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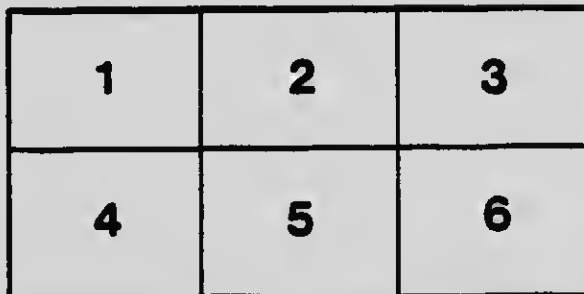
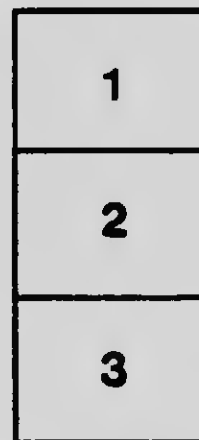
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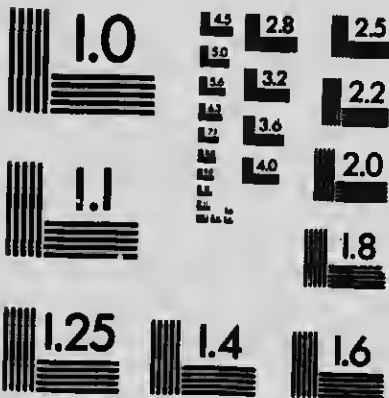
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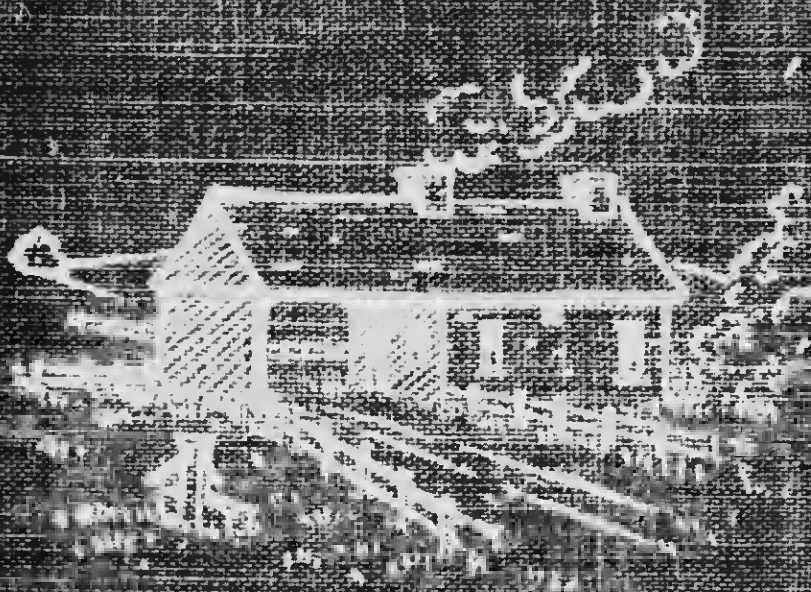
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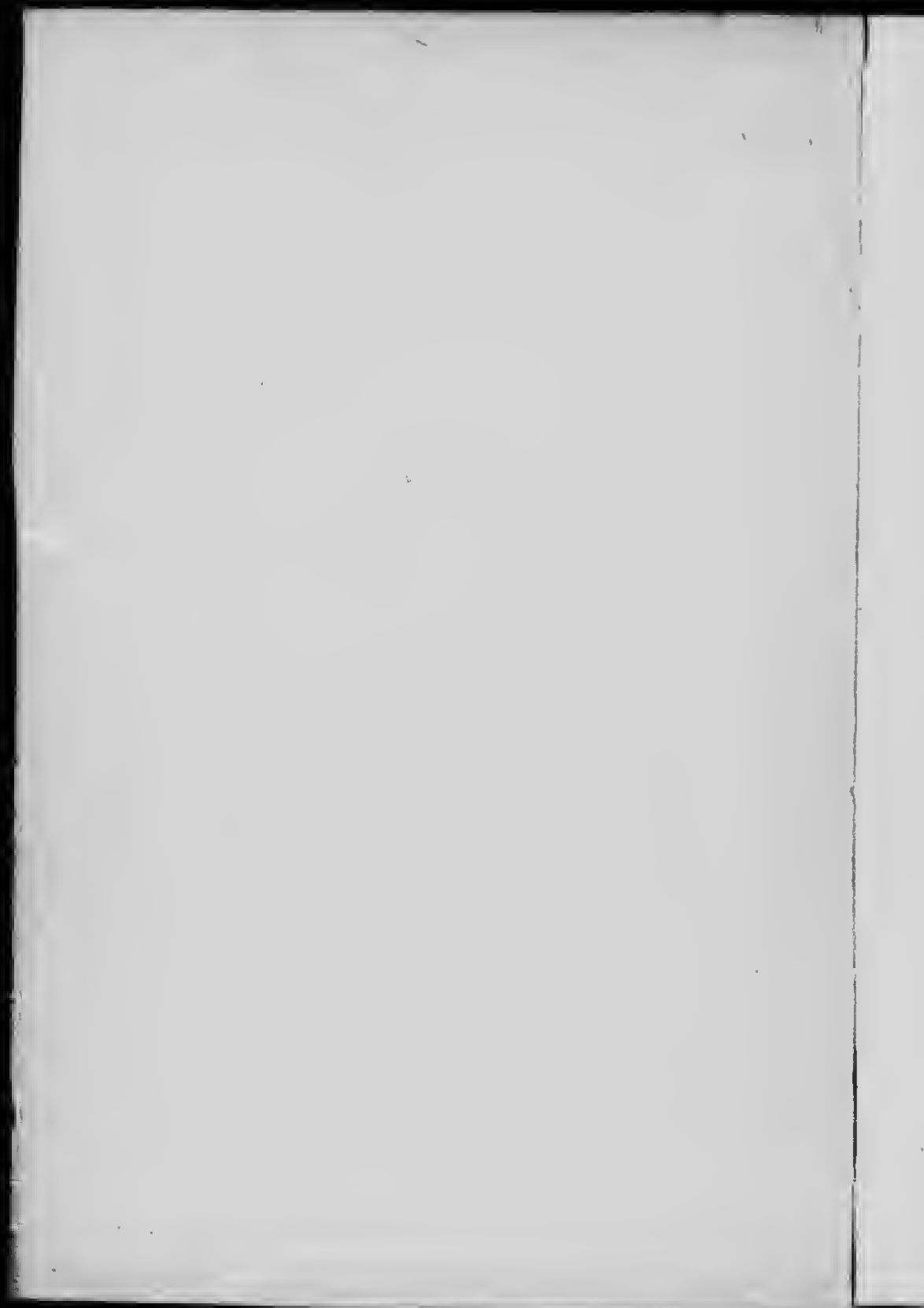
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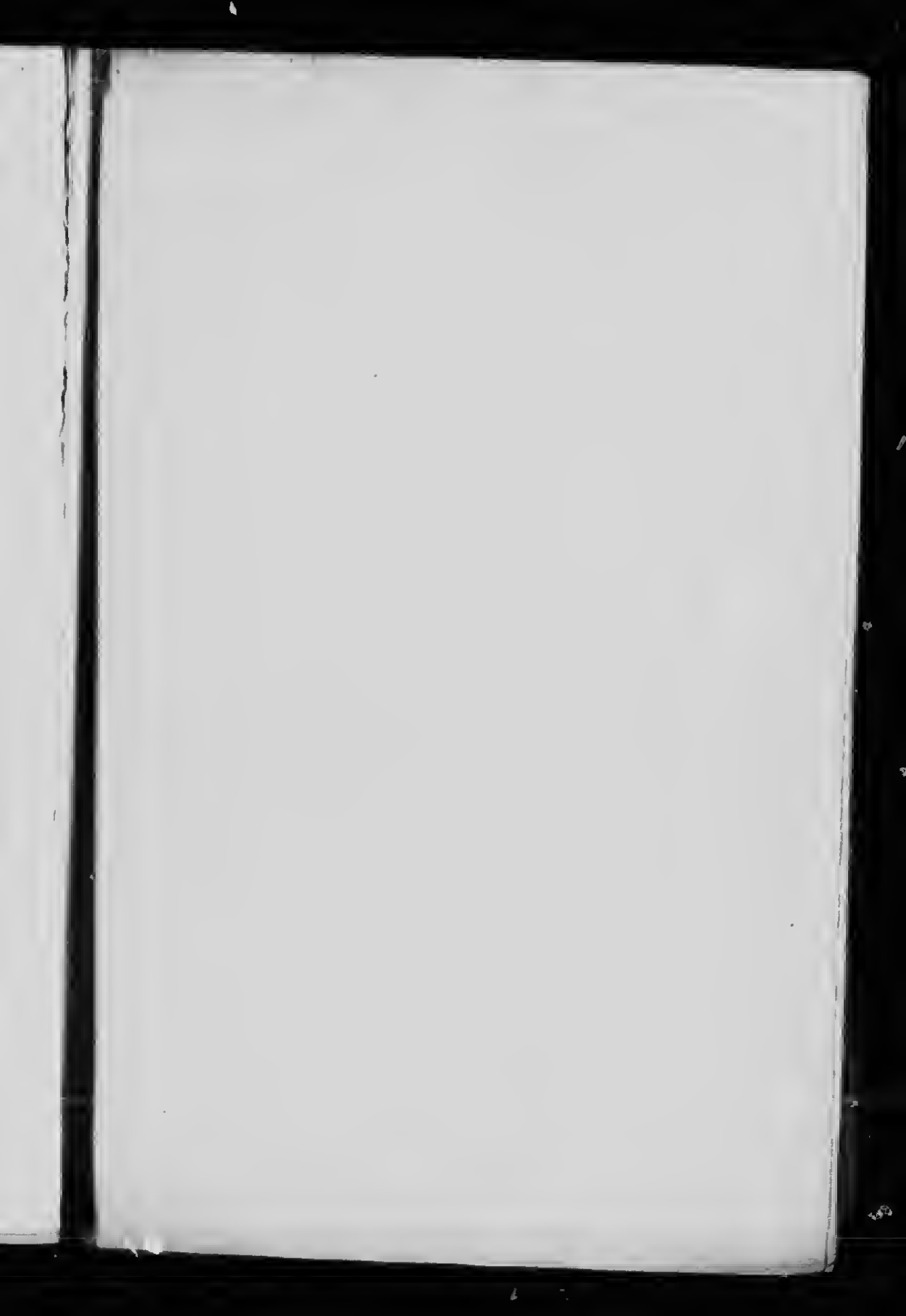
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COLIN

COLIN OF THE NINTH
CONCESSION

*A Tale of Scottish Pioneer Life
in Eastern Ontario*

BY

R. L. RICHARDSON

TORONTO
GEORGE N. MORANG & COMPANY, LIMITED

1903

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TO MY MOTHER

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

WITH the downfall of Napoleon, the mighty tempest that had begun with the French Revolution subsided and died away into a period of calm; but its effects were far-reaching. Into the vast, unbroken forest that lay for thousands of miles westward and northward from the Ottawa River, unpeopled save by a few wandering Algonquins, it had borne onwards a little colony of Scottish immigrants — disbanded soldiers from Wellington's armies and a number of their friends and neighbours, accompanied by their families. They set out to make a home for themselves in a land where they would be the owners of their own farmsteads. Entering the primeval forest, they selected their acres of trees and set to work to hew out a clearing and to plant their grain and garden seeds among the stumps. To the pioneers in other parts of the forest this district became known as "the Scotch Settlement." It forms to-day several townships in the eastern portion of the Canadian province of Ontario.

Here was developed a people whose sturdy life, as they spread over the Dominion, has done much to build

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

up the commerce and to develop the resources of this country.

If, in this chronicle of the remarkable events of which I was a deeply interested spectator, there shall be presented some pictures of the life of the settlers, with their lights and shades, with "their homely joys and destiny obscure" — pictures which can be easily recognised by all who have lived "near to Nature's heart"; if some Canadian hearts are warmed, and some Canadian fancies are pleased, as familiar faces and characteristics are delineated, then the author's reward will be complete.

The lives, the thoughts, and the conversation of the people were permeated by their religion. If all reference to this had been omitted from the pages which follow, a true picture of the community would not have been drawn.

The reader will, it is hoped, readily excuse any partiality an old man has shown in writing of his young friends, as well as the garrulousness that has at times led him off into discursive irrelevancies.

The events recorded in this chronicle occurred subsequent to the year 1840.

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PART I
AN UNNATURAL MAN

CHAPTER I

AULD PEGGY'S STORY

TEN years before this story opens, Auld Peggy had "taen tae th' rawd." She used to explain that "'twas no' that she should be regardit as a beggar or a puir limmer obleeged tae luv aff th' community, but jist that she wis a puir auld body wha's husband hed deserted her an' ran aff wi' a bold-faced hussy tae a place in the States that they ca'd Wast Constant [Wisconsin], at least sae she hed heerd. 'Twas no' but what she wis wullin' tae work tae support hersel' an' her twa faitherless bairns, but th' neighbours aye likit tull hae her ca' an' hae a crack wi' them, gie them th' news o' th' settlement, an' read th' cups f'r th' bonnie lassies; an' uf they slippit a hantle o' meal, breed, tea, or meat intil her bag as she wis gaun awa', it wisna charity, but jist guid fellowshp an' nabourliness."

So Auld Peggy reasoned, and she had so reasoned for ten years, until she had come to regard herself as

NOTE. — The pronunciation here indicated phonetically is that of the person reported, and should not be taken as invariably purely Scottish. Had it been so, the orthodox Scot's spelling would have been followed.

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

a legitimate charge upon the settlement. As the years passed, she even came to consider herself as a benefactress to the public, for "dld she no' gie each ane a cry as she passit"; and "dld she no' slit doon an' hae a crack wi' the women an' iassies, an' tell them a' that wis gaun on; an' uf she dld hae a cup o' tea wi' ane an' anither [Peggy's capacity for tea was infinite] or a wee bit drapple when it wis offered, whuch wis no' verra frequent, she'd like tac knaw wha's beesness it wis, f'r wis she no' a puir lane wuddow?"

It must be admitted that Auld Peggy was rather prone to exaggerate, and not a few foundationless yarns had the old woman been known to relate, but this was always excused on the ground that she felt news was expected from her, and that if there was none she had to invent it in order to furnish some *quid pro quo* for the anticipated present or cup of tea.

The constant companion of Auld Peggy on her rounds was a short, thick-set, chunky, coarse-haired, yellow dog, which she called Dugal. The unfortunate animal had only one eye remaining, and his tail had been docked so short as to render it problematical whether or not he ever possessed one. When questioned one day about Dugal's pedigree, Auld Peggy, after reflecting a moment or two, declared that he "wis a croas betwixt a Skye tARRIER an' a Dandy

AULD PEGGY'S STORY

Dinmont." Then she explained, "They Dandy Dinmonts is great doags, tarrible fierce ilke."

But Jock, the drover, declared that Dugal would flee from a tame white mouse, if the latter were running in the dog's direction. Jock's opinion being asked as to Dugal's breeding, that worthy, upon reflection, and after drawing a few deep whiffs from his pipe, declared that he "jedged that ar animal to be half mongrel and half dawg," although he "allowed that it wuz mostiy dawg. Yes, so fer as he could see, it wuz jest a dawg." Jock added that Dugal's tail had been cut so short that the man who performed the operation must have been uncertain as to which end of the animal he should return to Auld Peggy.

When Auld Peggy entered the home of the Widow McNabb on the morning with which this chronicle begins, it was evident that something very unusual had happened, for never before had the poor old body appeared in such a state of agitation. Well did Mrs. McNabb know that there was no use trying to hurry Peggy in the telling of her news, for true in this respect to a unversai characteristic of Scottish gossips, the more eager you seemed to be, the more secretive she became. Indeed, it was recorded of her that she never would unbosom herself at the toil-gate, "becase Mustress McPhairson had aince tell't her she wadna gie her a drap o' tea tui she gied th' fu' parteeculars o' Jessie

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

McLachlin's elopement wi' th' esh [ash] getherer frae th' Snaw Rawsd."

With that allowance for human nature which Mrs. McNabb displayed in an unusual degree, she rightly divined that the best plan was to allow Auld Peggy her own time; and while she and her bright-eyed, eager children, who had crowded about the old woman to learn the news, were naturally on the *qui vive*, it was deemed best to apply the necessary touchstone and take no risk of being disappointed.

Hastily Mrs. McNabb poked the smoky embers on the hearth, threw some fresh sticks on the fire, swung the kettle over the blaze, and in a few moments a cup of strong, steaming tea was set before the visitor, accompanied by a generous allowance of bread, butter, and scones.

During the preparation, the old body sat in her chair, swaying herself from side to side, and giving subdued utterances to her emotions. "Wae is me, wae is me, but 'tis a tarrible day f'r th' Scotch Settlement. O! but th' sicht wis awfu'!"

As she proceeded, the mood of her hearers changed, and with reason, from excited curiosity to awe and horror. The dreadful event she had to relate was one in which it was my lot to be involved. I learned and observed the facts for myself, for I was on the spot at the time, and had a special interest, as will

AULD PEGGY'S STORY

be seen later on, in knowing accurately all the particulars. Therefore, instead of reporting Auld Peggy's account, I shall assume the rôle of narrator myself, and I must begin with still earlier events which had occurred in England.

CHAPTER II

COLIN'S ENGLISH PARENTS

ON the death of our parents, my sister Eleanor and myself, then children, had been left to the guardianship of an uncle, a gentleman farmer in Warwickshire, England. Two small annuities comprised our whole fortune, and when, some years later, Edwin, eldest son of Lord Beaumont, was observed to pay marked attention to Eleanor, their acquaintance was frowned upon by both the earl and our guardian. When Edwin presented himself to Uncle Edward and asked for her hand, he was told that nothing of the sort would be thought of—at least for several years.

Two weeks later they fled together and went to the continent, Edwin hoping that in a few months his father would become reconciled to their union. The reconciliation was never effected. Four months after the marriage Edwin died of a fever caught in the city of Naples.

My sister returned to her guardian's roof, and there her son Colin was born. A year later she went to

COLIN'S ENGLISH PARENTS

reside at the country-seat of Lord Beaumont, who had represented that Colin should be brought up as became the heir to the title and estates. But after another two years, Lord Beaumont's brother, the next in line of succession, came forward with a startling statement. The marriage of Edwin and Eleanor had, he alleged, been celebrated by a man who was not in reality a clergyman, but an impostor, and the marriage was therefore invalid. The witnesses and the other evidence he produced seemed conclusive. Smitten to the heart, and distracted with grief for her son, Eleanor returned to our guardian's roof.

I was in London at the time. Eleanor was especially dear to me, and my heart bled for her when I received word of what had happened. Just one week later I received this message, "Come to me at once. — Eleanor."

I did so. Colin had been abducted, and my poor Eleanor was in a pitiful state of prostration. But inquiries had already been set on foot and advertisements published. We ascertained that a child answering to Colin's description had been in the custody of a man in Liverpool on board the emigrant ship *Oceanica*, bound for the port of Montreal.

Further than that we could learn nothing. I brought the news to my sister, and she entreated me to go at once to Montreal and restore her boy to

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

her. I prepared to depart the next day. Before we parted, she made me promise, in the most solemn and affecting manner, to care for her child.

The pledge was needless, for I believe I would cheerfully have died to relieve her terrible distress. I remember still, after the lapse of many years, the poignant grief, apprehension, and hope upon the sweet face that gazed into mine. But I gave my promise and I believe I have kept it.

Having arrived in Montreal, a week of enquiry resulted in learning that Colin had been seen with an English immigrant family named Wasby, who had left for "the Scotch Settlement." Having first written to my sister, I followed the Wasbys, going to Brockville Landing by boat, and the remainder of the way in an ox-cart. I found that a man named Wasby with a wife and family had indeed arrived, and that one of the children answered to the name of Colin.

CHAPTER III

WASBY'S HOME

I LEARNED that Wasby's coming had not been welcome. This, I found, was not owing to the aversion of the Scottish settlers for an intruder who could not claim the Land o' Cakes as his birthplace. They did not like his repulsive appearance and manner. Besides, it was known that while on shipboard, when crossing the Atlantic to Quebec, Wasby was detected in the theft of a valuable necklace from a little girl who had wandered into that part of the vessel where the emigrants were quartered. He escaped punishment by pleading the direst poverty, and pointing out the injury that prosecution would entail upon his wife and children. He had then removed to a somewhat isolated piece of land upon which the former proprietor had erected a small log house, and cleared a few acres.

The first thing for me to do was of course to find out whether or not the boy with Wasby was indeed my sister's son. If he were, I intended to arrest the man at once for abduction. But I would have to go to Tuffy's Corners, beyond Wasby's clearing, for a con-

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

stable, there heing no magistrate on the Ninth Concession, the centre of the Scotch Settlement, where were located the stone kirk, the schoolhouse, the toll-gate, and the hlacksmith's shop.

