Luckily for their happiness, there is generally a brood of them. These country people are not afraid of over-populating the earth. The little people, bright-eyed and wondering, peer like rabbits from the windows of the log cabins when I go visiting. A stranger can get nothing from them. They are

too shy to talk, but when they know you well and have been bound to you by various small presents and judicious offerings of candy, they will let you into their mysteries and tell you many quaint things; and if they happen to fancy you and even come to love you, they are your slaves. It is exactly the same with their parents. They are hard to get acquainted with at first; they are never awed by your superior position in the world; their friendship cannot be purchased with bribes or gifts; they cannot be ordered to do anything, or, in other words, driven. There is only one way to their hearts and respect, and that is through genuine, long-continued kindness. They seem to have an instinctive power of differentiating between real kindness and sympathy and the shoddy substitute. It takes years to win their confidence, but once you win it they are yours to command ever afterward.

There is a man at the village who has been in the past a large employer of labor, and the saying is common in the community that he can get more work out of the natives than any other living being. He demands from them long hours of service and vigorous toil when they are in his employ, but they swear by him simply because at some time in their lives they have been in great trouble, or the flour bin has been

scraped to the boards and there was no longer pork in the barrel. At such times this man has gone to them, over the ice or through the snow, and given them aid, brought them the doctor or mourned with them in their sorrows.

The human heart is peculiarly receptive to kindness, and in all ages men have been subdued by kindness and led along the path of civilization by those who knew unconsciously the way to their confidence.

The thought that is uppermost in my mind as I talk to or simply contemplate the wilderness children is this: Some day they will have to strike out in the world and earn their living; and knowing the heart-burnings, the disappointments and the awesome difficulties of this undertaking from personal experience, my heart swells with sympathy for these girls and boys now so thoughtless and care-free.

There is no future for them here. This is merely the paternal nest; but somewhere toward the West or the South lies the big world where fortunes are made, where fame lives, where there is luxury to be secured,—in fact, a place where young men and women go to take passage in the ship of their destiny.

I have seen several of them start out, but the home-leaving of a little Indian girl last summer impressed me most. We had known her since

she was very small, a dainty, black-eyed creature as timid as a chipmunk. She was one of a large family of children, who played and slept cuddled together like kittens, adoring one another. When she was twelve she used to come to the Island two or three times a week to pick the nasturtiums, and perhaps there never was a prettier sight than this tiny creature, with a red band about her dark hair, daintily picking the flowers about the big rock. She looked more like a Japanese than an Indian, and this became more pronounced as she grew older. At sixteen she was a beauty, and like all genuinely beautiful creatures she had the instinctive intelligence to clothe herself in good taste.

But now the time came for her to go out in the world and seek her fortune. Babies were still coming along at home and the nest had become too small for her. Her brother, her elder by a year, was already at work for a farmer some twelve miles away, so great a distance that he did not get home more than once a year.

She could read and write fairly well and do odds and ends of things when directed, but her accomplishments in handicrafts were so limited that necessarily she must start well down the ladder in her climb to a place in human society. And nobody could do this for her but herself.

Now, this little Indian girl with the face of a

Japanese princess was too dainty for the position of a kitchen maid, but what else was there for her to do? So a place was found for her and she fared forth out over the water, just as the adventurous swallow had done, with all her belongings in a hand-bag, and I am told that the first night in her new home she cried bitterly.

I really hope that God keeps His eyes on these little maidens who go out into the world, and brings comfort to them in their times of homesickness, for really their fate is pitiable and merits His loving compassion. There should be a better chance for them than the kitchen, for what can they graduate to from there?

It is in my heart to believe, for the wish is father to the belief, that the day will come when all the children of the poor will be recognized as wards of the State, and as such be given without charge a technical education, so that they can start life with a business training behind them, and not be forced to crawl to a place in the world as they now do on their hands and knees.