Early the next morning, after a walk of a couple of miles through "the hush," as the forest was invariably called, I reached the clearing. As I emerged from the wall of trees, and while I was yet at least thirty yards from the shanty, I heard Wasby's raucous voice shouting in rage: "Yeh won't, eh! Yeh'll do as I tell yeh, or by the gods I'll hreak every hone in yer body, that I will! Don't lie to me about Colin—hlast his eyes, I've a notion to knock out his brains!"

There was a movement in the shanty as if Washy were making for the object of his wrath, and I heard a voice say in tones which pierced my very soul: "For God's sake, Jerry, don't kill the lad! Don't you see how helpless and innocent he is? Kill me instead. I don't want to live, anyway."

The woman's reply seemed to inflame his rage yet further. I heard a rush, a scuffle, and piercing screams of terror.

In the tenth of a second I had decided that the best and quickest thing to do was to make Wasby aware of the presence of a stranger. I hroke out into a loud song, and between the sounds I could hear the voice in the shanty cease and a hurried hustling

WASBY'S HOME

follow. In another minute I was at the door knocking. Wasby called out, "Come in," and I entered.

The shanty consisted of but one room and an attic. The children had fled into the corner behind the ladder leading upstairs. Mrs. Wasby, a picture of wretchedness, was seated on a bench near the fireplace, her pale blue eyes faded and colourless, and her thin body but poorly covered with the frail garments which it appeared the enraged man had already almost torn from her body in the scuffle which I had interrupted.

Although of no apparent importance at this stage of the story, it is well to record that I noticed, standing in the corner near the fireplace, a number of long stakes, sharpened carefully at one end. They had evidently been placed there to dry, and had been standing for some time, as they were beginning to show traces of grime and dust.

Wasby had assumed an air of stolidity, and after a gruff "Mornin'," he proceeded to light his black, short-stemmed clay pipe with a live coal which he picked up from the fireplace, placing it in the bowl and pulling away vigorously until his face was enveloped in clouds of pungent smoke. Short, thick-set, and rather corpulent, his physique seemed fitted for the work of a settler, but his head and face showed a nature that was ignorant, brutal, and even bestial, and his

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

countenance was seamed with the record of violent emotions.

Being obliged to offer some excuse for entering the shanty, I said: "I am on my way to Tuffy's Corners, and I called to ask which Concession would be the best to take. I was told that the roads were very bad on the Twelfth Concession, and I don't want to stick to the town line, as it would take me a long distance out of my way. I thought you would know if the corduroy road on the Tenth Concession was fit to travel on, because if it is, it would save me a long roundabout in getting to the Corners."

"'F I was you, I'd folly the town-line," said Wasby. "It'll take yeh some longer, but ye'll get there quicker'n if yeh went over the cordery road. I'm told it is in bad shape sence the rains," and he rubbed a rough hand over his bristly, stubby beard, and ejected a mouthful of tobacco juice, which by sheer force he drove to the other end of the apartment and sent spattering against the wall. "Keeps the missus busy a-cleanin' up after me, it do," said Wasby, with a sinister grin.

As we continued our inconsequent talk about the roads, the children, realising that all immediate prospect of danger had passed, and that in the presence of a stranger there was comparative safety, gradually dispersed from the corner behind the ladder.

WASBY'S HOME

Poor little Colin! As I recognised him and looked at his thin, soiled face, I thought of Eleanor. I patted him kindly on the head, and he repaid me with a glance so sweet that it seemed as if Eleanor herself were gazing through his eyes. To avoid suspicion I spoke kindly to the other children also, talking meanwhile to Wasby about such commonplaces as I could think of.

I did not take my leave until I felt that the storm in the enraged man's breast had subsided, and that the woman and children were safe for the present. I crossed the field of stumps to the west of the shanty, in order to mislead Wasby, but as soon as I was out of sight I made a *détour* and struck the corduroy road, as I had originally intended. Little did I think, as I went, that a terrible tragedy was to occur in that miserable room within a few hours. Had I suspected for an instant that Colin was so close to fearful danger, I would at once have attempted his rescue.

CHAPTER IV

A HORRIBLE CRIME

I REACHED the Corners that night and obtained legal authority to release Colin, also a constable and a warrant for Wasby's arrest on a charge of abduction. We set out next morning at daybreak. As we approached the Wasby clearing, on which the shanty stood, I noticed smoke rising above the treetops. I quickened my steps, and in a moment found myself in sight of the shanty, which had been almost reduced to a mass of charred logs.

About the scene stood a group of awe-stricken settlers, whose faces betokened great agitation. I was informed that the shanty had caught fire in the morning, during the absence of Wasby, who had gone to the bush at daylight to fell trees. According to his statement, when he returned for his breakfast he found the house burned, and in the cellar he discovered the charred bodies of his wife and children.

Colin, then, had perished. My poor, poor Eleanor! How could that bruised reed bear this! I felt damned

A HORRIBLE CRIME

forever that I should have been so near at hand and yet have failed to avert this calamity.

"Where is Colin's body?" I asked.

"Oh, Colin's not dead!" exclaimed several neighbours standing about. "The little lad was saved."

"Colin not dead!" I cried, scarcely comprehending the words.

"No, the boy is alive and well, and is now at Dooley the blacksmith's. The good wife took him home," was the answer I received.

Before leaving the tragic scene we thoroughly examined the surroundings. The bodies of the unfortunate victims were frightfully charred, and on the blackened walls near the fireplace, which had not fallen, were finger marks, which some of the spectators thought were made by the victims in trying to escape.

I could see by the remarks dropped by the men that there was no suspicion of foul play in their minds, and I resolved to say nothing for the present about the scene in the shanty the previous morning.

The shocking tragedy, as might naturally be expected, created a profound sensation in the settlement, and for that matter throughout the entire colony, for nothing so frightful was known to have occurred before in Upper Canada. No doubt the grewsome details were exaggerated in proportion to the distance from the scene; but only those who have lived in a

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country place can appreciate the nature of the impression made by such an event. This impression was deepened into horror when the sequel became known; and to this very day there are hundreds of homes in which the old people relate the story to awe-stricken young people. The event became a landmark in the popular calendar, and the year of "The Burnin'" was remembered like the year of the "Blg Storm," the year of the "Great Plague," or the year of the "Big Flood."

I found Colln safe in Mrs. Dooley's house. Singularly enough, he was sound asleep when I reached there. Doubtless, on his arriving at a quiet haven, excitement had given way to the weariness caused by days of ill-usage and nervous strain.

When the child awoke, the effects of his stay with the Wasbys were still only too obvious, yet we gladly found that with good treatment his former health would soon be restored, and he would be ready in a week or so for the fatigue of the journey to England.

Fate, however, interposed. Two days later Mrs. Dooley told me that Colin had been repeating some strange words. "Come and hear him for yourself," she added.

We found him in the yard near the back door playing at piling up the sand, and talking to himself: "Jerry

A HORRIBLE CRIME

till [kill] Mammy. Jerry till Johnnie. Jerry till Betty. Jerry till Wille."

Then he would pause a moment or two and go over the recollection again. Sometimes he would mention the instrument with which the act was accomplished, as for instance: "Jerry till Mammy wif 'e stick. Jerry till Betty wif 'e stick. Jerry till Johnnie wif 'e stick."

Mrs. Dooley exchanged significant glances with me as we listened to the boy, and a dreadful possibility began to dawn upon us both. It could not be that the boy was soliloquising idly. "Jerry" was Wasby's Christian name, by which his wife addressed him, and we knew that Colin would have heard the other children calling Mrs. Wasby "Mammy." The other names he repeated were those of some of Wasby's children who were victims of the terrible tragedy.

After we had listened to Colin, we concluded that it would be well to interrogate the child. He replied: "Jerry did till Mammy, and Jerry did till Betty, and Jerry did till Johnnie," and so on, going over the entire family.

The impression that had been slowly dawning upon me that a frightful crime had been committed became a terrible conviction, as I listened to Colin's words.

The authorities deemed my suspicion too horrible to admit of belief, but they were completely aroused,

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

and it was determined to make a thorough examination of the Wasby premises.

The shanty was searched and found to exhibit evidence that a crime had been committed. On the same day, those who had undertaken the work of preparing the bodies for burial discovered marks of violence. Other evidence was brought to light. Wasby, who had meanwhile displayed a revolting callousness and brutality in conversation and action, and who had finally gone on a drunken debauch, was arrested on a charge of murder; and I was ordered by the authorities to remain in the country with Colin until the trial was over, our evidence as witnesses being required.

CHAPTER V

MRS. MCNABB

I WROTE to Eleanor, telling her how I had recovered Colin safe and sound, explaining why we could not return at once, and suggesting that if she had gained sufficient strength, she might come over and wait with Colin. In return I received a reply from my uncle, saying that Eleanor had not recovered from the shock of Colin's abduction. She had read with joy my letter telling of his recovery, and illogically, perhaps, but very naturally, had been filled with hope that her marriage would one day be proved as valid by the law of man as it was in the sight of Heaven. This temporary exaltation had been followed by a physical reaction, and she had passed quietly and peacefully away, expressing her confidence and trust in my care, under God's providence, of Colin's future. Keenly as I felt the loss, I could hardly regret it for her sake. The future that would have lain before her could not have been bright.

I began then seriously to think of plans for the future. There seemed to be little reason why we

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

should return to England. No prospects lay before me there, and Colin's welcome in my guardian's home might be very grudging. The whole countryside there knew of the charge brought against his mother's marriage.

Besides, I had become acquainted with an estimable woman in the settlement, under whose care I was anxious to place Colin. She was Mrs. McNabb, a widow, with two girls and three boys of her own.

The difficulty was how to manage the affair. I knew she was poor, and that the burden of a mortgage weighed heavily upon her. She could not afford to take the child without recompense; yet I knew already from what I had seen of her, that if I offered her money as an inducement, she might refuse to take him at all. Her care for a child was not a purchasable commodity that could be bought and sold, and her poverty made her even more sensitive and fastidious upon such a point. I called at Mrs. McNabb's house, and entered into conversation with her touching the events which had so startled the community.

"And little Colin," I said, when the conversation turned upon him, "he is now at Dooley the blacksmith's, but I scarcely think it a suitable place for him; the boys are so rough, and Colin is such a sensitive child."

"Aye," said the widow, "that he is, and I confess

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that the very objection you have named to Colin's remaining there has occurred to me. If the good Lord had but blessed me with enough of this world's goods, I would have been glad to take the boy into my own home. But the winter has been hard upon us, following the crop failure of last year, and the boys and I have not been able to earn sufficient money to pay the interest on the mortgage."

"How do you manage to carry the mortgage?" I ventured to ask.

"Well," she said, "it was always poor Duncan's ambition to lift it, and when he found that he was stricken with a disease which he knew was fatal, the sorest trial that he had to endure was that he must go and leave the mortgage unlifted. When he called the children in to give them his dying blessing, he charged the boys to struggle on with stout hearts to keep the interest paid, in order that the homestead might be preserved, and God, he said, would in His own good time provide a way to pay it off. But why should I complain?" she went on. "Indeed, I do not complain, for God has always been good to me, and I am ready to bear testimony that He has kept His promise regarding the widow."

She added thoughtfully: "If my boys were but two years older, I think it would be easier. Wallace says he is old enough now to go out to work. He has been

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

anxious for a year or two to go to the lumber shanties with the other lads, but I tremble to let him go. Not that I fear he will fall into evil habits, for I think the foundation of a sound character has been laid, but I am fearsome for some harm to him, he is so young and inexperienced. But he says he will go next winter anyway, for he insists that he must keep his promise to his father and keep the interest on the mortgage paid.

"Then there is Willie, the next boy," continued the widow. "Although he is but fourteen coming Christmas, he is just as anxious to help as Wallace, and he declares that if his eldest brother goes to the bush he will go also. Indeed, Mr. Ross, I am blessed with good children, and I have no doubt that if their lives are spared, they will pay off the mortgage some day."

"Perhaps I could help you with the interest," I suggested. "I happen to have a little money at present, and if it would be of any assistance I would willingly let you have it, and you and the boys can give me whatever interest you think fair, and make your payments to me whenever you find it convenient."

I added hurriedly: "You see, Mrs. McNabb, it's like this. The little lad Colin is, but for me, homeless and friendless. I would be very grateful to you if Colin could be brought up in your home. If you would allow me to see to it that this would not add to the burden now upon your shoulders, I would be thankful. I am

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not unmindful of the great additional care and responsibility that another boy in your home would entail."

Mrs. McNabb hesitated a moment. "Well, well," she said decisively and heartily, "it is perhaps the hand of the Lord. Who knows but He is just trying me! I would prove unworthy to turn my back upon the child. Bring little Colin to me."

And so it came about that Colin was taken to the home of the widow to live. The issues involved proved far-reaching, and whether or not the widow was rewarded for her faith and self-sacrifice is a question which must be left to be answered as the story proceeds.

I took the earliest opportunity of attending to the interest on the widow's mortgage and so set her mind at rest upon that score. I also procured a good supply of clothes for little Colin, and did not omit some things for the widow. I had to handle a matter of that kind with the greatest delicacy and diplomacy. Mrs. McNabb was a very proud, independent woman, in the best sense of the words, and would as soon have thought of accepting assistance which might be regarded as charity, as of cutting her hand off.

This matter being settled, I purchased a farm in the neighbourhood. As time went on, I formed ties and associations in the settlement, and excepting such visits as I may have made to other places, I remained there

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

permanently; though, as lumbering was then the chief industry in that part of the country, I, like many other farmers, was frequently absent from home for months, in lumber-mills or in logging-camps. I became, in other words, one of the settlers, going in and out of their homes, sharing their joys and sorrows, sympathising with them in trouble, and rejoicing with them in prosperity.

In the meantime, however, came Wasby's trial, one of the most sensational events that had ever occurred in Upper Canada. It is not my purpose to give the details, which can be found in the records of the county court where the case was tried, but simply to narrate the part that little Colin and I had in it. Then the reader will be invited to contemplate more cheerful scenes, and participate in events better calculated to inspire pleasant reflections and sensations.

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AULD PEGGY

CHAPTER VI

GREAT DAYS FOR AULD PEGGY

NEEDLESS to say, the greatest excitement prevailed in the settlement during the summer months that intervened between Wasby's arrest and his trial. All sorts of wild and even absurd stories were circulated. But all the narrators were far out-distanced by Auld Peggy. She positively revelled in the sensation and in all conceivable details connected with the crime. The event was a veritable windfall for her, — nay, a harvest; and she regarded as particularly well and justly earned all donations that came to her that summer.

“Losh me, Mrs. McNabb,” she said on one occasion, “but did ye hear the latest? It's no' but what Ah wis astonished mesel', an' couldna believe Mustress McKinnon when she tell't me, but me an' Dugal went oor-sel's an' investigatit, an' we can vouch f'r ivery word o't.

“Weel, ye see, it's like thus. Mustress McKinnon tell't us [“us” meant Auld Peggy and Dugal] that a strange auld man hed been seen nicht an' mornin' set-tin' on th' logs o' th' Wasby shanty an' talkin' tae himsel' aboot th' end o' th' warld, an' that th' burnin'

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

wis foretold in Scripture as ane o' they tarrible things that wad come tae pass afore th' warld passit awa.

"Weel, th' morn's mornin' me an' Dugal daundered awa doon tae th' Twalfth Concession tae see f'r oorsel's, an' what dae ye think we foon? Weel, sure enough, we foon th' auld loon seated on th' logs, an' we hed a lang crack wi' hum. It wad hae made yer fleesh creep tae hear hum talk.

"He tell't us that th' deil hed formed a partnership wi' Wasby, an' that th' crime wis but th' first instalment, an' that afore lang anither an' more tarrible event wad happen in th' settlement, somethin' that wad shake th' verra foundations o' society [not for nothing had Auld Peggy listened weekly to pulpit eloquence] and cause deep consternation throughout th' warld. He tell't us too that Wasby wis Beelzebub or Anti-Christ, an' that his meesion on airth wis tae destroy th' Protestant releegion an' turn us all into Papishes. Whiles as th' auld loon talkit tae us, his face an' form wad change, an' ane time he frichtened us tarrible like by turning humsel' intil a wild animal, th' verra image o' ane o' they pictures on th' wa' at th' toll-gate; I think they ca' it a tang-o-rankin [orang-outang]. When we were aboot tae rin, he ca'd after us no' tae be frichtened, as he wad dae us nae hairm, his meesion bein' jist tae warn th' sinfu' tae flee frae th' wrath tae come."

GREAT DAYS FOR AULD PEGGY

Here is another of Auld Peggy's yarns just as she told it:—

“Losh me, Mustress McNabb, an' did ye hear th' news? Weel, it's like thus. As we [Dugal and Peggy] wis a-comin' through th' Black Swamp beyant Duffy's Corners th' nicht afore last, when we wis in th' middle o't, an' th' nicht wis as black as a wolf's mouth, we wis stoppit by a tall maun wearin' a robe like ane o' they Papish priests, an' he demandit frae us whaur we wis gaun, an' what wis oor errant. We wis gey frichtened an' trimmled frae heed tae fit, sae that it tuk oor breeth awa, an' it wis some time afore we could whusper that we wis jist puir Auld Peggy an' Dugal, on oor way hame frae travellin' th' rawd syne early mornin', an' that uf he didna mind we wad be gled uf he wad jist let us pass on tae oor hames an' dae us nae hairm, as th' twa bairns wis awaitin' us an' must be gey hungry, f'r they hed hed naethin' tae eat syne th' mornin'.

“Weel, th' figure startled us sae that we trimmled a' th' more, hum declarin' that he wis Wasby in fleesh an' bluid. Noo we kent gey weel that Wasby wis lockit up in th' coonty jail an' couldna be at lairge. Sae we jist wis preparin' tae surrender whan he tell't us no' tae be frichtened as he wad dae us nae hairm. He then tell't us that he hed kill't th' puir woman an' a' her bairns, an' that it hed been his intention tae kill wee Coalin as weel, an' that uf th' deil helpit hum yet, he wad hae th'

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

lad's life. Sae that, Mustress McNabb, I'd advise ye tae keep a shairp look-oot on th' lad, an' no allow hum tae wander frae th' hoose sae lang as yon tarrible fiend is above groon'. Wasby also tell't us that uf they hangit hum he wadna dee, but wad contlnue tae haunt th' settlement an' work evil tae a' th' settlers."

After a pause Auld Peggy said, "Ah feart as much, f'r Ah suspeekit th' verra first moment Ah plt eyes upon Wasby that he wls a bawd ane an' bawd wad come o' hum." She continued: "An' noo Ah'm certain o't, an' Ah'm fear't lt wull no' end tull we are a' wiplt oot frae th' face o' th' airth. Hoo weel it wull be f'r us a' tae be ready tae gang, whan th' summons comes!"

Auld Peggy always deemed it best to Import a spice of religious sentiment into her conversation with Mrs. McNabb. With all her mental shortcomings and superstition, the old woman possessed an amount of cunning and an acquaintance with human nature that stood her in good stead with the settlers, and won for her many a loaf of bread, bar of home-made soap (of the personal application of which, to speak the truth, she seldom availed herself), ladle of meal, or "chunk" of meat. She understood, perhaps as did no other inhabitant, their prejudices and peculiarities, and played upon their hobbies as willingly as Muckle Peter, the precen-tor, upon his bagpipes, after he had had a sufficiently

GREAT DAYS FOR AULD PEGGY

copious indulgence "at his bitters." And it used to be said of Muckle Peter that he could take fourteen glasses of whiskey, and after he got five more he had had enough, and could then play anything from "The Campbells are Comin'" to "Darlin' Daisy Dean."

CHAPTER VII

THE TRIAL

IT would be superfluous to say that there was but one item upon the criminal docket that attracted general attention when the fall assizes opened. That item was, of course, the charge of murder preferred by the crown against Jeremiah Wasby. The settlers flocked to the county town from hamlets and farms for many miles about.

A lawyer of wide repute had been sent down from the capital of Upper Canada to act as crown prosecutor; and Wasby being unable to employ legal assistance for himself, another able lawyer was instructed by the judge to act as counsel for the prisoner. A plea of "not guilty" being entered, the trial began.

As a witness for the crown I was detained, together with Mrs. Dooley and little Colin, in a room adjoining that where the court sat. I was the first witness called, and I still remember vividly the scene that I beheld as I entered the chamber.

When I took my stand in the witness box, Wasby scowled and darted a malignant and vindictive glance

THE TRIAL

at me, and then turning away his head, gazed at the judge.

As the reader is already in possession of the facts I had to relate, I need not repeat my evidence. I may mention, however, that when I spoke of the terror visible on the faces of the children when I entered the shanty that morning after hearing the squabble, and of the sharpened stakes that I had seen near the fireplace, the fear manifest on the prisoner's face was most noticeable. I was cross-examined closely on what I had overheard as I approached Wasby's shanty the day I visited him, and then I was allowed to sit down. Mrs. Dooley gave evidence of the marks of ill-treatment she had observed upon Colin when he was taken to her house.

The county constable next testified to his discoveries at the ill-fated shanty, and produced one of the stakes, the sharpened end of which was still covered with clotted blood and singed hair, thus telling its mute but awful story. Other evidence was brought to show that marks of violence found on the bodies had been inflicted before they were exposed to the fire.

When Colin's name was called by the crier, a murmur ran through the courtroom, which was hushed to silence as Mrs. McNabb entered, leading the child by the hand. She placed him upon a chair, and as the child faced the great crowd of rough-looking and coarsely clad men, I feared that he would break down. But he was

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naturally a brave child, and I had recently observed evidences of that self-mastery which his mother had possessed.

Just as the lawyer for the crown rose to question Colin, there was a bustle in the direction of the prisoner's dock, and the constable told the judge that the prisoner asked to be allowed to kiss the child. The instant the request was made Colin uttered a cry of dissent, but he was promptly assured by the judge, and by Mrs. McNabb as well, that he need not comply.

What prompted the prisoner to prefer such a remarkable request, no one could guess. His countenance at the time bore a sinister expression most incongruous with the wish he expressed. When the excitement occasioned by this strange incident had subsided, the examination proceeded.

In his childish voice, and with his eyes fixed upon the dock, Colin repeated the words already quoted: "Jerry till Mammy. And Jerry till Betty. And Jerry till Johnnie." And so on, until all the names of the victims were mentioned.

"Who is Jerry?" asked the prosecuting attorney.

"Dat is him," said little Colin, pointing to the prisoner.

"Why do you call him Jerry?" again queried the lawyer.

"Mammy said he was Jerry," answered Colin.

THE TRIAL

"What did he kill Mammy and Betty and the others with?" asked the lawyer.

"He till 'em wif de stick," answered Colin.

"Can you show me the stick?" asked the lawyer.

The blackened implement was lying upon the table, and pointing to it, Colin said, "Dat is it."

After little Colin had told in his simple way how the others had been killed, the lawyer handed the youthful witness over to the opposing counsel.

"And now, my child," said that gentleman, "will you tell the court why the prisoner did not kill you, and how it comes that you, and you only, are left to tell the tale?"

I could see that from the tone of the lawyer the child fancied that he had done something to offend. The judge, who was a kindly man of ripe experience, seeing the danger of a break-down on Colin's part, intervened and said gently, "My child, tell the man how it was that you were not killed with the others."

"Jerry holded me up in his hands," said Colin, "and hurted me awful, an' tol' me he till me like de ozzers. I said, 'Pease don't till 'ittle Tolin,' an' den he jist drop me to de floor and I runned away."

Cross-examination merely elicited a repetition of the same answer. The child could not be led to vary it in the slightest detail, despite the ingenuity of the lawyer.

A deep hush prevailed while the boy was on the stand,

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

and many a scalding tear trickled down bronzed and swarthy cheeks as the child's voice related how he had come to be saved from the fate intended for him.

This concluded the evidence of the crown, and the defence had none to offer. It was impossible, owing to Wasby's conduct during the day of the tragedy, to attempt to prove an alibi. The counsel for the defence therefore contented himself with putting the best face he could on the prisoner's case in his address to the jury. The counsel for the crown briefly outlined the irresistible evidence, and the judge gave an able summing up.

There was a great stir among the spectators when the jury retired. In an hour and a half the jurors filed into the courtroom, and after the roll had been called, the clerk said, "Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict?" The foreman rose and announced that they had agreed.

"How say you, gentlemen, — do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty of the crime charged?"

"We find him guilty," said the foreman.

Instantly a shout of approval went up from the rough audience. The judge commanded silence and threatened to clear the room if instant obedience were not vouchsafed. His lordship then thanked the jury for their verdict, in which he said he entirely concurred, and discharged them.

THE TRIAL

"Let the prisoner stand up," said the judge, gravely.

Wasby, who seemed to be in a dazed stupor from the instant the terrible word "guilty" had reached his ears, was raised to his feet by the constables.

The judge proceeded solemnly: "Jeremiah Wasby, after a fair trial, in which every opportunity was afforded you of proving your innocence, twelve of your fellow-men have found you guilty of perhaps the most heartless and brutal crime that has ever been committed in this colony. The sentence of this court," continued the judge, placing the black cap upon his head, "is that you be confined in the common jail till the thirteenth day of November ensuing, and that upon that day you be taken to the place of execution in the jail-yard, and that you there be hanged by the neck until you be dead. And may God have mercy upon your soul!"

Wasby was led from the courtroom and securely lodged in the cell of the stone jail reserved for prisoners under sentence of death. The crowd then quickly dispersed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONFESSION

THE trial was concluded on the twenty-sixth of August, so that the condemned criminal had only about eleven weeks to live. I am unable to say that he faced death well. The wretched man begged abjectly for mercy, and to every one who went within conversing distance he protested his innocence, and daily recited varying explanations of the death of his victims.

There was a "religious" character in the settlement named Nathan Larkins, who professed to have been a local preacher in the old land before emigrating to Canada. He made an effort to "carry the Gospel," as he put it, to the doomed man's cell. To him the murderer made a profession of conversion. Upon every possible occasion thereafter the old preacher loved to refer to Wasby as a "brand plucked from the burnin'."

The night before the fatal thirteenth of November Nathan spent with the prisoner, and after he had left, in the early morning, the officers entered the cell and prepared the prisoner for the scaffold.

Wasby, it seems, had never quite given up hope of a reprieve. He fancied that his professed conversion

THE CONFESSION

might help him. When, however, he realised that there was no chance for him, he broke forth into the wildest fury.

The horrified guards did what they could to quiet him, and spoke as kindly as possible under the circumstances. One of them ventured the remark that, if he were innocent, as he claimed, he need not fear death.

"Innocent, did you say!" shouted the frantic man. "Innocent!" and he laughed hideously. "No, I'm not innocent! I'm only sorry I did not crush the lie out of the other brat too! If I had got him into my clutches in the courtroom when I asked to kiss him, I'd have made short work of him."

As he gradually grew calmer, the guards, wishing to induce him to confess, encouraged him to continue.

"Yes," said Wasby, at last, "I had been on a spree. And when I was alone in the bush, choppin', I got to thinkin' o' hell, and the devil himself came to me in the form of a black man and urged me to kill Colin, and my wife, and the other children. I asked him how I would do it. He told me to sharpen some hardwood stakes and dry them in the shanty till the time came. He actually held the stakes for me while I sharpened them, and it was with one of those stakes that I killed the family. The devil in the form of a black man visited me every day and urged me to it, so that at last I resolved to do as he said.

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"When I returned from the bush for breakfast that mornin', my wife had overslept herself and was still in bed. I flew into a rage, and the devil seemed to take possession o' me. My poor wife was soon done for, and I started in on the children. By the time I finished each child, I grew more sick and shaky, and when Colin's turn had come I could hardly stand. I don't know why I didn't take him first, I'm sure. He looked into my face and begged me not to kill him. Then I was clean stuck. I sat down a minute. When I came to myself, Colin was gone.

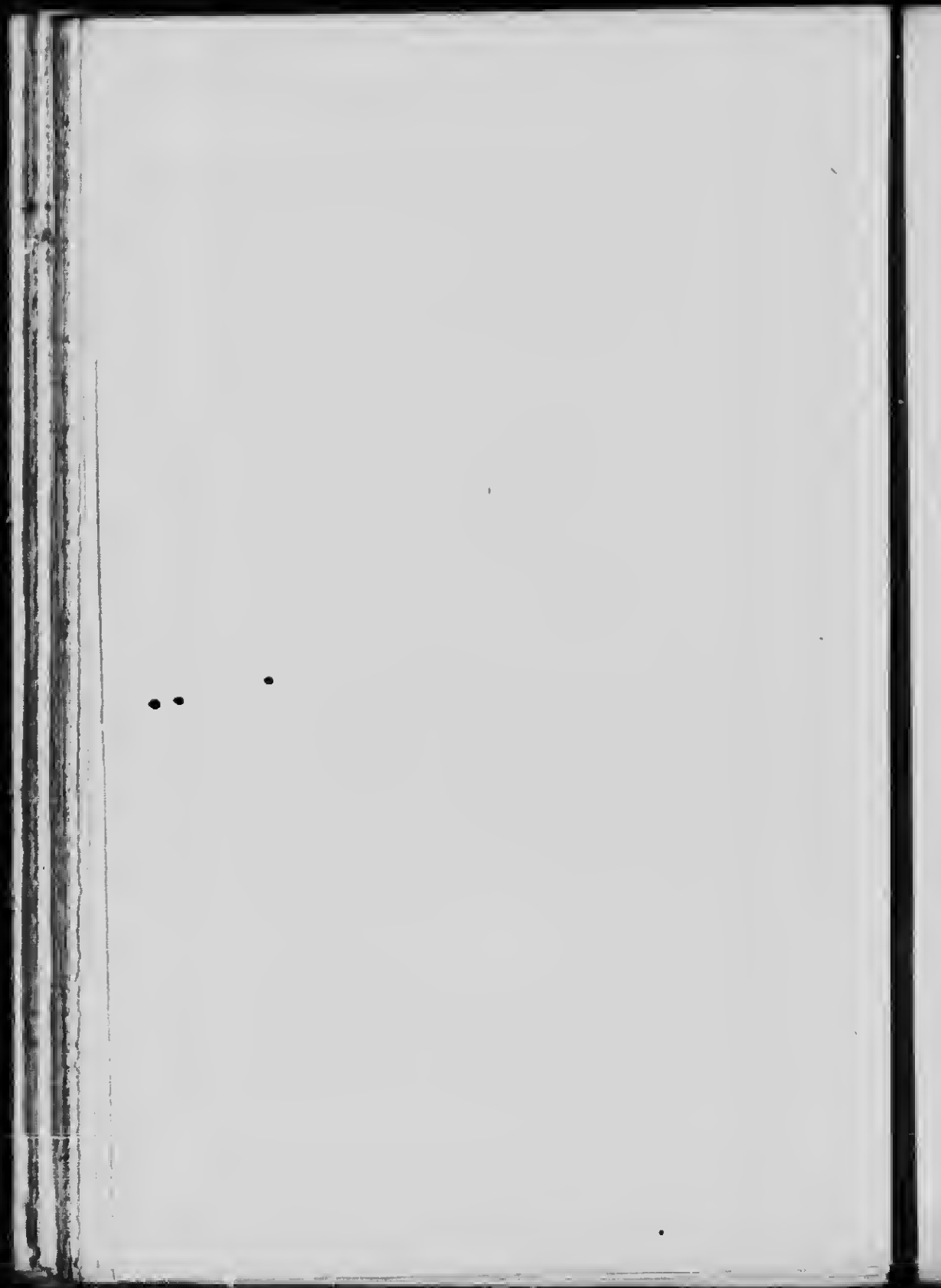
"I set the shanty on fire, thinkin' the bodies would be burned, and there would be no evidence agin me. Then I hurried towards the bush, so nobody passin' could see me. By and by I came back and the shanty was pretty well burned, but the bodies didn't burn. So I threw them into the cellar. But first, I drew their hands several times down the charred wall, to make people think they had tried to fight their way out of the place."

After a magistrate had been called and this confession had been written down, the sheriff ordered the execution to proceed. When it was all over and the doctor pronounced the body to be dead, it was cut down. I must record that it was rudely seized by the mob and hurriedly drawn and quartered. This dreadful act was of course perpetrated to show the popular contempt of the horrible crime.

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PART II
LIFE IN THE SCOTCH SETTLEMENT



CHAPTER IX

GOARDEN

THE succeeding winter was one of the most severe that had ever been endured in the settlement. The temperature often went down to thirty-five and even forty degrees below zero. Jock, the drover, declared that the mercury had got so low in the town thermometer that it fell through. Jock also asserted that, while crossing a lake near the "dipo," on his way to the "shanty" that winter, the frost was so severe that it froze up the words of himself and his companions. "It wuz all right, however," he added, "fer in the spring, on our way back, the language wuz jest thawin', an' we could hear the words comln' out uv the air ali round us."

Not to be outdone, Goarden Weaver, known throughout the settlement as "the hired man," declared it was so cold in the "shanty" (the logging camp) that he used to trap foxes by just turning his bob-sleighs upside down and putting grease on the steel shoeing.

"Many a mornin'," he asserted, "I found es many es seven foxes caught by their tongues, an' offenses an'

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offens I found a string uv tongues thet th' foxes hed left in their efforts t' escape." But it should not be forgotten that Goarden was admitted to be almost as big a liar as Sam Latt, concerning whom it used to be said that, of the three liars between the Seventh and Thirteenth Concessions, Goarden was one while Latt was the other two. There was, however, said to be "one Pepper, back of Hornersville," who could hold his own in this respect.

The reason I recall the winter as being so severe is because it was the first occasion on which Mrs. McNabb's eldest boy, Wallace, had "gone to the shanty" with the gang. He was a sturdy, alert lad, and, although quite young, was strong, and able to hold his own with the best of the men.

Many a night, while the wind was howling dismally and rattling the window frames of the old log house, his mother would sit quietly knitting, thinking of her first-born, and wondering how he was faring in the shanty with the rough men. How often have I seen her pause in her work, lay aside her spectacles and close her eyes, while she offered a silent prayer to Him who was able to take care of her boy quite as well in the distant shanty as He could were he with his mother on the farm.

Wallace returned in the spring, safe and sound, and as he deposited the sixteen pounds he had received for

GOARDEN

his winter's work in his mother's hand, and told her to see that the next instalment of interest on the mortgage was paid, I never saw a prouder looking boy. Indeed, I could have given three cheers for him myself, for very admiration. Contact with the rough, coarse men who were generally to be found in the shanties in those early days did not appear to have in any way injured the lad or dulled the fine edge of his natural modesty and good breeding. This pleased the mother more than anything else. She would rather have had the mortgage foreclosed than that one of her sons should impair his character or lose his self-respect.

Wallace did not, of course, accompany "the drive" to Quebec, as a number of the shantymen often did, in the spring. He returned home as soon as the desired quantity of logs had been cut and deposited on the ice-locked streams.

Among those whose custom it had always been to follow the drive of logs to Quebec was Goarden Weaver, "the hired man," and it was amusing to see with what an air of disdain he regarded his old friends upon his return to the settlement, about June. As he always followed the most extreme shanty fashion, his attire usually included a pair of long boots, which were studded with heavy nails and furnished with copper toes, red leather tops, and lugs hanging loosely on either side. Into the boots were tucked a pair of corduroy

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

trousers, generally worn loose and "bagged" down. They were supported by a red, white, and blue sash, which Goarden had tied about his waist in a specially constructed shanty knot. A highly coloured, fancy flannel shirt with a reversible bosom enabled him to make a "lightning change," and so provoke the envy of the "young bloods," whose custom it was to meet nightly at the post-office, or at Dooley's blacksmith shop, to swap stories and talk about the "gurls" to their hearts' content.

A description of Goarden's costume would be incomplete without a glimpse at his head-gear. When purchased at Quebec it must have been a broad-brimmed hat, but by the time Goarden had worked the crown into a peak resembling a pagoda, and had distorted the brim into a fantastic scoop shovel, he seemed to regard the cup of his happiness over his physical appearance as full. A red bandanna handkerchief tucked beneath his sash completed the outfit. He scorned to wear a coat or vest, — garments, he declared, worn only by fops.

Thus togged out Goarden thought himself, if not absolutely irresistible, at least more nearly so than any other swain in that or the adjoining townships. He naturally deemed himself the "boss masher" at the local dances, or "sprees" as they were sometimes called.

GOARDEN

As he had learned to "call off" in the shanty, where men with a handkerchief tied around one arm did duty as "gurls," he considered himself at these functions second only in importance to the fiddler, and on many occasions, if not duly humoured, was known to threaten to break up a dance by leaving abruptly. Once he carried out his threat, but he suffered so in prestige that he never repeated the mistake, for "Dave, the fiddler," undertook to do the "calling off" as well as the fiddling, which feat enhanced Dave's reputation and standing so much, and gave him the "on'ay" (Goarden's French) with the "gurls" to such an extent, that Goarden for the future confined his sulkings merely to threats.

It was indeed an inspiring sight to see Goarden standing on a bench and doing the "calling off." The inflections that he worked into his voice, and the quaint directions that were given in his choicest vocabulary, supplemented by every catch-saying that he had picked up from the head waters of the Opeongo down to the lower waters of the St. Lawrence, were most impressive.

I shall here present a few "calls," as I remember hearing them from Goarden's lips at the famous dance that Dooley gave after Goarden's return from "the drive."

"First" (in a very high voice) — "couple lead to the right" (in a very low voice).

"Ladies" (in a very high voice) — "pass up the cen-

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tre and gentlemen follow the" (very low)—"stream" (very high).

Upon the occasion of the dance at Dooley's, to which I have referred, Goarden sprang the following upon the unsuspecting assembly:—

"Birdie" (very high)—"fly out" (very low)—"and ducky fly in" (in a gradual crescendo).

"Ducky" (very high)—"fly out" (very low)—"and give birdie a swing" (gradually ascending).

These dances were usually kept up vigorously until daylight the following morning. Cotillions, eight-hand reels, French fours, and "hoe downs" were kept going alternately, with an industry quite touching in its earnestness.

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JOCK

CHAPTER X

• JOCK, THE DROVER, DESCRIBES DOOLEY'S DANCE

JOCK, the drover, who had spent a portion of his early life in the New England states, and who had forgotten that I was present at the dance myself, subsequently gave me a full account of the evening.

"Yeh see, Watty," said Jock, "th' dance wuz giv at Dooley's jes' arter th' boys cum back frum th' drive. Thar wuz more'n thirty couple on deck, some comin' frum Hornersville, Tuffy's Corners, an' th' Snow Road, 'cause Dooley's dances is famous, an' no one iver thinks uv missin' 'em, whether he gits to bed er no. Mrs. Dooley hed hed a quiltin' bee in th' arternoon, an' th' boys wuz invited fer th' evenin'.

"Thar wuz th' boys frum th' back country, an' they come mostly dressed in thar 'iverydays,' fact bein'," said Jock, aside, "thet they hed nothin' else t' wear. Some young bloods wuz out frum th' town wearin' dickeys an' standin' collars. Frum th' first thar wuz bad blood atwixt th' townshippers an' th' town gang. Es fer our own boys on th' Ninth an' adjacent Concessions, they uv course wore thar bests, an' es paper

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collars an' hair ile hed come in fashion, they wuz slicked up most impressive like.

"I noticed," said Jock, after a pause, and with a ripple of merriment on his countenance, "thet th' Greig boys thet didn't hev any paper collars uv thar own, hed appropriated thar father's, an' es his neck wuz about es large round es Nathan Larkins' sassiety bull, an' thar's wuz very thin (takin' arter th' female side uv th' house), they hed t' make a pleat t' get them t' fit. I sejested t' th' youngest lad thet he might better uv cut one in two, an' it would hev done two at a time an' hev gone funder. Howsumever, most uv all our own boys hed paper collars uv thar own, an' ef they hadn't, they hed jest borried frum somebody else. Some uv th' toniest boys present, 'specially them frum th' town, who were extrey tony, hed thar pants made with a spring so's t' cover most uv thar boots. I must confess," added Jock, reflectively, "although I'm no connozure, thet I'm a bit struck on them air spring pants myself, an' thet I'm a-goin' t' hev a pair when I sell th' pigs in th' fall.

"Wall, th' getherin' wuz a very respectable one, an' th' paper collars an' fancy coloured flannel shirts lent an air uv gorgeousness t' th' scene, even if supposin' th' gurls wasn't thar at all. But speakin' uv th' gurls," said Jock, "I'm bound t' confess they wuz perfectly scrumptious. Most uv 'em come in muslin in plenty, although them frum th' Tenth Concession an' Tuffy's

JOCK DESCRIBES DOOLEY'S DANCE

Corners come in flannel frocks, some dyed in butternut, others black an' red, an' some with yalla stripes, runnin' perpendic'lar er crossways, I fergit which. A few uv 'em wore thar aprons an' carried real flowers with ornaments t' match, as I seed in a description uv a big ball at Montreal, thet wuz in th' paper. Although no connozure, es I sed afore, arter sizin' th' hull affair up, I felt bound t' award th' prizæ t' th' gurls uv th' Ninth Concession, fer they hed two black silks made down frum th' bridal dresses uv thar mothers, one imitation satin an' two winceys, t' say nothin' uv Kearstie McLachlan's patchwork dress, which tuck th' prize at seven consecativ' fall shows.

"Arter all th' crowd hed arriv, ole man Dooley, whose lively speerits wuz elevated by this time, strode into th' centre uv th' room in his shirtsleeves an' announced thet they wuz about t' clear th' deck fer action. He called on several uv th' boys t' giv him a han', an' soon chairs, tables, an' boxes, an' everythin' thet could obstruct wuz cleared away [just as stoves, etc., are removed at country dances at the present day].

"T' th' ginerall constarnation, 'twuz foun', when this wuz done, thet th' fiddler hed not arrove, an' when inquiry come t' be made, 'twuz foun' thet he hed been entirely overlooked, an' so a couple uv chaps wuz started off fer th' Ferry, nine miles distant, t' git th' moosic. Meantime, howsumever, es proceedin's could

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not be delayed, Tugal Cameron's daughter Tena wuz axed t' lilt fer a cotillion, an' when th' next dance wuz called, Mrs. Dooley took her place on th' table, an' placin' a bit uv paper over a comb, played 'The White Cockade' 'with great acceptability,' as th' noosepapers say. Tena lilted 'Down the river, down the river, down the O — I — O,' which is a splendid toon fer a cotillion, an' Goarden, arter much coaxin', wuz persuaded t' call off.