Some few of these struggling ones do climb out from the cellar of life, and climbing having become a habit with them, keep on ascending until they sit in the seats of the mighty, becoming of that rare brotherhood whose master workman was Abraham Lincoln, but the way is hard and a mighty stout heart is required.

It won't do any harm, my good friends who read this, to think hard along these lines of giving the children of the poor a better chance. Think of the little Indian girl in her tiny bedroom above the kitchen, longing for the joys of life, and cultivate compassion for such as she.

For the loveliest being in the world is a little child, and the more helpless it is the more it appeals to us. Nature cares nothing about us older people. She was done with us years ago when we cut our chair strings and learned to look out for ourselves. We are of the autumn of the year, and if she regards us at all it is with a query in her eyes. "I am burying my old leaves and vines and flowers and grasses," she says, "hiding all under the snow; is it not about time for you also?"

She loves only the young, she paints roses on their cheeks and touches their lips with carmine. She fondles them and croons over them, mothering them, mystifying them with her secrets, alluring them to a fullness of beauty so that she may rejoice in her handiwork. Blessed in her sight is the strong, young tree, the rose in bud, the colt in the pasture, the boy spinning his top, and the peasant Pippa singing as she passes over the old log bridge, "I 'm a happy girl, I 'm a happy girl."

CHAPTER XII

WINTER

JACK FROST closes the story of Aspinwall Island. He comes creeping down from Hudson Bay, hiding in the marshes by day, and each night stealing a little bit farther southward, breathing upon the foliage as he passes a sleep-inducing anesthetic. He is merely a sprite of Mother Nature, this dispenser of winter magic. She is worn out and would sleep, but before she retires for her annual rest she casts aside her catholicity of taste and demands from Jack and her other coloraturists the bizarre in a most pronounced degree.

"Set the world on fire for me with the flame of your most brilliant hues," she cries, and the hills flash in an orgy of crimsons and purples and pinks.

Then the colors fade, the leaves fall, the grasses crinkle and bend low. The birds are already gone, all but the ducks and geese, that take their time feeding on the delicious wild rice in the lakes along their way. But soon the last

of them disappear also, and old Father Winter himself comes puffing and blowing over the hills, scattering snow before him. The lake freezes, freezes, freezes, until sometimes the ice is three feet in thickness. Where are the black bass now? That is what John Antoine and I would very much like to know. They must be down in the deep water, moving silently about in the gloom.

The snow piles up on the Island in immense banks, half burying the cottage, and there is no evidence of life in the vicinity except the blue streak of smoke ascending from the chimney of John's cabin on the mainland.

It becomes so cold that sometimes it is forty degrees below zero. The earth seems as dead as a boulder. The air cracks and snaps as if in pain. "Br-r-r-r!" blusters old man Winter, "I 'm a devil of a fellow!"

But none of us are frightened by this unfriendly season. We know, just as the little children of Sharbot Lake know, that Nature is only asleep, that along about March she will yawn and stretch, causing the ice on Sharbot Lake to crack and heave; that early in April she will sit up with a satisfied sigh and call the winds about her, telling each to go its ways spreading the news to the birds to come back, because Mother is up and about. Then the Sun

will kiss the Earth on the lips and a new honeymoon will begin.

So the wheel goes round, but we grow old—we who have loved the sunshine and the humid soil so passionately. Yet while the pitcher at the well is still unbroken we may continue to drink the elixir of life, that wonderful compound made up of the laughter of children, the singing of birds, the murmuring of young trees, the fragrance of flowers, the sparkle of pure water, and the joy of fresh air. And as we draw near to the soil perhaps the secret of reincarnation may be revealed to us.

As for myself, I know that some day I must bid good-by to Sharbot Lake and all its beloved associations; and when that time comes I hope that my soul will slumber lightly, and that I shall hear always through the eternities the swish of water, the rustle of leaves, the twitter of birds, the melodious hum of insects, and that my senses will play about me like fairies, delighting me with memories of Aspinwall Island.