"'Honours t' pardners!' he shouted at the top uv his voice, frum whar he stood on th' table. An' th' titterin' gurls an' boys got off their best curtesies. 'Half right an' lef'!' called out Goarden, es Tena reached th' O — I — O part uv th' toon. 'Half right an' lef' back!' An' th' dancers cluntered back t' thar places. 'Adam an' lef'!' Which they did with great enjoyment. 'Balance!' An' th' heels uv th' cowhides come down with sitch force es t' threaten th' flure.

"'Swing!' This command wuz obeyed with a vigger an' alacrity thet would make yer hair stan' on end. Th' boys an' gurls uv th' settlemint hev made a special stidy uv th' swing, an' most uv 'em kin perform about seventeen revolutions t' th' second. Th' ony thing I kin liken th' swing t', Watty," continued Jock, "is th' upright shaft in th' town grist-mill, when it's goin' with a full head uv water. Yeh know th' idee, Watty. It is t' stan' on one foot, an' usin' th' other es

JOCK DESCRIBES DOOLEY'S DANCE

a propeller, see ef yeh can go roun' quicker'n chain lightnin'd chase a squirl roun' a crooked grained hemlock with th' bark off. Oh, it's a great movement, is thet air swing! 'Shoo fly all' wuz th' last call in th' fust figger, an' when th' hired man issued it, a feelin' uv sadness seemed t' hit th' dancers at bein' obliged t' close off th' swing.

"Wall, arter Tena hed lilted fer five er six dances, an' Mrs. Dooley hed played on th' comb fer es many more rounds, wheels wuz heerd at the dure, an' in a moment Dave, the fiddler, wuz in our mldst. But it tuck s'long t' toon his fiddle thet th' company almost got 'sasperated. At las' th' fiddle wuz tooned, an' Dave wuz about t' strike up, when he made th' discovery thet he hed no rossum, an' he refused t' draw a bow. Here wuz a purty fix, an' Tena an' Mrs. Dcoley hed t' start in again until some one hunted about th' settlemint t' git a supply uv rossum. Wall, at las' it wuz got an' it wuz mos' midnight. Howsumever, when th' fun did start it started in airnest an' wuz kep' up at a two-forty-one-an'-a-haff clip till broad daylight th' nex' mornin'. It wuz some time afore midnight," observed Jock, after some reflection, "thet th' paper collars begun t' giv out, an' once they started, it didn't take long t' d'mollish th' lot.

"'Twuz arter supper," Jock went on, "which wuz served at one in th' mornin', an' which consisted uv bread an' butter, cold b'iled pork, fried eggs, apple sass,

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

beet pickles, an' sitch like, thet th' real fun begun. A dispute arose atween a gent frum th' Snow Road an' a dandy frum town es t' which hed th' right uv way t' dance with Dolly Pepper. Uv course Dolly preferred th' town dandy, but th' Snow Road man wouldn't hev it so, an' he stumped th' hull town gang out, an' out they went with thar frien's at thar heels t' settle it among 'em. Th' fight wuz a red-hot one, an' wound up in th' teetotal rout uv th' town gang, an' they didn't show up at th' dance fer th' rest uv that night.

"Now, Watty," said Jock, when he was done, "I think I hev covered th' groun' fer yeh purty well, an' thar's no use uv me goin' any funder with th' descriptions." And the short-legged, stumpy little chap, toddled laughingly off down the Concession.

CHAPTER XI

THE SHANTYMEN'S SONGS

BEFORE the dances concluded it was generally the custom to have a song or two from those who could sing. Now Goarden could not sing very well, but as Jock, the drover, used to say, "he thought he could, an' thet did jest es well." In the matter of singing, as well as in some other respects, the boys used to "run the rig" on Goarden, and he was generally called on. It was deemed the best of good form to demur and take a good deal of coaxing before yielding, and you may be sure that Goarden hesitated sufficiently long to fill the bill. Indeed, on one occasion he demurred so long that the crowd passed him over and called for somebody else. Goarden never repeated that mistake.

The first song that I ever heard him sing was "The True Shanty Lad." I cannot recall the first verses of the song, but the conclusion runs something like this:—

THE TRUE SHANTY LAD

An' when I am dead an' gone, sir,
Let that put an end to my life;
Let there be no weepin' nor wailin',
But do a good turn for the wife.

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Do a good turn for the wife, boys ;
An' one thing more yet I do crave :
Wind me up in my old shanty jacket, —
Pray, fiddle, an' dance o'er my grave.

The last word was spoken in order to let the audience know when the end of the song was reached. In response to a vociferous "ancor," Goarden took a pace or two forwards and said: "Ladies an' gents, if you'd like it, I'll sing you a French song which I larnt on 'the drive' last spring."

Of course there was a strong demand for the French song. As everybody knew, Goarden had a weakness for exhibiting a knowledge of the French language, which he professed to speak quite fluently, and into which it was his habitual custom to lapse, much to the admiration of the "young bloods," and to his own self-gratification.

Well, here is the only stanza of Goarden's "French song" of which I could make a note at the time, and I give it spelled phonetically, exactly as Goarden sang it. Perhaps some reader may recognise the old favourite which often made the forest ring forty or fifty years ago in Ontario and Quebec.

GOARDEN'S FRENCH SONG

Oo le lamb ah bully boo yay,
Oo le lamb a boo yay,
Pas ale vous, la dig a maw,
Oo le lamb a boo yaw.

THE SHANTYMEN'S SONGS

I cannot say whether or not Goarden spoke the last word of the above, but the point is immaterial, as he half spoke, half drawled everything he attempted to sing.

Once fairly started, it was difficult to stop him, and before the dance broke up at daylight he had gone pretty well through his repertoire, which embraced such well-known sentimental and musical gems as "Darling Daisy Dean," "Don't you go, Tommy, don't go," "Lottie Lane," and "Now we are Aged and Gray, Maggie." Some of his songs were evidently old ballads imperfectly transmitted. For instance, this —

THE LOVELY BANKS OF BOYNE

I am a youthful damsel;
I loved a laddie well.
I was always true and kind to him,
And the truth to you I'll tell.
It was in my father's cas-tle
That he gained this heart of mine,
And he tempted me to wander
On the lov-lee banks o' Bine. [Boyne.]

He coorted me all for a while
And promised for to wed,
And when he'd gained my favours
Away from me he fled.
He fled from me like the morning dew
When the sun began to shine,
And he quite forsook his Flora
Of the lov-lee banks o' Bine.

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His hair hung down in ring-a-lets,
His cheeks were like the rose,
His teeth like pollshed ivoree,
And his eyes as black as sloes.
His come-ly looks enti-ced me,
And his aspect boid but kind;
For he tempted me to wander
On the lov-lee banks o' Bine.

A-las! I'm told this false young man
To London town has gone,
And it's there he has got mar-ceed
To a lady of high reoown.
So, ladies, guess my fee-lings I
Mind how you spend your time,
Or they'll leave you like poor Flora
Of the lov-lee banks o' Bine.

I quick-a-lee pursu-ed him
Unto fair London town;
I pack-ed up my jew-el-ree
That very afternoon.
I bade farewell to my parents dear,
Who now in sorrow pine,
And I left my father's cas-tile
On the lov-lee banks o' Bine.

Goarden sang not only with great unction but with that perfect nasal twang which none but he could give. I have often thought that if some impressario or shrewd theatrical manager could hire Goarden to appear on the stage and act naturally, there would be a fortune in the venture.

THE SHANTYMEN'S SONGS

Perhaps one of the best "Come all ye" songs that Goarden used to sing was the one entitled "The Rovin' Rangers," which ran something like this:—

THE ROVIN' RANGERS

Come, all ye Rovin' Rangers,
Wherever that ye be.
I hope ye'll pay attention,
And listen unto me.
My name is something extra,—
To you I will not tell;
But to all ye Rovin' Rangers,
I'm sure I wish ye well.

'Twas at the age of sixteen
I joined a jolly band.
I marched in Great Ontay-re-o,
Unto a high-yer ground.
Our captain he gave orders
(Pe-raps he thought it right):
"Hyay, — before you reach the station, oh,
Brave boys, ye've got to fight!"

I saw the Injns comin',
I heerd them give the yell;
My feelin's at that mo-ment
No mort-yal tongue could tell!
I thought on my old mother,
And her to me did say:
"To you they are all en-e-mees;
With me ye'd better stay."

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[*Sung pathetically and softly.*]

Pe-raps ye have a mother,
Pe-raps a sister tew ;
Pe-raps ye have a sweetheart (*audible sobs*)
To weep an' murn for yew.
Let this be your condition,
An' yew are beound to roam,
I'll tell ye by experians
Ye'd better stay at home.

There's five as noble Rangers
As ever crossed the west,
Lie buried by their comrades,—
Lie in their peace'ful rest.

For the benefit of those readers who may experience a desire to practise this song, I append the notes of the tune:—



THE SHANTYMEN'S SONGS

Sometimes, if John Malcolm, the old salt, was present, and duly primed, he used to sing "Hearts of Oak," and other nautical songs. Malcolm was a great favourite in the neighbourhood, and not without reason, for before the advent of the railway, indeed before the advent of the stage, he used to act as the means of communication between the settlement and "the front," — as Brockville, Prescott, and the St. Lawrence were regarded. Many a commission did he execute for the settlers, and many a missive did he carry. He would throw the letters and smaller parcels into the old weather-faded muskrat cap which he wore, summer and winter, on his long rounds; for in those early days he peddled beer along the Grand (now Ottawa) River, supplying the rugged settlers who had located in that tier of counties along the river, with the "good cheer" which he carried.

Malcolm was never known to lose a parcel or letter, or forget a commission entrusted to him. He was the best of good company, with his fund of nautical stories, in which he usually appeared as the central figure. So that a drive from "the front" to the settlement, or even a "lift" a short distance, with Malcolm, was a rare treat. The narration of Malcolm's stories would fill a small volume, and I may add, an interesting one; some day they may be given. A kindlier soul than Malcolm never drove through the Concessions of those

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

eastern counties, and his memory is often recalled with affection to this very day.

It was only on the rarest occasions that Dooley, the blacksmith, could be induced to sing. He had a voice like a buzz-saw, and as he generally struck a pitch an octave or two too high (Jock, the drover, said "a few octaves here or there wuz not'nin' to Dooley"), the effect can be imagined, more especially when his selections (I think he had only two) contained such inflammatory words as these:—

Come, all ye true-bred Irishmen,
Wherever that ye be!
I hope ye'll pay attintion
While a story I relate.
It's of a bluddy Orange crowd,
That killed and murdered Patrick Donohue,
And him did massacre!

If Whitey Roberts, a red-headed, peppery north of Ireland man, who always acted as marshal at the annual "Orange walk" in the county town, was present when Dooley "performed" this song, there was generally a fight; for drunk or sober, Whitey could not stand that song, and the moment Dooley concluded the first verse, if Whitey was about, he always "stumped" the blacksmith out to fight.

An encounter of this nature was a diversion which the boys, and especially Goarden, keenly relished, and

THE SHANTYMEN'S SONGS

it was often regarded by the rougher element as an appropriate climax to a first-class dance.

Dooley's dance, like all other similar festivities, concluded with a "hoe down," in which, when "balance on the corner" was called, the boys vied with each other in their efforts to drive the heels of their boots through the floor. I have perhaps lingered over it at undue length, and have presented too great an array of songs; evidently we cannot afford to attend a country dance more than once in a book, and this will wind up our experiences in that connection.

CHAPTER XII

THE ANNUAL PASTORAL VISIT

THE Rev. Gavin McBean was a grave, solemn old man, who inspired awe rather than affection. He was brought up in the old Covenanting school, was most unbending, and maintained, during the forty years that he preached in the Ninth Concession kirk, a dignity and reserve which held the people at arm's length. He was, however, a man of education and refinement, and, as Muckle Peter stoutly maintained against all critics, "a man o' Goad, deeply versed in th' Scriptures, an' a powerful releegious controversialist."

He never, however, succeeded in getting down to the plane of the people, in inspiring their confidence, and in walking with them as a guide, philosopher, and friend. The character of his sermons was cold and generally of an abstract nature, and he invariably wound up by appeals for money to carry on the "schemes of the church." This was not the kind of pulpit pabulum calculated to inspire the religious enthusiasm and fervour of the settlers, and as a consequence the subscriptions

THE ANNUAL PASTORAL VISIT

diminished, until the taking up of the collection by the elders came to be called the "getherin' of the coppers"; as it was a rare thing to find on the "plate" a coin larger in denomination than a copper or penny. Indeed, it was the frequent custom for the adherents to call at the toll-gate on the way to service, and get their coins reduced to the smallest possible denomination.

The word "plate" is quoted, because the vehicle actually employed to "gether the coppers" was a black velvet bag about eight inches deep with a tassel at the bottom and was attached to a long stick. When this was passed along the pews, any member of the congregation could make as big a chink by dropping in a copper or even a button, as he could with a York shilling.

I have known the McNabb boys take to the barn when they saw the minister coming down the Concession on his annual round. It was all their mother could do to get them to come into the house, have their faces washed and a fresh clean smock hurriedly placed on their backs by the time the good man arrived.

Then the widow, all bustle and excitement (for the minister's annual visit was an important event to the settlers), would stand the children in a row and question them on the Shorter Catechism.

"Now, Jamie lad," she would say, "tell me what is the chief end of man. The minister will be here in a

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moment, and I would be fashed to have him think that your spiritual training was neglected." Jamie gave the answer that is famlliar to every Presbyterian.

"How many persons are there in the Godhead?" the widow next asked, of Willie. Willie was able to give the correct answer promptly.

"What is justification?" was the question asked of Lizzie. And when it was answered, the anxious mother asked a few other questions taken at random from the catechism, and by the time the answers were given, there was a knock at the front door, which Mrs. McNabb hurried to open, and the minister was ushered into the "front room." After a formal greeting, and a careful scrutiny of the room and its contents, he promptly proceeded to business.

"I hope, Mistress McNabb, that you are training up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Mrs. McNabb remained silent. It was, however, a very common practice among the settlers to remain silent and let the minister do all the talking. The practice led him ultimately not to expect any answer. Sometimes, to reply would seem to border on familiarity.

"Bring in your children," said the minister. "I should like to examine them on the Shorter Catechism and see if their minds are stored with religious truth."

The family filed into the room at the widow's com-

THE ANNUAL PASTORAL VISIT

mand, and took their stand with backs to the wall, facing the minister. Then the latter, drawing his little book from his side pocket, questioned the boys and girls closely on the catechism and the Ten Commandments, asked a few questions relating to the history of the Old Testament celebrities, and concluded by suggesting to the widow that it would be an excellent plan, and one which would keep the children out of mischief, if she would set each of them the task of reading ten chapters from the New Testament every Sunday.

"I would also suggest," he added, "that instead of visiting them with corporal punishment for any breach of discipline or domestic offence, you should assign them some such task as the reading of one of the four gospels, — John preferred."

The widow offered no suggestion or comment, and after the minister had prayed he took his leave, intimating that he would be returning up the line about supper time, and if she had no objection, he would drive in and sup with her and the family. Of course Mrs. McNabb readily acquiesced, for it was usually deemed quite an honour by the good housewives of the Scotch Settlement to entertain the minister.

CHAPTER XIII

ENTERTAINING THE MINISTER

I HAPPENED to call at the widow's home the evening of the minister's visit; and after he had taken his tea and his departure, I found Goarden, the hired man, at the stable. He was in a wretched humour, and was swearing profusely and artistically, for he had a remarkable power of inventing original and picturesque expressions in profanity. I asked him what was the matter.

"Oh, matter 'nuff, Watty!" he ejaculated, expectorating vigorously against the oat bin. "It all comes uv that confounded travellin' sky agent a-stayin' here fer supper."

"Why didn't you take yourself off when you knew he was coming?" I asked.

"Wall, I should a done so ef I'd ony a knowd he wuz a-comin'. I should a knowd enough, fer I wuz at church Sunday an' heered him give it out myself thet 'Goad wullun, he wad veesit th' fam'lies luv'in' on th' Ninth Concession thus week,' an' I might a knowd he wud stop fer tea at th' widdy's, 'cause he allus does. I tell

ENTERTAINING THE MINISTER

yeh what, Watty, they know whar th' good meals is sarved, an' yeh can allus count on them fetchln' up at th' widdy's about tea time. I guess," added Goarden, reflectively, "th' thrashin' boys spreads th' news whar good grub's t' be got."

"But why should Mr. McBean's annual pastoral visit disturb you so, Goarden?" I asked.

"Why? Wall, 'cause they wanted t' ring me in t' th' fam'ly wuship thet follyed. 'Twouldn't a bin s' bad ef I hed a bin axed in t' supper. But yeh know how it is, Watty, at most uv th' settlers' houses when th' minlster stops t' meals. There's niver 'nuff chairs t' go roun', th' forks runs short, an' not 'nuff knives, an' th' upshot is, most uv th' childer an' th' hired man hes t' wait fer th' second course. Besides, I don't like bor-ryin' things frum nabours when they's speclal company. I tell yeh what, Watty, I've bin sent many an' many a time when I wuz a-workin' on th' Snow Road or th' Tenth an' Twelfth, t' nabours' houses t' borry chairs, an' git th' loan uv knlves an' forks, an sltch like, when special company wuz in."

"But you were not asked to borrow to-day to help the widow out," I said.

"No, but es I tell yeh, Watty, they wanted me t' go in an' set down while fam'ly wuship wuz bein' held, an' I tol' Lizzie who come fer me, thet 'twan't no use es it 'ud take a block an' tackle t' bring me. 'Twould be all



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1.50

1.55

1.60

1.65

1.70

1.75

1.80

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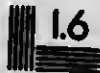
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COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

I could stan' ef I'd t' set down t' supper with the rest, but t' endoor fam'ly wuship on a empty stummick wuz too much fer me, an' so I perfurred t' stay out here an' cuss while th' minister wuz a-prayin' an' eatin' in th' house."

"What bill of fare is usually presented, Goarden," I asked, "when the minister or special company stays to tea?"

"Wall, uv coourse th' white imytation marbel lle cloth is took off th' table, an' a white linen cloth is spread. Ef thar's no fresh meat in th' house (an' uv coourse yeh know, Watty, thar ginerally isn't in th' warm weather), eggs does duty es meat, fried eggs, although I hev knowd th' missus t' ask th' minister p'lutely ef he perfurred 'em biled t' fried. Then uv coourse th' bes' pursurves is fetched up frum th' cellar, th' pound fer pound, es they'se ginerally called."

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"Don't know what pound fer pound means? Why, — a pound uv muscavado sugar t' a pound uv berries. It's ginerally strawberries, wild strawberries, es is used fer th' purpose, an' th' jars is kep' in th' cellar an' guarded es carefully es ole Skinny McIntosh, the miser, does his little iron box with th' money."

"Have ycu ever partaken of pound for pound, Goarden?" I asked.

"Only wunst, an' thet wuz by mistake. It came

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'bout in this way. It wuz at th' McGlashins, an' I hap-
pened t' be thar a-givin' uv ole Saunders a han' t' kill
his pigs in th' fall. Wall, th' minister wuz a-doin' uv
his roun's on th' Twelfth thet day, an' uv coourse I hed
t' wait fer th' second table, although ole Saunders went
in t' th' first. But uv coourse ole Saunders niver
touches pound fer pound. His missus hes him too
well trained fer thet. Wall, I wuz called in t' th'
second table arter Kearstie hed stripped it purty bare.
Yeh know, uv coourse, Watty, thet besides th' pound fer
pound, thar's one t' three an' one t' four. Thet is,
one pound uv sugar t' three er four uv fruit; an' some-
times we git a taste uv thet. Wall, Missus McGlashin
wuz a-puttin' uv her bes' foot first on this 'casion, an'
she put on a jar uv pound fer pound fer th' minister,
an' a jar uv one t' four fer th' rest. But when Kears-
tie came t' clear th' table afore me an' th' childer wuz
cut loose on th' remains, she mistook th' one t' four jar
fer th' pound fer pound, an' thet's how I came t' hev
a feed wunst in my life. When Missus McGlashin
foun' it out, Kearstie got a dreadful scoldin'.

"But I guess I hev got off th' thread uv my story,"
said Goarden; "an' comin' back t' th' supper, I might
add thet it is customary in th' fust fam'lies t' dish up
potted head ef thar's eny in stock, an' thar ginerally is.
Sometimes I hev knowd women t' fry spiced sausengers
fer th' minister. Yeh will offens see 'em hangin' in

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long rows 'bout th' ceilin', whar they ketch th' heat, th' dus', an' mos' generally th' flies. But thar great eatin' is spiced sausers," added Goarden, as his lips watered at the recollection of a feed he had had at some farmhouse. "Then, I mussen fergit t' mention th' curren bread, an' curren buns, an' th' cakes with lots uv carvey [caraway] seed in 'em. Then thar is allus twisters an' homemade pickles, an' homemade cheese, which is generally es tough es rubber. An' offens yeh kin git maple su'rp.

"An' oh! yes," added Goarden, as he had overlooked something, "an' in a few fam'lies yeh kin git 'white sugar.' I don't mean th' yalla muscavado, but rale white sugar. It's come in fashion now, fer ole John Malcolm brought a little bag uv it frum Brockville th' las' time he come, an' a few settlers hes it t' put in th' minister's tea when he is a-makin' uv his roun's. I fergot t' tell yeh," Goarden went on, "thet afore tea wuz in ginerall use, th' fust fam'lies giv' rossberry vinegar an' sometimes rhubarb wine, ef th' minister wuzn't a teetoller, which they generall wuzn't."

"Anything else?" I asked.

"Wall, naw, not es I kin think on, 'ceptin' thet thar is usually a cake uv bought soap, scented up like hair ile, kep' in ivery farmhouse, an' when th' minister stays t' tea, thet air cake uv new bought soap (which one uv th' Greig boys said wuz not made, it bein' jes'

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bought) is put on a saucer beside th' basin an' jug uv soft water in th' spare room fer th' minister. Uv coourse thar is allus a special tow'l niver used afore, kep' fer th' minister's visit. I mind wunst, when th' minister wuz at th' McGlashins, th' ole woman lef' Kearstie t' tidy up th' room an' she fergot t' put th' new tow'l on th' chair aside uv th' washdish, an' th' minister hed t' wipe his face an' han's on a pilla slip. It caused a great scandal an' much talk in th' settlement fer years, but it hes blowed over, es it wuz niver knowd t' happen agin."

As I was turning to go, Goarden said: "I fergot t' mention th' front room while th' supper is bein' got ready in th' kitchen. All th' members uv th' fam'ly thet are on han', or kin be caught, sets roun' th' room, bolt upright, with th' ole uns, with thar stiddy gaze a-fixed on th' minister an' a-listenin' t' th' proverbs wot falls frum his lips. An' when th' minister druv out uv th' yard, arter th' long chapter an' prayer an' exertashun which follyed th' supper (fer th' minister hed t' giv suthin in return fer bein' fed), th' boys an' the rest uv us would giv' a whoop an' cut up fer th' res' uv th' evenin'."

CHAPTER XIV

GOARDEN'S FRENCH IS CHALLENGED

"MO share effa mo rear saw twah."

The speaker was Goarden Weaver, the hired man, who sat, one day in midsummer, on the top rail of a crooked fence on the Ninth Concession, surrounded by an admiring circle of lads, while the older men were engaged, at a "by-the-day" pace, in making some improvements to the road. It was the season for doing the statute labour.

Old Nathan Larkins was the pathmaster, and he had "warned the settlers out" a week previously to do the statute labour assigned them. Nathan dearly loved office, and he was prepared on all occasions to accept such a position, no matter how insignificant it might be. It pleased him to be even allowed to witness a document, and he fairly revelled in such official distinction as pathmaster, or as chairman at a meeting, no matter what its purport.

The slightest elevation always induced him to swagger and "lord it over" his neighbours. Jock, the drover, opined that if he ever attained to the high office of a

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county councillor, it would be necessary to provide him with a double expansion hat or let him go bare-headed.

On the present occasion Nathan had two gangs under his supervision, — one working near the town-line, and the other over the hill three-quarters of a mile down, and not visible from the point where the first gang was at work. This was exactly what the boys desired, for when Nathan was with one gang, the other could loaf, and "terra firma," as Goarden would say.

At the particular time when this chapter opened Nathan was over the hill with the other gang, and Goarden, the hired man, was, as he would say himself, "doin' a lot of hivy settin' round," and trying to prevent the others from working.

It was on such occasions as this that Goarden loved to air his alleged knowledge of the French language, and now and then he would burst into some such expression as that which opens the chapter. As he had shantied most of his life, he professed to have learned the French language during his shanty life.

Now there happened to be a stranger, a youth of nineteen or twenty summers, working in the gang. Though Goarden did not know it, this young man was a French Canadian from the Gatineau, who had driven to the settlement with Malcolm, the beer pedlar, and as he had a few days free on his hands, he undertook to

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do the road work for Dooley, the blacksmith. Dooley had gone up the country to see a sick horse, — for he deemed himself a horse doctor as well as a horseshoer, and professed to know all about the diseases to which horseflesh is heir. When summoned to the stable, he would examine the animal, look into its mouth, check its pulse by his watch, and talk knowingly about the “main stay” being affected. If the animal recovered after taking his prescription of herbs, he would chuckle proudly and declare that he had just reached the brute in the nick of time “to snatch him from the jaws of death.” If, however, the horse died, Dooley would shake his head and declare that the owner had delayed too long in sending for him, as the “main stay” was gone before he reached the animal.

When Goarden, seated proudly on the top rail of the fence, delivered himself of the expression, “Mo share effa mo rear saw twah,” Jock, the drover, stepping jauntily up to Goarden, looked at him roguishly from under his tam-o'-shanter, and said : —

“ Say, Goarden, there's a chap here es says yeh can't talk French fer sour apples, an' thet yeh couldn't ast a gurl in French t' dance with yeh.”

“ Where is he ? ” roared Goarden. “ I'll make nim eat his words ! ”

“ Think ye'd better jest test th' French question fust, afore fumin' 'bout like a crazy dawg,” suggested Jock.

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"Joe, the Frenchman here, heered yeh get off that air jargon 'bout 'maw share saw pat,' or whatever it wuz, an' he seys yeh a-givin' us all guff, an' t' save yer neck yeh couldn't ast a gurl in French t' dance with yeh."

For a moment Goarden hesitated; it was a desperate chance to take, but he decided to bluff it out. Then he turned, and walking up to where Joe stood, looked him hard in the eye and said:—

"Yeh want me t' ast a gurl in French t' dance with me?"

"Oui," answered Joe; "dat is wat I want."

"Well," said Goarden, looking the Frenchman hard in the off eye, "Parley-vous le tourley loorey lipsy ting."

The Frenchman gave Goarden one look, the embodiment of contempt, and said, "Parley-vous le tourley loorey lipsy — hell!"

A roar of derisive laughter went up from the crowd, for every one of them realised, as perfectly as if they were all accomplished French scholars, that Goarden's bluff had been "called," and that as far as his French was concerned, he had now entirely lost his prestige.

Goarden himself realised that there was no use attempting any explanation; it would be received with ridicule and contempt. And so lighting his pipe, and casting a malicious look at the Frenchman, he said, as he started to join the gang over the hill: "I'll meet yeh at th' poplars [the poplars was the place where most of

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the disputes in the settlement were settled by an appeal to physical force] one uv these fine evenin's."

"Ef you no fite better dan you spik de French," replied Joe, "you be de damnedest easiest ting dis side de Gatineau. I meet you at wat you call de poplares or anny odder place dat you mak' — what you call dat? — de 'p'intment."

But Goarden was not anxious to meet the Frenchman in physical combat, and contented himself, after Joe had returned to his home, with talking about what he would have done with that "frog-eatin' furriner" if he had ever met him in mortal combat.

The exposure had a distinctly "bearish" effect upon Goarden's prestige, for at the next dance, because of the humiliation he had suffered at Joe's hands, he was refused by no less than three of the lasses whom he asked "to do a turn" with him "at the quittilion."

CHAPTER XV

"DOIN' STATUE LABOUR"

BUT while Goarden was greatly crestfallen over the knock-out blow his French had received, it did not in the least interfere with his loquaciousness, and so one day, before the road work was completed, I induced him to give me his impressions regarding the system.

"Uv coourse, Watty," he said, "it's a dead snap fer me an' me likes. Th' bes' times I git are a-doin' uv statue labour an' tendin' uv thrashin' mills. Kin yeh tell me, Watty," Goarden broke off, an idea just striking him, "why Jock, the drover, laffed s' much when I tol' him th' other day I wuz a-doin' uv statue labour? He jes' laffed an' sed, 'Wall, I guess yeh is, Goarden, fer ivery time I seed yeh on th' road, yeh wuz es motionless es a statoo.' There mus' be some joke about it, fer th' res' uv th' boys laffed too."

I promised to think it over and let him know, and then he continued:—

"Why, yes, es I wuz a-sayin', Watty, th' bes' times I gits is a-doin' uv statue labour, an' tendin' thrashin' mills. I hev never worked at eny place in th' settlement whar

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my breakfas' wuz not on th' table waitin' fer me, no matter how airly I got up. I hev allus bln kep' workin' s' late nites, an' bln put t' lt s' airly mornin's, thet I'm beginnin' t' think sometimes I'm in Heaven, 'cause thar's no nite here.

"But es t' th' road work, yeh know plagid well th' practis. Ivery pathmaster looks out fer hlself, and sees thet th' road in front uv his own homestld is put ln apple-pie order doorin' hls 'tenoore' uv office, es Jock puts it. This year it's ole Nathan Larkins es ls pathmaster, an' I s'pose yeh hev noticed thet th' road opposite his place is es smooth an' slick es th' town-line, which ls planked, an' thet th' dlitches ls cleaned out an' th' walk 'long th' fence made es smooth es a onion bed. Thar hain't no flies on Nathan when he's pathmaster."

"But does the road need all the improvements talked of?" I asked.

"Suttenly not, suttenly not. Usally th' road needs no fixin' 't all, but th' statue labour hes t' be done an' so we go t' work. P'raps yeh know thar is a scheme on t' cast lots each year an' do th' statue work on th' lucky settler's farm who wins the cast."

"Don't you do considerable loafing at the road work?" I asked.

"Oh, bless yeh, yes. We do a lot uv hivy settin' roun', an' th' moment we git th' pathmaster outen our site, we set down an' swap yarns. Thet ole sojer named

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Flett, who sez he's come 'thru th' Crimee war, is th' wust ole sojer in th' line uv loafin' yeh iver seed. He won't turn a han' ef he can help it, an' wot's more, he won't let eny one else do 't. Th' moment ole Nathan is out uv site, down sets Flett, an' getherin' th' boys aroun' him, he tells th' goll-darnedest yarns 'bout his doin's in th' war, yeh lver heerd uv. 'Cordin' t' his own test'mony, he carries enywhere frum five t' twelve pound uv lead in his karkis, an' he shows more scars, which he sez wuz made by baynites, then yeh could shake a stick at. He sez thet w'en he goes huntin' he niver carries no bullets fer he jest taps hisself th' time es you would a tree an' spills out wot bullets he 'seds. He's a queer un is Flett, I niver know'd him to boast uv enythin' pertainin' t' his fam'ly 'cept his mother's funrel wich he sed wuz th' dog-gondest bliggest funrel thet wuz iver seed in th' country whar he wuz riz.

"I mind well, one day," Goarden went on, "thet we wuz so taken up with one uv Flett's stories 'bout th' war thet we niver noticed Nathan comin' over th' hill until he wuz clost up on us. Then we jumped t' our shovels, ploughs, an' scrapers, an' while Nathan stormed an' threatened t' report us t' th' Queen (Nathan allus seemed t' be real int'mate with Her Majesty doorin' statue labour season), Flett wuz likenin' our suddent break-up t' th' army uv Wellin'ton at Waterloo, wich, he sed, at one magic word wuz dissolved frum solid

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squares into thin red lines, wich swep' on t' meet th' enemy es we did t' meet Nathan.

"Nothin'," added Goarden, "so zasperates Flett, es t' find somebody a-doin' road work who wants t' work. 'It's like a fishin' party!' exclaimed Flett, one day. 'Thar's allus some goll-darned fool in ivery fishin' party es wants t' fish.' Thar wuz a fresh Alick named Towler on th' road work las' year," said Goarden, "a-doi.' time fer th' toll-keeper, who wuz sick, an' it kep' Flett a-cus-sin' th' hull two weeks at thet air chap. He would work, no matter how Flett would cuss an' no matter how entertainin' wuz his stories, an' Flett fairly spread hisselt t' int'rest Towler an' keep him idle. But 'twas no good. Towler would work in spite uv enythin' Flett could do er say. One day Flett got th' res' uv th' boys t' hol' a indignashun meetin' right on th' road, an' a resolution wuz passed condemnin' uv Towler in th' strongest uv langwidge, an' threatenin' him with consequences ef he didn't stop his 'd—— nonsensical work.' Thet wuz th' expresshun used in th' motion. But Towler kep' right on, an' th' danger uv utter demoralisation t' th' res' uv th' gang became s' great thet Flett bribed th' toll-keeper t' hev Towler withdrawn, an' so he wuz, an' things went on smoothly enuff agen. Flett sez heroic misures will hev t' be took, ef iver sitch a thing happens agen, an' th' int'rests uv honest statue labour is threatened."

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"How old must a boy be before he is permitted to do road work?" I asked Goarden.

"Oh, thet all dipends. Ef he's a good chunk uv a boy an' can show a little down on his upper lip, he ginerally 'goes,' but pathmasters isn't all alike on them p'int. Some will 'cept a youngster uv twelve er thirteen whose upper lip hes niver even been licked by a cat, but others is different, an' they zamine boys' lips very carefully, fer th' lips is th' test, Watty; th' lips is th' test. This practis hes led lashins uv boys t' scrape thar lips regular with thar father's razor, so 's t' git th' furst growth started. Then a week er two afore th' road work commences, they let up on usin' th' razor so 's t' be able t' show quite a little stubby growth. But it's hard work fer some uv them t' pull thru," added Goarden, with a sigh.

"Do you ever have any quarrels on the road during the progress of the work?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; lots uv times. This very season Peerie Cameron an' Black Dougald got into a argyment es t' wich wore th' most 'spensive boots. Arter a wile they got to fitin' right on th' road, an' they wuz havin' a purty rough time uv it when ole Nathan Larkins, th' pathmaster, hove in site. Nathan hustled up t' th' scene an' tol' th' men t' separate. Uv course they paid no 'tenshun t' him, so mountin' a great stone, ole Nathan said, 'I command peace in th' Queen's

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name.' This, uv coourse, wuz treated with contemp', an' th' men kep' right on fitin'. Then ole Nathan pulled out uv his pocket th' riot ack, wich es a magistrate he allus carried, an' thar he stood on th' big stone a-readin' uv th' riot ack, while Peerie punched Dougald an' Dougald pounded away at Peerie. Arter Nathan hed finished a-readin' uv th' ack an' hed saw it wuz no good, he sed: 'Peerie Cameron an' Black Dougald, hevin' commanded yeh t' peace in th' Queen's name an' yeh hevin' refused, I now, by virtoo o' th' power vested in me, es one o' Her Majesty's justices o' th' peace, impose a fine on both o' yeh uv ten shillin's an' sixpence halfpenny each.'

"'T' hell with yeh an' yer fine!' roared Black Dougald, an' Peerie muttered somethin' in Gallic.

"'Black Dougald,' sed Nathan, 'I fine yeh one pound ten more fer insultin' an' defyin' o' Her Majesty's representative; an' yeh, Peerie Cameron, arter I git yer Gallic interpreted, ef I find ye've been insultin' me, too, I'll fine yeh th' same figger.'

"Wall, th' fighters paid no 'tenshun t' Nathan, but fought out thar battle t' th' end, an' ony quit when they hed hed enuff, wich is th' usual practis with men.

"Yes," added Goarden, as I was leaving, "statue labour is all right, but yeh want a good pathmaster, an' it's a fine thing t' hev a cove like Flett t' amoose th' boys an' keep thar speerits up."

CHAPTER XVI

NATHAN LARKINS, "THE LOCAL PREACHER"

WHEN Nathan, the pathmaster, returned from his visit to the gang over the hill, it was not difficult to perceive that he was disturbed in mind. He lost no time in disclosing the nature of the trouble.

"Muckle Peter," he said, "has just threatened me with violence if I dig a drain through the Widow McMannus and let the water into him."

It should be explained that Nathan referred to the land owned by Mrs. McMannus and Muckle Peter, but it was often the habit to refer to a settler's farm, or that portion of the roadway in front of his farm, as if it were the settler himself. Thus when Lame Sandy, One-eyed Saunders, Peter, or Nathan spoke of digging a drain through Mrs. McMannus, they merely referred to deepening the ditch on the Concession in front of her farm, to allow the water to flow down the road. In the same way I have often heard settlers speak of changing the course of the creek and "sending it through Lame Sandy," or of "running a road through Muckle Peter," or "driving a team through Dougal McTavish."

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"It was all I could do to avoid an assault on the Queen's highway," resumed Nathan, "which would have been a terrible scandal in the country, had the facts ever reached Her Majesty's ears, so violent was Muckle Peter. He declared that if I did as was proposed, he would have the 'lah' on me."

In fact, Muckle Peter had been irreconcilable, and bringing his fist down on the handle of a scraper with such violence that he broke the handle off short, had delivered this ultimatum, "Jest es sure es Heaven, Nathan, if you dig that drain through Mrs. McMannus an' let the water into me, I'll 'llow th' lah tae tak' its coourse."

This was the strongest threat that Muckle Peter ever used. In fact, he regarded it as the most powerful menace that he could employ. For what could be more terrible than to invoke the law, the majestic law, on his behalf? It was not as if he threatened Nathan to "have the lah on him," that was putting it in the mildest possible form, which, if carried out, might only entail considerable financial loss; but when he threatened to "'llow th' lah tae tak' its coourse," it was different. It meant unutterable and irretrievable ruin to any one upon whom the "coourse" might flow.

With such earnestness and unction did Muckle Peter always give utterance to the threat, that the settlers finally came to regard it as a terrible consummation, to

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be avoided at all hazards; so it was not to be wondered at that Nathan was visibly disturbed at the threat that had just been made by the fierce Scotsman.

"It's not so much that I fear Peter himself," Nathan exclaimed; "but I would not like to be the cause of settin' the entire legal machinery in motion, — something which might bring ruin on the community, and lead to us all being turned out of house and home."

And so, after consultation, it was decided, in order to avoid "letting the water into Muckle Peter" and thereby entailing the terrible legal consequences, to put in a culvert, bring the water across the road, and "let it into" Blind Ranald, who could not see what change might result, and who was a mild and retiring man, not likely in any event to offer any resistance. Thus was the crisis avoided, and the road work allowed to proceed without interruption.

It was during the performance of the statute labour that I learned much about old Nathan Larkins, the pathmaster. I was holding the scraper for Jock, the drover, that week, and Jock, who had lived in the neighbourhood for twenty-five years, with the exception of an annual summer excursion into the back townships to buy cattle and horses, and who knew the idiosyncrasies of every settler, entertained me immensely with stories and reminiscences about Nathan.

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"It wuz in th' wet fall uv '36," said Jock, "thet Nathan drifted into the settlement. He came in with a wanderin' band o' reviv'lists who preached hell-fire so airnestly thet yeh could a'most smell th' sulphur. Wall, they made no success o' th' job here. Th' camp-meetin's they held wuz a dead failure, an' often wound up hilariously, fer Malcolm declar'd he niver sold so much beer in th' history o' th' Ninth Concession. Wall, th' upshot wuz, th' company got stranded, an' we hed t' tak' up a kleckshin t' send them off. We could ony git enuff t' send two, an' th' third hed t' stay. Lots wuz drawed, an' Nathan wuz elected t' stay. P'raps he wuz not th' wust o' th' lot. He made a big push t' keep up th' meetin's, declarin' es he'd been a preacher in th' ole lan', an' know'd 'xactly how t' do th' trick."

"And do you suppose he ever was?" I asked.

"Wall," said Jock, aifter some reflection, "it's purty hard t' tell. He must 'a' hed some experience somewhar, fer he kin put up th' mos' powerful prayer yeh iver heered. D'ye mean t' say thet yeh niver heered Nathan pray?"

I had to confess that I had never been accorded that privilege.

"Wall, wall," said Jock, "yeh don't know w'at ye've missed!"

"What are his strong points, Jock?" I asked.

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"His strong p'intst!" said Jock, with enthusiasm. "Wby, he holds th' hlv-y-weight champeenship fer prayers, frum th' First Concession t' tb' Thlrteenth, an' frum th' town-line t' tb' Snow Road. He usually be-gins at th' Garden o' Eden, passes on down thru Noab an' Abrim an' Moses, touchin' on ony uv th' leadin' events in them four er five books o' Moses, relates tb' rasslin' match between Jacob an' tb' angel, refers famil-iar-like t' th' kings an' other aristocracy. He finishes off the Chronicles in 'alf a column notis, but spends consid'erable time belpin' Nebemiah rebuild th' walls o' Jerusalem. Then he suffers with Job fer a spell, rejoices with David, an' quotes extensively frum th' Psalms uv tbet gentleman. An' arter tbet he helps kill Goliath o' Gath, gives Solomon p'inters on how th' Proverbs should bev been wrote, talks so familiar 'bout Isaiab thet you'd think him an' th' prophet hed been batchin' together, laments with Jeremiah, describes th' appearance o' th' lions in th' den, an' overhauls Shad-rack, Meshack, an' Abednego. Arter that, be draws a long breath an' plunges into th' New Test'mint, an' wades ahead until he finally fetches up at th' celestial city, an' th' scarlet woman on' tb' hill, an' th' beast with seven horns. Tben he slashes roun' agen, cov-erin' mucb o' th' ole groun', unless some one calls out 'time,' when Nathan fetches up with a sudden jerk an' says 'Amen.'"

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After lighting his pipe and taking a few vigorous pulls at it, Jock resumed:—

“Yes, I niver met Nathan’s equal t’ pray. I niver encountered ony minister o’ th’ gospel in good standin’ in these parts who could make so all-embracin’ a prayer es Nathan. Indeed, it is th’ verdict fer six townships ’bout that he can put up th’ mos’ powerful prayer o’ ony individool who hes iver struck these parts. Ef yeh could only hire a boy t’ wake yeh up es Nathan gets down t’ th’ peroration, yeh would be more’n paid fer ony loss o’ sleep, fer when Nathan hes covered th’ hull groun’, he will throw back his head in rale gran’ style, close his eyes, give a majestic sweep o’ his han’s, an’ cry out, ‘Blow, oh, ye east winds; blow, oh, ye south; blow, oh, ye west winds; blow, oh, ye north.’ I niver could understand w’at Nathan intended, but ’twas gran’, an’ paid me well fer gettin’ woke up an’ losin’ my sleep.”

“He must be a marvel, Jock,” I observed.

“Oh, yes,” replied Jock, “he’s a hull team, is Nathan, an’ specially so at camp-meetin’s. His voice carries fer more’n a mile an’ penetrates parts o’ th’ bush whar those who air wont to ‘wait on th’ Gospel’ in this manner might be strollin’. One evenin’ wen Nathan wuz doin’ o’ himself proud in one uv his star prayers at th’ meeting-house, he worked himself into quite a state uv excitement. He wuz prayin’ away an’

NATHAN LARKINS, "THE LOCAL PREACHER"

said he wished t' raise his voice so thet it would be heered in th' uttermost parts o' th' airth.

"'Jest raise th' windy, Muckle Peter,' I whispered t' th' percentor, loud 'nuff fer th' con'gation t' hear. Wall, they all laffed right out.

"I remember one incident touchin' Nathan rale well," said Jock, chuckling to himself at the recollection. "A scapegrace had been put in th' lock-up fer a month er two fer committin' an assault while drunk, an' Nathan undertook t' carry th' Gospel t' his cell. Many an' many a night afore th' man's time wuz up Nathan used t' make th' old rafters o' the jail ring es, t' use his own expression, he 'rassled wi' th' Lord' on behalf o' th' errin' man. Nathan used t' raise th' windys o' th' jail on th' nights when he wuz engaged in tryin' t' pluck th' 'brand frum th' burnin',' es he put it. With nothin' but th' bars t' confine his voice t' th' man's cell, Nathan would pour out his soul an' call upon th' Lord so's yeh could hear him fer miles. Nothing," said Jock, "could hev happened t' make th' people feel more sympathetic like fer th' pris'ner es them air long prayers an' rasslins o' Nathan's. I came mighty near takin' roun' a petition t' th' gov'ment myself t' set th' man free, an' I certainly will ef setch a thing iver happens agen. Ef th' pris'ner hed taken a fit an' killed Nathan some night, 'twould 'a' bin a great relief t' th' nighbourhood."

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"Has Nathan no other accomplishments besides his ability to pray?" I asked.

"Oh, yes!" replied Jock, promptly. "He allus takes 'speclal pleasure in officiatin' at ony religious er semi-religious er doctrinal function, an' consequently revels in christenin's. His ingenoolty in securin' th' administration uv sitch ordinances is reely strikin'. He seldom gits ony pay fer it, but it's gen'ally good fer several meals an' a night's lodgin'. Th' only man es I've iver heered on, es could beat Nathan at th' table wuz Schmidt, th' Dutchman, who hes been knowed t' eat a hull turkey at one settin' an' a hull pork ham at anlther.

"Yes, yes," Jock went on, as we turned the scraper round, "I hev knowed Nathan t' travel fer miles in th' hope uv gittin' th' chance t' preside at a church getherin' uv ony kind, frum a ordination service t' a siree [tea meeting]. Standin' up with th' programme in his han' Nathan ls right at home, an' arter devotin' half a' hour t' th' item, 'Chairman's remarks,' he gen'lly proceeds t' call upon th' coir [choir] fer a selection. Them is great tea meetin's presided over by Nathan!" And Jock would chuckle long and heartily to himself at the recollection of some memories connected with them.



THE WIDOW McNABB

CHAPTER XVII

MRS. McNABB AND HER FAMILY

AS the reader already knows, Mrs. McNabb's family consisted of three boys and two girls. At the time of my coming to the settlement, the eldest son, Wallace, was between fourteen and fifteen; Willie was thirteen, Lizzie eleven, Jamie seven, and Katie three. Colin and Katie were about the same age, and as they were adapted to each other in temperament, it is not difficult to surmise that a childlike attachment sprang up between them. Katie was a kind-hearted, affectionate little thing, with great brown eyes and a wealth of curls which, as she grew older, her mother used to twist into ringlets. She was just old enough to appreciate the horror of the Wasby tragedy; she had listened with awe-stricken countenance to the family conversation about the details, and had learned about Colin's travels and perils. Her heart naturally went out to him in sympathy, interest, and almost admiration. Colin, on his part, was a warm-hearted, sentimental child, and Katie's frequent avowals of sympathy and affection for him produced the warmest

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and most enthusiastic responses, so that by the time they were six years old they were sworn comrades.

As the years passed, many a trifling rupture occurred between these allies, caused by some little difference about the ownership of marbles or chickens. They would break off relations for a day, or an hour at a time, but filled with remorse they would soon make up, and it was beautiful to witness the consideration which each would display for the other under such circumstances.

We have all been witnesses to childish comradeship of this sort, often ended later on by the departure of one or other to some distant place, or by growing differences in temperament. Perhaps, in the case of these two children, the attachment was unusually strong. Katie was prepared to stand up for and defend Colin on all occasions, and Colin was just as devoted to Katie. I remember that, though his mother had trained him to truthfulness and straightforwardness, he was detected in a most glaring untruth, uttered to shield his youthful *fidus Achates*.

I have known many mothers in my time, but I never knew one who had more perfect control of her household than had Mrs. McNabb. She had a way of making herself a perfect companion to each child. She entered into all their troubles and helped to carry their burdens. No matter how deep the sorrow that weighed

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down the juvenile heart, after it had all been "told to mother" the child was solaced, and departed with renewed confidence in the harbour where safety, security, and happiness were assured. In the same way the mother had her Harbour of Refuge, into which it was her daily, often hourly, practice to sail, and she came forth refreshed and strengthened for the struggle of life.

A Sabbath spent in the home of Mrs. McNabb constituted at once an excellent sermon and a moral tonic. It was the widow's custom after "the dinner things had been red up" to take down from the shelf the large family Bible, and read to her children who sat about her some of the grand truths and lessons contained therein. Betimes she would pause to explain in her simple, direct way anything that appeared to be obscure. It was the custom to sing selections from the metrical version of the Psalms. With her sweet, clear voice she would raise the old tunes herself, and the children would join with their treble voices. In her youthful days the widow could repeat by heart the entire Psalms and Paraphrases from "That man hath perfect blessedness" to "Praise ye the Lord, God's praise within His sanctuary raise." The majestic language and sublime imagery had doubtless played its part in moulding the character of the widow.

As time wore on, and the necessity of the boys mak-

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ing their way in the world became daily more inevitable, many an evening was spent discussing the future. The boys were ambitious, and as the prospects of success were none too promising in the settlement, it was decided that Willie should before long accept the suggestion of an uncle living in New York, who promised to secure a situation for him and see him launched upon some career. The homestead, of course, if it were ever cleared of the mortgage, would go to the eldest boy.

It was agreed, after correspondence, that Willie should start when he was eighteen years old, which would be the following spring. For months before, the anxious mother busied herself over the boy's wardrobe, knitting him a good supply of woollen socks, and preparing everything for his comfort that a thoughtful mother's heart could suggest.

When it became known throughout the settlement that Mrs. McNabb's son was going to New York to seek his fortune, many were the comments, and many the predictions of failure. Auld Peggy, however, saw in it a chance to score, and on her first call after the news was announced, she peered long and earnestly into the widow's cup and then exclaimed:—

“Losh me, Mustress McNabb, but Ah see ane o' yer bairns is gaun on a lang journey, an' he's gaun tae ane o' they beeg cities tae mak' his fortune, an' Ah'm sure he's

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gaun tae mak' it, f'r dinna ye see th' breed crumbs i' th' bottom o' th' cup?— which is sure proof th' laddie wull ane day return es reech es King Midast, or auld Solomon himsel'. Oh, but it's a happy woman ye suld be th' day, f'r Ah can see thet Wullie is gaun tae bring great luck tae th' family, an' th' day wull come, Mistress McNabb, whcn ye'll live tae be prood o' yer boy."

She left the widow's in the best of spirits, having drunk "twa cups o' tea," and eaten "fower slices o' hot breed," which was a delicacy to her.

May had been designated by the uncle in New York as the best month for Willie to go. The twentieth had been set down as the day to start, and it was drawing on apace. So long as the departure was viewed from a distance of a year, or six months, or even three months, it did not appear such a trial, but when it got down to a question of days, and then to hours, it began to cause deep regret in the home.

Since the death of Mr. McNabb, many years ago, there had been no break in the family circle. Notwithstanding the struggles with adversity and the difficulties sometimes experienced in making ends meet, and keeping the interest on the mortgage paid, the home had been a happy one. But Willie had to go, and the arrangements for his departure had to be completed.

His little red box had been brought down from the

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attic, where he kept it, to the "spare room," where it could be packed. Into this box the widow, with a heart burning with love for her boy, placed her gifts. There were several pairs of woollen socks, a couple of fancy flannel shirts, besides the one the lad would wear, an extra pair of trousers, and an extra coat. He was to have a brand-new pair of boots to start with, and also a new hat.

Into the box the widow also dropped a ball of yarn and a darning needle, a couple of spools of thread, a packet of needles, and some pieces of cloth for mending purposes. She also placed in it a number of little trinkets to remind the boy of home, and a small-sized Bible. In anticipation of this event, she had gone carefully through the good book and had marked in it such passages as she hoped would bring comfort to the boy, and perhaps prove a message in his periods of necessity. She had worked with her own hand a love message on a piece of cardboard, and this she placed in the book as a marker.

The day before that arranged for the departure, Willie paid a visit to those of the settlers to whom he was attached, saying good-bye to them and accepting their good wishes. When he came to shake hands with Goarden, he promised to send him the latest New York song, which promise he afterwards kept, and Goarden boasted about that song for many a day.

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Then the boy went about the farm and visited the scenes that were so dear to him. There was the beech tree where he and his brothers had carved their names many years before. Opening his old knife, he printed beneath the names the word "Good-bye." He paused at the spring in the bush and, stooping down for a drink, smiled at the solemn expression of the face reflected in the water, and, looking around, was surprised to notice that the shades were lengthening.

He visited the cattle, almost every one of which recognised in him a friend. He knew the cows each by name, — indeed, it was he who had named nearly every one of them. When he called them, to speak a word of farewell, so solemn did they appear to his imagination, that he almost fancied they understood what he was saying. Then he took a look at the sheep, among which was a pet lamb that he had reared. Then he visited the stable and caressed his favourite mare, after which he entered the house. He spent most of the evening with the others around the fireplace. They were all rather silent, for everybody felt the constraint of the occasion.

But the good mother could not let her boy go without a final talk; and after the lad retired to his humble room she sought his bedside, and remained with him till after midnight. We shall not intrude upon it, but Willie never forgot it. When she came forth from her

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son's room there was a calm, resigned light on her countenance. She had committed her boy to the keeping of Him who commands the tempests, and she felt that it was all right.

Willie did not get much sleep that night. His mind was in a whirl about the great city to which he was going, and he wondered how the great room and great bedstead, which he fancied would be his portion in New York, would compare with his humble attic room and his trundle-bed.

It had been arranged that Willie should go with Malcolm, the beer pedlar, as far as Brockville. Malcolm would see him across the river there, and place him in the stage, which would carry him to the nearest railway point, from which he could easily make his way to the great metropolis, where his uncle would meet and take charge of him.

The little red box was bound up with cord and deposited at the door, awaiting the arrival of Malcolm. Willie could not eat much; there was that great lump in his throat which prevented it. He moved uneasily about, with his hat drawn down over his forehead and his hands in his pockets, waiting for the last moment.

"Here's Malcolm!" said Jamie, looking out of the door as the rumbling of a wagon was heard.

The widow started uneasily, and hurried the preparation of Willie's lunch basket.

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"Come!" said Malcolm, as he entered the house. "Is the lad ready? We ought to be halfway to the black swamp by this time."

The red box was swung up on the wagon and tied there securely, and then the moment came to say good-bye.

Willie began with the youngest. "Good-bye, Katie dear."

"Good-bye, Colin, old fellow."

"Good-bye, Jamie. You can have my rabbits, my old jack-knife, and the little blue box with the keys."

"Good-bye, Lizzie, write a letter soon and tell me all about the farm."

"Good-bye, Wallace, be a brave boy, and between us we'll get the mortgage paid off some day."

Then Willie turned to his mother, who was standing at the door, pale, but calm. He could not give utterance to the words that he had intended saying to her and that he had rehearsed so often. He threw his arms about her neck and then rushed from the house, and mounted the box where Malcolm was sitting. The whip was cracked; and Willie had gone forth into the world to seek his fortunes.

Here is Willie's first letter, which was received at the old homestead about three weeks after his departure:—

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NEW YORK, JUNE 3, 18—.

MY DEAR MOTHER, BROTHERS, and SISTERS: It all seems so queer, after the farm; but here I am, in this great city,— a poor insignificant cipher. I used to think myself of some consequence, but one has only to come here to realise how very small and unimportant he is. I suppose you will all be anxious to know how I got along. Malcolm will have told you about our trip to Brockville. After that, I was terribly lonesome. A kind old man who was going to New York helped me along, and when we reached here, he helped me to find uncle. Uncle isn't a bit like what I fancied him. He started to find me a situation yesterday, and got me in as office boy in the N. Y. C. & W. railway office. I am only to get a pound a week, but that will leave me a little after paying my board and room, and they say if I do well I shall get more pay. Uncle does not appear to be very prosperous, and I shall not live with him. He found a lodging place for me on the sixth flat of a big house near the railway office, and here I am to-night in my little room. Uncle doesn't live in the grand house I expected, and my room is not so fine as I anticipated. My bed too seems no better than my dear old trundle one.

I had expected so much, and I had fancied that everything here was grand and bright, and that everybody was well off. But it is a thousand times worse than in the Scotch Settlement, and the city seems so wicked, and nobody seems to care for you. Tell Wallace the farm is much finer than the city, and that some day I shall ask him to trade places with me, if I ever get any position worth trading. Lizzie must give the cows and other animals a treat in my name. Have Jamie take good care of the rabbits, and tell him when I get to be

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a great man I shall send for him. And Colin must come here just as soon as the way opens for him. Kiss dear Katie for me. Remember me to Auld Peggy, and give my love to all that inquire for me.

Your loving son,

WILLIE.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SCHOOLMASTER

TEN years passed quietly away after my coming to the Scotch Settlement when an incident occurred in Colin's history which had some effect on his subsequent career. About this time there came to the settlement a man who applied to the school trustees for the position of teacher. It had been vacant for some months, owing to the sudden marriage of "the little missus," as the former school-teacher was called by many of the settlers, to a young man who drifted into the settlement selling books. "The little missus took a shine to him," and together they "left for the States," which was at that period attracting many young Canadians.

Nothing was known of the new applicant beyond the fact that he gave the name of Simon Smallpiece, and professed to have taught school for some years in the vicinity of By Town (now Ottawa). Like many others, he drove into the settlement with John Malcolm, the beer pedlar, who was returning from one of his periodical trips along the Grand River. The teacher had heard from John that the Ninth Conces-

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sion school was vacant. He was not long in making terms with the trustees, who, in view of the fact that he was a male teacher and likely to wield a firm hand with the sturdy and often rough children, decided to allow him thirty pounds a year,—a sum which at that early period was deemed a very liberal salary.

Simon was a man slight in stature and below the average in height. His head was of that elongated cast which is sometimes mistaken for a sure sign of intelligence. His shoulders were narrow and drooping, his mouth exceedingly large, and his upper lip was so short that when he laughed his face appeared to be malformed. This, however, he seldom did, except at the expense of some child who was the object of his sarcasm.

In a back settlement like that in which our story is laid, the schoolmaster was usually an individual of much more than ordinary importance. By a great many people, every expression that fell from his lips was supposed to contain nuggets of wisdom, and there were always many ready to sit at his feet as if he were a veritable law-giver. Even his ordinary talk was supposed to be intensely clever.

I never knew a teacher more ready than Simon Smallpiece to claim his prerogative in this respect, so that it soon came to pass that he paraded about as if he held a mortgage on every homestead.

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In his relations to the children he was guided by the financial circumstances and influence of their parents. When prizes were distributed at Christmas, although paid for by all the people, they were usually awarded to the sons and daughters of the trustees or to children of influential settlers. To the minister and elders he catered by teaching in the Sunday-school, and by a general display of religious zeal.

The children of the poorer settlers fared ill at his hands, and the parents were fearful of complaining either to him or to the trustees, lest he should revenge himself upon the youngsters. Besides, as long as Simon had the ear of the trustees, and they could be relied upon to stand by him, complaint was likely to prove of little avail.

Those children who, in addition to being poor, lacked a father to defend them, were the worst off of all. He was of course especially offensive to the Widow McNabb's children, above all to Colin. Colin had by this time grown to be a fine strapping lad of fourteen. He was a manly, straightforward, truthful boy, possessing a frankness and directness which a poor judge of human nature might mistake for bravado.

Such a nature was sure to provoke Simon's antagonism, and the latter adopted every possible means to humiliate the lad. He would even make covert references to Colin's antecedents, implying that he was the

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offspring of Wasby. To the credit of most of the children it must be said that they had no sympathy with Simon.

Many and many a time he belaboured Coiln over his head and neck with long, seven-fingered taws, knotted and burned on the ends. Such brutal punishment, which raised welts on the boy's flesh inches in length, and which sometimes terminated in abrasures of the skin, was borne in silence by the lad.

Indeed, neither the widow nor I knew of the length to which Simon went in his treatment of Coiln. Had I been at home he might have spoken to me of the master's conduct to others, as well as to himself; but it was during the winter that he went to school, and at that time I was usually away in logging camps. The boy, too, had a sort of pride that kept him from complaining of a "licking" or asking for protection from future "lickings." He did not wish to distress the widow or involve her in trouble, so he said nothing to her of his own treatment, and he convinced Katie and the rest that they should not do so either. He did report Simon's treatment of some others, and a protest was made to the trustees, but they upheld Simon. It should be remembered that at this time a belief in the efficacy and necessity of frequent severe corporal punishment was still strong. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" was at that period supposed to be one of the wisest texts in the Scriptures.

CHAPTER XIX

COLIN'S FIRST SCHOOL FIGHT

WHO that has ever attended a country school cannot recall how hard an ordeal it is for the new scholar who timidly enters upon the life. There are always to be found boys devoid of the finer feelings of sympathy, who take a somewhat fiendish delight in making the new boy win his spurs by fighting his way up. Such was the practice at this period with the "new boy" at the Ninth Concession school. Scarcely was the first recess announced than there was a rush for "the battle-ground," for every school had its fighting place. A fight was promptly arranged between the "new boy" and some other lad about the same size. The chip was placed on the second boy's shoulder, and the "new boy" was urged to knock it off. Picture his situation, with no kind monitor to advise him, and thinking it had to be done. With desperate courage he knocked the chip off. Then there was a scuffle, and the two children were engaged in combat, while the young bullies who set them to fight stood by, "egging them on," and thoroughly enjoying the "sport."

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Whitey Roberts's hoy, Dannie, had always been the ringleader in promoting these infantile encounters. He it was who usually selected the antagonist, put the chip on the shoulder, and if the hoys were backward about beginning the encounter, pushed them together in such a way as to break the *status quo* and precipitate hostilities.

The day on which Jamie, the six-year-old son of the Widow McMannus, first went to school, Dannie had him promptly matched against Bill Pepper's boy Tom at "the poplars," which was the battle-ground for the school, and which was just below the playground. Tom was a little older than Jamie, and much heavier. He was punishing the latter rather severely when there was a shout and a rush, and Colin, who had been hurriedly sent for from the playground by a friend of Jamie's, stepped into the arena, and seizing the children, who were locked in a deadly grip, set them apart.

Colin was furious. He had always been fond of little Jamie, and to see the child covered with blood set him on fire. With a face blazing with wrath he exclaimed:—

"If the miserable bully who started this fighting will step into this ring, I'll teach him something that he'll remember!"

A wild whoop of approval greeted this bold challenge, and a dozen juvenile voices exclaimed:—

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"Now, Dannie, you've got the stump! You know it was you set Tom and Jamie fighting. Surely, you won't be such a big coward as not to fight Colin, seeing he has stumped you out!"

The boys were all pleased at the challenge, and most of them were anxious to see the young bully punished. But Dannie, while he was always ready and anxious to set others fighting, was not so ready to do it himself. He was not a coward, but he was one of those boys who delighted to make mischief without facing the consequences, so he hesitated for a moment or two, as he surveyed Jamie's angry champion.

"Come!" roared Colin, growing angrier every moment, and aching to be at the instrument of Jamie's torture. "If you don't peel off your coat and jump into this ring, I'll whip you in your tracks!"

Dannie realised that he had to face the music, and that Colin would keep his word, so he reluctantly discarded his coat and waistcoat, and stood before him in the ring.

Colin had also laid aside his coat and waistcoat, and as the two strapping lads faced each other, the young band of excited spectators held their breath, for they knew that they were about to witness a struggle for blood.

Dannie was the heavier of the two, and was con-

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siderably taller than Colin. His face was flushed deeply, and he wore a dogged, heavy look, which indicated that he intended to do his very best. What Colin lacked in weight he made up in agility and alertness, and the only advantage that Dannie seemed to have, was his longer reach and greater strength.

Colin, whose excitement seemed to leave him as Dannie entered the ring which the boys had formed, was very pale. It was said of old, and I think with truth, that a pale face indicated that the blood had gone to the heart, where it does its most effective work in sustaining the strength of the combatant during the fray. Two of the larger boys arranged to show "fair play," and everything being ready, the boys took up their positions, and the contest began.

Dannie, with his head down, made an impetuous rush at Colin, but the latter jumped nimbly to one side and gave his antagonist a stinging blow on the ear. This enraged Dannie, and vowing vengeance on Colin, he again rushed at him wildly, striking right and left. Colin tried to keep out of his way, but did not succeed as well as the first time, and consequently received an ugly blow on the chin, which caused the blood to trickle.

"First blood for Dannie!" shouted a couple of his friends.

Nothing daunted, however, Colin sparred coolly about

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his antagonist, waiting an opportunity to strike. Elated with his success, Dannie was growing more confident and less wary. Colin observed this, and making a feint for the chest with his left hand, landed a stinging blow under Dannie's eye with his right.

The blow staggered Dannie for an instant, and there went up a wild cheer from Colin's sympathisers: "Good boy, Colin! Give him another and he's done!"

But Dannie was far from being "done," and quickly recovering himself, he rushed at Colin again, and seizing him in his arms tried to throw him. He had the better hold, but it would have been all he could do to throw his agile antagonist, had not Colin's foot caught in a root, and this caused him to fall with Dannie on top of him. His head struck heavily on the hard ground, and the fall partially stunned him.

In a moment, however, Colin was on his feet again, and although dazed for a few seconds, he was not beaten.

"Do you give in?" said Dannie, coming up to him and getting ready to strike him again.

"Give in!" answered Colin, with contemptuous emphasis. "Not if I know it!" And he rushed menacingly at his antagonist. A swinging blow caught Dannie beneath the ear. The boys got into close quarters again, and for several minutes the contest

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waged was a hot one. Sometimes Dannie appeared to have the best of it, but the next moment Colin, looking pale, determined, and triumphant, struck out to right and left, raining his well-directed blows upon Dannie's face.

It was evident to all that this pace could not be kept up much longer, and that the fight must end soon. All held their breath, realising that, as the boys were pretty evenly matched, much depended on the fortunes of war.

Shakespeare has truly said that "Thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just," and Colin knew that his cause was just. Spurred by this conviction, after the two lads had rested a brief space, Colin waded in, remarking quietly, "Now, Dannie, I am going to finish you this round." No knight of the sword whose contests have been immortalised by the pen, ever fought with greater determination and was sustained by more righteous sentiment than animated the boy's breast, as he started in to "finish Dannie."

Dannie made a vicious pass at Colin's face, but he fell short, and the undelivered blow swung his body round. Quick as lightning, Colin went at him, and before Dannie knew what had happened, Colin gave him two smashing blows in the face. These stunned him, and, before he could recover, Colin swung his left arm around Dannie's neck and had him instantly in

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chancery. Then the triumphant Colin continued to belabour Dannie in the face.

"When you've had enough, just say so, and I'll stop!" said Colin, keeping up the fusillade on Dannie's imprisoned head.

Presently, "I give in! You've got me licked!" came a voice from beneath Colin's arm. He released him, and the fight was over.

"Three cheers for Colin!" shouted a voice, and "the poplars" rang with cheers for the young champion.

"I guess I've put a stop to his setting new boys to fighting," said Colin, coolly, as he resumed his coat and waistcoat and started for the pump to wash his face, which bore evidences of the struggle through which he had just passed.

And sure enough, Colin had put an effectual stop to it, for during the period in which he remained at school no one was ever known to set the small boys fighting. The two young fighters bore each other no ill-will, however, and were ever afterwards on cordial terms.

When Colin returned to the widow's that evening, Mrs. McNabb observed the marks of the struggle through which he had passed, and asked him about it. He frankly told her the story. While proud of the boy for his manly conduct in defending Jamie,

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Mrs. McNabb, fearful lest approval should help to cultivate a quarrelsome spirit in the lad, spent half an hour by his bedside that night before he fell asleep giving him homely Christian advice.

The master of course had heard all about the affair, for he boarded with Dannie's parents, and was, according to common report, "sweet on Kearstie," Dannie's eldest sister, — a great, easy-going, sonsie lassie, accustomed to giggle upon the slightest provocation, and possessing less than a reasonable amount of wit and shrewdness. Simon would have taken prompt notice of the fight if he could have punished Colin and let Dannie off, without creating trouble for himself; but the neighbours had learned the facts, and sympathy with Colin was general. So Simon ignored the matter, secretly resolving to get even with Colin and humiliate him.

CHAPTER XX

WHAT AULD PEGGY OVERHEARD AT THE CROSS-ROADS

COLIN had proved a faithful boy, and had worked for the widow even more earnestly and industriously, if that were possible, than her own children. He took the deepest interest in everything relating to the farm and to the welfare of his adopted mother's family, and when the day to pay the interest on the mortgage came around, no one was more anxious than he to know that the money was on hand. During the summer months Colin worked on the farm, helping to plant and gather the crop, and displaying the greatest energy and ingenuity in his efforts to serve Mrs. McNabb. In the late fall and winter months Colin attended the public school, where, unfortunately, Simon Smallpiece was still the master. That worthy, by his scheming and obsequiousness, had been able to hoodwink the trustees, and he still held the fort, notwithstanding his growing unpopularity and the sinister stories that were being spread about the settlement concerning him.

"It's no' f'r a puir auld body like me tae be interferin' in they matters," said Auld Peggy to Mrs. McNabb one

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day, about this time. "But Ah mæ n jist tell 'e what Ah seen and heered wi' my ain een an' ears. Ah wis comin' doon th' rawd frae Tuffy's Corners twa nights ago, an' whan Ah cam' near tae th' spout whar th' rawds cross, Ah heered voices, an' Ah paused tae lussen, an' what dae ye think Ah seen an' heered?"

Here Auld Peggy paused, as her habit always was when she came to the interesting part of her story. She could not refrain from tantalising her listener, and, if possible, provoking even greater curiosity than was already aroused.

One excellent plan to adopt in hastening Auld Peggy's story was to underestimate its importance. These subtle tactics the widow thoroughly understood, and so, in disinterested tones, she opined that it was probably John Malcolm scolding Muckle Peter for drinking his beer when his back was turned.

"Teuch, Mustress McNabb! Will ye naver be wise?" responded Auld Peggy, with warmth, and thoroughly disgusted at her host's obtuseness. "Ah wad ask ye tae guess, but ye naver could. Na, na, — it wis na ane else than th' maister an' Kearstie Roberts, yoan braw sonsie lassie wi' th' braid shouthers, th' little wut, an' th' superflouty [this was the biggest word that Auld Peggy ever attempted] o' gigglin'. Kearstie wis urgin' Simon tae marry her. There wis na gigglin' about th' puir lassie yoan nicht, an' Ah couldna but feel f'r her, f'r

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she maun jist hae trusted th' betrayer, believin' he wis sae guid a man thet he wadna deceive her.

"Ah tell 'e what, Mustress McNabb, Ah could naver bring mysel' tae trust yo'n man. Ah tuk a scunner tae hum a'most frae th' first, an' whan Ah used tae see hum coortin' Kearstie, Ah intended tae warn Mustress Roberts. But she an' her guid maun hed aye sicna exalted opeenion o' th' maister, an' aye talkit sae high about his great attainments an' Christian qualitles, — 'fr,' said Mustress Roberts, 'dis he na teach in th' Sawbath-skule an' lead in prayer whan th' meenister's awa'?' — thet Ah feared she wadna believe aught again' hlm.

"Wall, th' shoart an' th' lang o't," continued Auld Peggy, "is thet th' maister has betrayed puir Kearstie, an' mark ma words, although Ah heered hum gie her his soalem promise an' vow thet he'd marry her wi'in twa months, Ah dinna believe he'll dae onything o' th' kind, but wull leave th' puir lassie tae rassel wi' her trouble alane."

Auld Peggy's recital brought real pain to the heart of Mrs. McNabb, who, on this occasion, did not doubt the old woman's story, as it corroborated the hints which a few of the inhabitants were beginning to drop.

It has been intimated that any popularity which Simon ever possessed was beginning to wane, and once the process began it went on rapidly. The marvel is that a man like Simon, so heartless and

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cruel, and so utterly devoid of human feelings and ideals, without which no individual should be allowed to teach children, had been permitted for so long a time to hold the school. The means by which he managed to do so, however, have been explained. He had gone on practising his cruelties upon the children, and, in many cases, had almost extinguished in the youngsters those finer and gentler graces which are so beautiful, and the cultivation of which is so desirable. The man never seemed to possess a single ideal. He did not even exalt truth-speaking and truth-acting; indeed, his daily conduct served to break down any ideals which the children may have acquired elsewhere. It was of course impossible for him to inculcate manliness in the pupils, for he never understood what it was himself. The pupils whose parents were prominent and influential he praised and exalted, the children whose parents were poor and uninfluential he oppressed and degraded. Simon had been known to lift Colin and other pupils right off the floor by their ears, and this he did for the "fun of the thing," as he would say. When he was in a rage he thought nothing of dragging children out of their seats by their ears or hair.

In the event of his taws being mislaid or lost, he would cut heavy rods or gads from the trees surrounding the schoolhouse, and with these rough instruments of torture he would belabour the children upon the most

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sensitive parts of their hands, bare feet, and bare legs. Nothing seemed to give him such unalloyed delight as to make the barefooted children dance while he switched them unmercifully on their bare feet. It was not only in the administration of corporal punishment that he was brutal, and God knows he was brutal in that respect, but it was in his sneers and partiality that his most cruel work was done.

Many years have passed over both Simon's head and mine since the day, soon after his departure, when the discovery was made by me of his conduct towards Colin and the others. For years I carried the resolve in my heart to thrash the man on sight; and often, when I reached the words "as we forgive those who trespass against us," Simon's repulsive figure would rise before my mental vision and almost bar the utterance.

God knows I would not like to be unjust to Simon, nor judge him harshly, for I am now an old man, but when I recall the bright young lives into which he sowed the tares of distrust, unfairness, untruthfulness, and cruelty, when he should have sown the seeds of manliness and kindness, and the thrice-sacred seeds of truth and honour, I am tempted to curse the hour that saw his birth.

Lest the reader might think that I have overdrawn the picture of the injustice and cruelties practised by

WHAT AULD PEGGY OVERHEARD

Simon upon his pupils, I quote an extract from a volume entitled "Shanty, Forest, and River Life in the Backwoods of Canada," written by the Rev. Joshua Fraser, who assisted in looking after the spiritual welfare of the Presbyterian settlers in Eastern Ontario fully fifty years ago, and who often officiated in the Scotch Settlement, where the scenes in this story are laid. Mr. Fraser writes :—

"As I have intimated, he [the teacher] was severe in his code of discipline. 'Severe' did I say?—that is no word for it. His castigations and punishments were simply horrible,—yea, fiendish. I firmly believe that the old man thought, and had an honest, conscientious conviction in his soul, that the beginning and end of all sound and effective imparting of knowledge lay in the tips of the taws. Whatever his theory was, this was his practice, anyhow. I don't think that more horrible thrashings were ever inflicted, either in ancient or modern times, than those which the unhappy youths had to undergo in that old square stone schoolhouse in the village of Lanark, Ontario, at the merciless hands of old Robert Mason. His taws were the most horrible instrument of torture that could be imagined. Leather was dear in those days, and as the taws were stolen at every possible opportunity that occurred, the 'maister' found it too costly a business to go to the shoemaker every time he required a new pair; so he would rummage around the barnyards of the neighbours until he found an old horse trace which had been thrown away, and had been drying and hardening in the sun for months. Then his soul would be delighted, and he would forthwith fashion it into the direst weapon of cas-

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tigation that the heart of man or demon could devise. He would pare down one end of it so that he could conveniently wield it with both hands, and the other end he would slice into three or four tails, and then singe and harden them in the fire to give them more weight and sting. With this awful weapon, perhaps five feet in length, in his hand, he would go to work as deliberately as a man in chopping down a tree. I have seen as many as a dozen pupils ranged before him, each waiting in gloomy silence his turn to undergo chastisement. If it was in warm weather, each one, as he came forward, had to lay his hand down on the cold stoye (which was never removed summer or winter), and then, after a long, deliberate wipe of his forehead, shaggy eyebrows, nose, mouth, and chin, with his left hand, he would bring down the taws upon the hand of the luckless culprit with a mighty pegh l just as you hear a man give with every swing of the axe upon the tree before him. After each one had received his dozen or more allotted 'licks,' the old man would be somewhat exhausted, but I believe it was a pleasant kind of exhaustion to him, and kept him in good humour for hours afterwards."

CHAPTER XXI

THE CRISIS AT THE SPELLING-MATCH

ONE day in March, just two months before Colin reached his seventeenth birthday, there was a spelling-match. It was on Friday, and it was often the custom to hold spelling-matches on Fridays, just before the school was let out for the week.

The practice was to appoint two captains and call sides; then the master would alternate from side to side in giving words to spell. The side that survived the longest won, and the pupil that was last on the floor enjoyed unusual distinction. It happened this day that Katie and Colin were on opposite sides, and that they were the last two on the floor. They did not, however, mind being rivals in this way, for they could both spell well and each would have rejoiced to see the other win, although they both did their best. There were, perhaps, no two scholars in the school whom Simon was less anxious to see win the honours of the match, and the jealousy he felt, was beginning to exhibit itself in the way he gave out the words.

"Now, Katie, I want you to spell 'imminent,'" said Simon.

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"E-m-i-n-e-n-t," spelled Katie.

"Wrong," said Simon; "step down."

"Would you mind repeating the word?" said Katie, for she was confident that she had spelled the word correctly.

Simon was growing very angry and was not going to give Katie the information, when Colin broke in:—

"It's 'imminent,' Katie, that he means, something near or impending, not eminent."

"Oh," said Katie, "I could spell that word," which she immediately did.

But the storm of Simon's wrath, which he had repressed for a longer time "than wis his usual," as Auld Peggy would say, burst out in unrestrained fury. He made for Colin with a wild rush, when poor Katie, whose sympathy and fear for the lad fairly carried her away, stepped in between them.

The blow with the burnt taws that Simon had aimed at Colin's head fell with stinging effect across poor Katie's face and eyes. The girl, half dazed and smarting with the frightful pain, dropped into a seat. Colin leaped to her side, his face pale and agitated.

"Are you hurt very badly, Katie dear?" he said, as he raised her childlike form in his arms. But Katie only sobbed convulsively in answer.

When Colin satisfied himself that Katie was not in danger, he turned to Simon, whose face was ablaze with

THE CRISIS AT THE SPELLING-MATCH

malice, and who seemed anxious to vent his wrath on the lad.

"You aimed that blow at me," said Colin, walking up to Simon in a manner which caused the master to wince. He had never seen that look on Colin's face before, and it made him feel uneasy. His wrath began to subside rapidly.

"Yes," answered Simon, for he felt he was before a presence that compelled an answer.

"Well," said Colin, slowly, and with deliberation, "had it struck me, you might have escaped the consequences, but your time had to come sooner or later, and it is just as well that it should come now. You have been a brute, sir, yes, a brute. I am surprised that I did not kill you long ago. Do you see those marks on my neck?" said Colin, loosening his shirt collar and exposing a series of black and blue streaks. "Those were made by your cruel taws. It had to come to an end sooner or later, and I'm glad that the end has come. Here," said Colin, savagely, "give me those taws!"

Simon perceived the purpose that was in Colin's mind, and he began to tremble like the coward that he was.

"Here, Jamie McMannus, run for the trustees," he said, fear taking possession of him, for Colin was quite as big as he, and had the advantage of being much younger.

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But Jamie, staunch friend that he was of Colin's, and remembering how his champion had defended him under "the poplars" when he thrashed Dannie, refused to budge an inch.

"Well, Dannie, you go," said Simon. But Dannie, who had recently been hearing murmurings at home that satisfied him that the master was not all he should be, also refused to move.

Simon then appealed to Pete Pepper, the meanest boy in school; but when Pete was about to start, Colin stopped him. "Pete," he said, "if you budge an inch, I'll trounce you." This threat had the desired effect, and Simon realised that he must face his antagonist.

"Hand me those taws!" again demanded Colin. But Simon, realising what Colin intended to do, refused, and was making towards the door, when Colin rushed at him, and with overmastering strength tore the instrument of torture out of his hands.

Several of the larger boys, encouraged by Colin's example, were rolling up their sleeves, preparing to help him if necessary, and this thoroughly frightened the craven Simon. The rest of the boys and girls in the school gazed on the spectacle, awe-stricken, and even Katie forgot her pain and was also a trembling spectator of the struggle.

It was beyond comprehension to see the authority of this tyrant defied right in the schoolhouse, and to see

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him chased about the room and brought to bay at last by the aroused and determined Colin. With a strength that amazed himself, and with the blood coursing his veins like fire, Colin dragged the master up the aisle to the front of the school.

"Now, Simon," he said, "I want you to take off your coat!"

Simon, of course, did not do so, whereat Colin went at him like a tiger and tore the garment from his back. The menacing attitude of the big boys, who were prepared to assist Colin if necessary, seemed to deprive the master of any courage to resist.

Then, swinging the taws aloft, Colin brought them down with terrific force upon Simon's back. The tyrant cried out with pain, but it seemed a labour of love to Colin, so thoroughly possessed was he with the idea of settling an old score and wiping out years of humiliation, which he and the other scholars had suffered at Simon's hands. The taws continued to descend upon Simon's head and back with unabated vigour, and it was only when Colin's arm grew tired, and when he had beaten the tyrant till he roared for mercy that he desisted, and flinging the taws contemptuously in the face of the dazed, cowering wretch who stood before him, said:—

"I think, Simon, that we are now quits, and I take my leave of you forever!"

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"Come, Katie," he said kindly, turning to his pale and trembling sweetheart, "let us be going," and with Katie by his side, Colin strode out of the schoolhouse.

He felt as he left the portals that he had passed an important milestone in life, and he seemed to realise that his school days were ended, as indeed they were, for he never again returned to the school in the settlement. It often brings a feeling of sadness as one realises that milestones such as these are passed, and that for us they will never be encountered again. And so, after all, it was with a heavy heart that Colin returned to the widow's.

It is true he had administered a well-deserved punishment to Simon, but he felt that he might be regarded as a bully. A strange depression took possession of him. He began to feel, after vengeance had been taken, that there is something unsatisfying about it, and that, as Mrs. McNabb had said, "God knew far more about it than we poor mortals when he said, 'Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will repay.'"

He spent another sleepless night. Thoughts of the day's events and of the future that lay before him were coursing through his mind. After he had told Mrs. McNabb all his feelings, and she had talked long and earnestly with him, he lay until the sun's morning rays lighted up his room. Then he rose softly, and as it was still early, he strolled away down the lane to the woods.

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Seeking a clump of balsams, which was his favourite resort, he threw himself upon the dead twigs. At length peace came to him. He resolved that he would never again undertake to administer the vengeance that "belongeth unto the Lord." He washed himself at the spring, and returned to the house just in time to join the others at breakfast.

CHAPTER XXII

WAITING FOR THE SCHOOLMASTER

WHEN the minister drove up to the church on Sunday afternoon, he found his congregation, as usual, divided into groups near the door of the edifice. They were discussing, with more than their customary animation, the flogging incident, and canvassing the situation.

Naturally, opinion was divided, but the majority seemed to think that Simon, against whom the current had been setting for some time, deserved the punishment he received. Most of the scholars sympathised with Colin, and they had exerted quite an influence upon their parents. Then there was that inevitable rush of opinion in the direction in which the current suddenly commenced to flow strongly. Among the groups about the church door which discussed the event that Sunday afternoon, there were heard a great many instances of the master's cruelty, and other rumours calculated to discredit him.

"It sarves him d——d well right!" exclaimed Jock, the drover, in loud tones, which were overheard by the

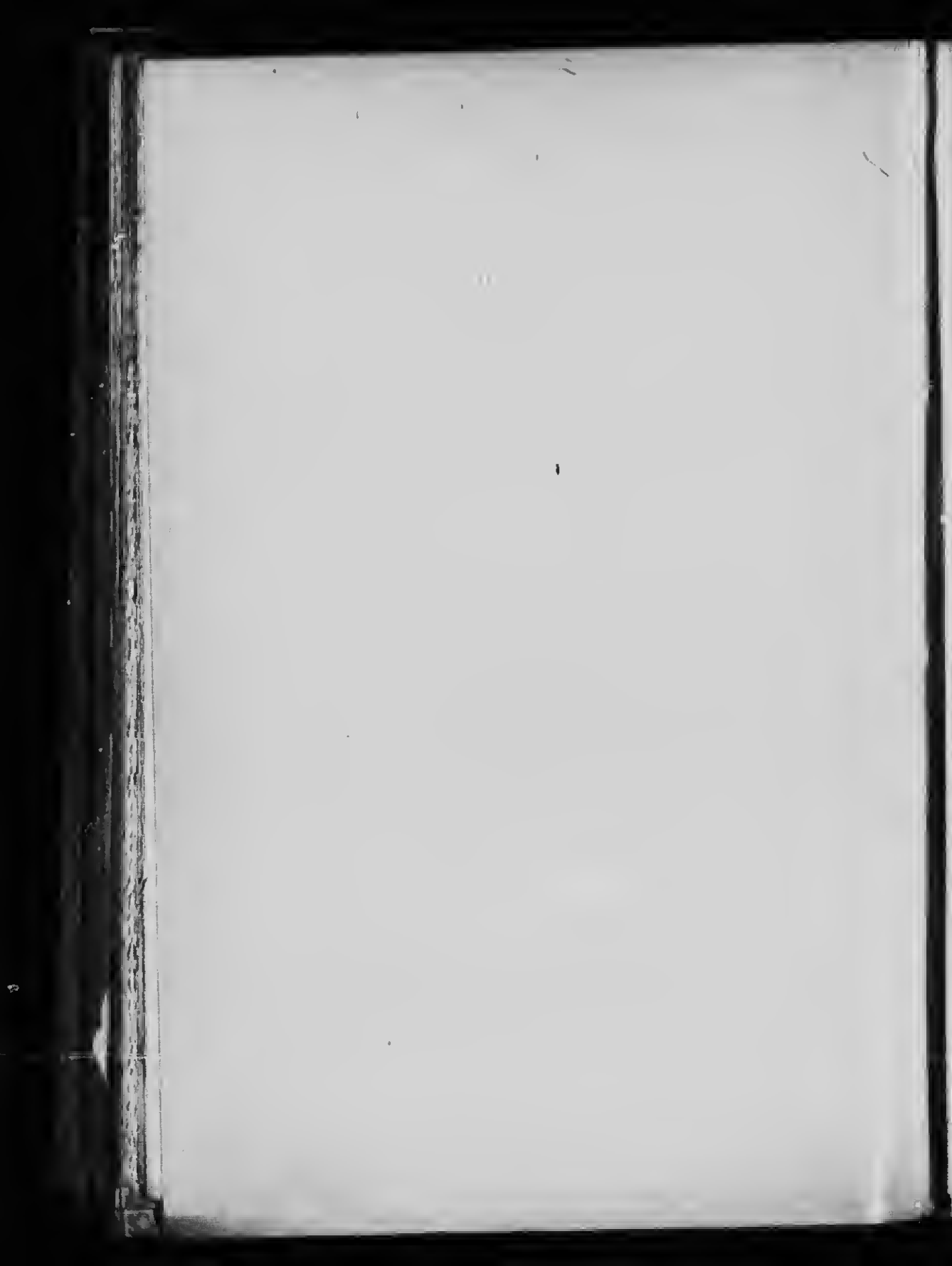
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minister, who, unseen by the particular group in which Jock was the most important figure, had just walked up the path.

"Ye'll no' get yer token, Jock," said Muckle Peter, with a twinkle in his eye. "Although Ah maun confess that if Ah hed been in Coallin's place Ah'd 'a' knockit his d——d heed aff!"

"Hush, hush, Peter!" said Nathan Larkins. "Yer always so profane that I feel uneasy sittin' in the same church with you."

"Weel, weel," responded Muckle Peter, "if ye canna find comfort wi' th' people o' Goad wha worship in this kirk, then ye maun jist plt up a kirk yersel' an' worship under yer ane vine an' fig tree, es ye luv tae tell us about in yer lang prayers."

The sally at Nathan's long prayers shut the old man up pretty effectively, and he moved off to another group, in the hope of finding more receptive soil for the views he entertained. He was anxious to have his neighbours agree with him that the flogging was an evidence of Colin's depravity, and on every occasion when he put forth that view he would wind up with the expression:—

"Well, well, what else could be expected from a boy who would defy his own schoolmaster,—a boy that comes from nobody knows where, with a man like Wasby, and has no kin but a stranger who says he is

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his uncle? Bad will come of him, mark my words! He'll come to no good end!"

But Nathan found few sympathisers, and the few that he did find at first, soon melted away. It was not regarded as singular that Simon did not turn up at church that day. Indeed, scarcely anybody, including those who did not suspect he bore evidence of the flogging, expected he would. The trustees had looked for a visit from the master on Saturday, but as he did not put in an appearance, they supposed that he had delayed till Sunday. Sunday however passed, and still Simon did not appear.

Needless to say, there was a large attendance at school on Monday morning, as every scholar was keyed to the highest pitch of curiosity by hearing the comments at home. Half-past eight, the hour at which Simon always arrived, came at length, but the master was not on hand; a quarter to nine, and still no Simon; nine o'clock struck, and the master was not there.

Then the scholars formed themselves into groups, and eagerly discussed the situation. They waited around till half-past nine, and as they saw Dooley, the blacksmith, coming down the Concession, they hailed him and let him know the situation.

As Dooley was not a trustee, and was never known to take any responsibility except in case of a sick horse, he counselled the children to move cautiously,

WAITING FOR THE SCHOOLMASTER

lest some complications which might involve the settlement in difficulties, should ensue. Finally, he told them to remain where they were, while he went and notified the trustees. In half an hour these dignitaries were all on hand, and were soon in solemn conclave in the schoolhouse.

"Here, Jamie McMannus," said Muckle Peter, emerging from the schoolhouse, "you rin tae th' Tenth [the Tenth Concession] tae th' maister's boardin'-hoose, an' see what's cam o' th' maun. Dinna ye lat th' grass grow unner yer feet, me maun," added Muckle Peter, as he hurried Jamie away.

While Jamie was off on his errand, the trustees discussed the situation; and the scholars, much too excited to play ball, or any other game, continued in groups about the playground, talking over the case, and wondering how it was all going to end.

Jamie returned in about three-quarters of an hour, bringing the news that the master was nowhere to be found. He had returned to the house where he was boarding on Friday evening, and that night had gone out quietly, without saying a word to any one.

Mrs. Pepper (for it was at Pepper's the master then boarded), thinking Simon had only gone off somewhere for the night, paid little attention to his absence. When he did not return the following day, knowing what had happened at the spelling-match, Mrs. Pepper

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"pit twa an' twa taegether," to use her own words, and investigated the master's room.

She found that he had gathered up the most valuable of his little belongings and had taken them with him. But she was only quite sure of Simon's intention when she "cam' tae mak' doon th' spare bed" for a stray book pedlar who had dropped in upon her for a night's lodging. When she lifted the bolster she found a note from Simon, which read thus:—

MRS. PEPPER: This will notify you that I am leaving the settlement, and you can tell the people that I have shaken the dust from my shoes and that they will never see me again. I hate the place, anyway. I hate that low-bred murderer's son, and if I live long enough, I shall repay him for his conduct to me, curse him! I have not left any money to pay my board. The trustees owe me some, and you can get your pay from them. Tell any persons who may think of following me that they may just as well save themselves the trouble, for I am not going to be found, and they may just as well understand that first as well as last. Besides, I have no money but what little is in my pocket, and that would not do any one much good. I shall be far enough away by the time this note falls into your hands. I hate most of the people in the settlement, anyway, and especially do I hate the Ninth Concession school, and I am not sorry to leave it.

[Signed] SIMON SMALLPIECE.

This was the note that Jamie carried back from the "Tenth" with him and handed over to the trustees.

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After debating its contents for some time, Muckle Peter called upon Nathan Larkins to "state his policy." Nathan, considerably embarrassed at being so unexpectedly called upon to declare himself and formulate a policy, said with trepidation:—

"I opine that the best thing to do would be to send the children home, accept this letter as the master's resignation, and try to get John Malcolm to look us up another master when he is at the front. I think also that it would be well, and in the interests of sound discipline, to institute an investigation into Colin's conduct in this connection, for we would still have had our master if that young upstart had not flogged him; and if an example is not made of Colin, no other teacher may be found to risk himself amongst us."

"Ah agree wi' Jock, the drover," broke in Muckle Peter, "thet it sarved th' maister daum weel richt, an' es Ah said at the kirk yestreen, uf Ah hed been in Coalin's place, Ah'd 'a' knockit his daumed heed aff!"

This settled Nathan's proposed investigation, and the trustees went out, told the scholars what had happened, and dismissed them. Then Muckle Peter locked the schoolhouse, and putting the great key in his pocket, walked thoughtfully down the Ninth Concession. When he came to the gate of the Widow McNabb he paused, and after a few minutes' deep thought he strode towards the house.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FRIENDSHIP OF MUCKLE PETER

THE widow was at home, and as she saw Muckle Peter coming down the lane, she trembled lest his mission boded evil to Colin. Although Peter was a great, rough man, Mrs. McNabb had always a kindly feeling towards him since the night on which her husband died. Peter had been there, and as the dying man breathed a parting message to his wife and children, Mrs. McNabb observed the tears stealing down Peter's rough face. When he took her hand that night his voice shook with emotion as he said:—

“Goad has left ye all alane in th' warld tae fight its battles, but ye mauna forget His proamises about th' wuddow an' orphans, an' uf ever th' burden becomes sae sair upon ye that ye canna carry it yersel', dinna forget thet Muckle Peter stauns ready tae help ye. It's no thet Ah hae muckle mair than eneuch fer masel' an' th' bairns, but Ah'll be pleased tae divide wi' ye uf it's ever necessaire.”

Not infrequently, during the years that followed, Muckle Peter, in his own rough style, would take a

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roundabout way to discover, without offending the sensitive widow, if she needed assistance; but Mrs. McNabb's invariable reply, "The Lord is keeping His covenant with the widow," set his mind at rest.

When he entered Mrs. McNabb's house that forenoon, there was a kindly expression on his rugged, bearded, bronzed face, which immediately dissipated the widow's misgivings.

"Ah wuz thinkin', Mustress McNabb," began Peter, without circumlocution, "noo th' maister's gane an' th' skule's vacant, thet it micht no' be a bawd plaun uf we could get Lizzie, yer eldest lassie, tae tak' hold fer a time at least, tull we could look about us an' get a trained an' certined maister. Ah hac no' mentioned it tull th' ither trustees but forbye Nathan, an' he disna coont. Ah'm conveenced we could arrange it uf ye wuz only wullin' yersel'. Sae Ah thocht Ah would jist hae a wurd wi' ye afore speekin' wi' ma coalleagues."

Mrs. McNabb was deeply touched with Muckle Peter's thoughtfulness, because she perceived in it an effort on his part to do her a friendly turn. When she expressed some doubt about Lizzie's qualifications, Muckle Peter broke in:—

"Ah, dinna ye mention thet, ma guid woman, Lizzie'll dae gae weel fer a time. It's true she's a trifle young an' may lack th' masterfu' quality, but she hes guid sense an' lots o' self-respeck, an' Ah'm thinkin'

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wull dae a mighty sight better than th' scoonrell we're sae weel rid o' [for Peter knew of Simon's conduct towards Kearstie], an' wull mak' a first-rate skule missus."

And so it was arranged that Lizzie should take temporary charge of the school. Of course, Nathan objected, but he was in the minority. As Muckle Peter was leaving the widow's that day he encountered Colin in the lane.

"Come hither, ye young scapegoat!" he said, in his great, strong, rough voice, and striking a menacing attitude. "Come hither, tull Ah see what stuff yer made o'. I'm gaun tae give ye a taste o' th' kind o' treatment thet ye meted oot tae th' maister th' ither afternoon."

For an instant Colin was disposed to think that Peter, of whom he generally stood in awe, was in earnest, but there was a good-natured twinkle about the corners of the precentor's eyes, which enlightened him. As Colin approached, Muckle Peter seized the boy in his great, strong arms (for he was a mighty man), and held him aloft as easily as he would a child of five.

"Hoc daur ye interfere wi' th' maister an' pit th' whole settlement in turmoil?" said Peter, lowering Colin and standing him safely on the ground. "Dinna ye ken, ye young hoodlum, thet ye were interferin' wi'

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th' Queen's beesiness, an' that ye are liable tae be transported fer yer action?"

Colin smiled good-naturedly, for he recognised that Peter was having a bit of fun with him.

"Th' young rascal's no' a bit fear'd o' me," said Peter. "Weel, weel, me maun," he continued, feeling Colin's biceps, "I dinna blame ye, an' uf Ah hed been in yer place, Ah'd 'a' knockit his daumed heed aff. But Ah say, Coalin lad," said Peter, as he moved away, "th' trustees'll get th' stairt o' ye after thus, fer we're gaun tae pit a lassie in chairg^e o' th' skule, an' ye are tae much o' a maun tae thrash her, are ye no', Coalin?"

Colin was soon informed by the widow of the object of Peter's visit, and he rejoiced over the prospect of the family earnings being increased by the employment of Lizzie as schoolmistress.

Nothing was heard about Simon Smallpiece's whereabouts, and nothing was known of him, till John Malcolm returned from his trip "up the Grand River." Malcolm would never adopt the new name "Ottawa," but stuck to "Grand" as long as he lived. John had learned that Simon had made his way out of the settlement to Prescott, where he crossed the St. Lawrence and disappeared in the United States.

"Ye see, Mustress McNabb," said Auld Peggy, who had dropped in on the widow "tae hae a bit crack," the day after Kearstie died, "it's like thus. Th' puir

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lassie deed o' a broken hairt. She never rallied after she realised f'r hersel' thet Slmon hed really gane aff an' left her. She grew sae thin an' weak thet verra soon she hadna ony strength left, an' whan th' doactor wis ca'd yester morn, he knew at a glance it wis aw ower wi' puir Kearstie. Th' lassie wis tarrible far through, an' hadna strength tae recooperate. She jist turn't her heed ower in th' bed sae tired like, an' gied ane lang wearisome look at th' sorrowin' attendants. Then she sighed, oh, sicna deep sigh, an' — she wis gane l"

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CHAPTER XXIV

NATHAN IS ELECTED CHAIRMAN

NOTICE!

A PUBLIC MEETING of the ratepayers will be held in the schoolhouse on Tuesday evening, the 10th instant, convening at 8 o'clock, for the purpose of discussing the political questions of the day.

God save the Queen.

POSTERS bearing the above legend were to be seen about the first of July, adorning the walls of the tavern, the post-office, the toll-gate, and the red door of Dooley's blacksmith shop. Several were pasted on boards, and the latter nailed to trees along the town-line, and where the roads forked at the turns to Tuffy's Corners and Hornersville. A general election had been called, and the politicians were going about discussing the questions of the day, buttonholing the settlers, and making a vigorous canvass of the neighbourhood. The names of Baldwin and La Fontaine were heard on every hand, together with that of John A. Macdonald (then a rising young politician), Francis Hincks, and M. C. Cameron, who delighted in the cog-

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nomen of the "bare-footed boy," which had been given him by an opponent as a name of opprobrium.

The burning issues before the people were the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, the Double Shuffle, and Representation by Population, or Rep. by Pop., as it was called for short.

In the summer months, when a meeting was on, the settlers usually assembled an hour or so before the time announced for the meeting to begin; and as they sat about on the top rails of the fence adjoining the school-house, awaiting the arrival of the speakers, and discussing in their own way the public questions, it was most interesting to listen to their remarks.

Muckle Peter, who was a supporter of Baldwin and La Fontaine, opined that these politicians would certainly carry the day, because "he hed been tell't, but couldna vouch fer 't, thet Baldwin hed come frae th' same country es himsel', an' hoo could he help but wun?"

Dooley, who was a Tory and a worshipper at the shrine of John A. Macdonald, curled up his lip contemptuously at Muckle Peter's remark and said:—

"Be japers, I'd back Jawn A. agin th' hull crowd o' yer Baldwins. I niver knowed a Baldwin thet wuz worth salt till his porridge, an' I heered es how this man yer a-talkin' aboot is no better thin he ought t' be. In fact, it is rayported thet he wants t' divide th' hull Clurgy Resarves among himself an' his fam'ly."

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This sally of Dooley's created a laugh, which Muckle Peter checked by remarking, with a sinister grin, that "howsumever th' Resarves would be deecided, one thing wuz sure, th' church o' th' dark ages tae which Dooley belonged wad no' receive an acre."

Thus the time was occupied until the first buggy arrived, with one of the candidates and his friends. The candidate was of course very affable, and went about among the settlers, calling them by name and speaking to them as familiarly as if he knew each one intimately. Ere many minutes had elapsed, one after another of the settlers who were known to "hae a likin' fer his bitters," was invited by a knowing wink from the candidate or his companion to make an excursion towards the buggy, in which was found a large jar of whiskey. By the time the other candidate had arrived and his supporters had also been invited to visit his buggy a few times, a number of the intelligent electors were "high."

Shortly after this a spontaneous movement was made towards the schoolhouse. Nathan, who was very officious on such occaslons, usually snuffed and lighted the tallow candles that burned in the sockets of the "sconces" hanging on the walls. Then, after all was ready, there was an embarrassing pause, for some one had to move the appointment of a chairman. As has been previously stated, there was no one who

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loved the office as dearly as Nathan Larkins, and he took up a prominent seat at the front near the master's desk, in order that he might be the more likely to be selected.

Jock, the drover, who had visited the buggy of the John A. candidate pretty frequently, was in great good humour, and he determined to have a "rise" out of old Nathan, so he stood up and said:—

"I move that our old an' distingulshed neighbour, Nathan Larkins, be summoned t' th' high offis uv chairman, a position uv lofty dignity, callin' es it does fer th' exercise uv a very high order uv judicial pre-science. Before Mr. Larkins is elected, howsumever, I would, on behalf uv myself an' my fellow-settlers, call upon him fer a full, frank, an' untrammelled statement uv his policy in conductin' th' meetin', should his fellow-countrymen see it t' be their dooty t' 'lect him."

There is always a man in every community who follows the practice of seconding motions. The function does not call for the exercise of any powers of oratory, nor is it calculated to exhaust the brain. It very often, however, results in the man's name appearing in print, and he receives some little prominence at a very slight cost. The individual in the Scotch Settlement who always seconded motions was Paul Drew, — a well-meaning, "religious" personage whom Muckle Peter delighted to tease occasionally by asking him if

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he had ever yet received an "aunswer tae the lang epusle the aince he wrote tae th' Ephesians."

"Second the motion," muttered Paul Drew, shuffling halfway to his feet.

While always impressed with a sense of his own importance, Nathan was overwhelmed at discovering the lofty opinion that was, as he fancied from Jock's splendid tribute, entertained by the settlers with regard to himself. He said: —

"Fellow-citizens of this settlement and gentlemen from Hornersvnie, Tuffy's Corners, and the Snow Road, for I see you all here, I promise you that if you see fit to repose such high confidence in one of yourselves, who realises his utter unworthiness [cough] and inability to discharge the functions appertaining to the office, I shall, God helping me, do the best in my power to hold the scales equal between the combatants and to administer even-handed justice to all."

This speech settled it, and Nathan was duly elected to the chair.

CHAPTER XXV

DOOLEY BREAKS UP THE POLITICAL MEETING

NATHAN walked on to the raised platform, sat down behind the master's desk, adjusted his spectacles, fumbled with some papers, and then rising and looking over his spectacles, said : —

“We are met to-night, fellow-citizens, for the purpose of hearing our statesmen discuss the great issues of the day, and I bespeak for them a patient hearing. I shall be very sorry if I have to call on the constable to keep order, or to blow out the candles. I am very sorry that we have not the coir [choir] with us, so that we could vary the proceedings with music.”

“Thar'll be lots o' music afore the meetin's over!” sang out a voice from the rear.

The first candidate introduced was a self-important, red-faced, short little man, who immediately proceeded to dilate on what he had done for the country. He talked with the greatest familiarity about Joseph Howe, Dr. Tupper, Francis Hincks, John A. Dorion, and other “distinguished and cultured colonial statesmen.” But there was not one of them who was equal in importance to himself, or who had done so much for the country.

DOOLEY BREAKS UP THE POLITICAL MEETING

If any of the distinguished statesmen mentioned had ever been able to accomplish anything, it was due to the superior political prescience and far-seeing statesmanship of the speaker. If there is anything that a Scottish audience cannot stand it is a man and a speech of this character, and many of the hard-headed auditors began to move about in their seats uneasily.

"It was just at this critical and exciting period of the history of the colony," proceeded the speaker, "that I came upon the scene. Being returned to parliament by an overwhelming majority [the record shows the majority to be less than 150], I took my place in the great forum of the country. It was after Baldwin had thundered away against the bill, and it looked as if defeat stared us in the face, that I rose to my place in the House of Commons."

"I'm sure yeh made a hell uv a rise," chirped Jock, the drover; and the audience, greatly pleased with the sally, burst into roars of laughter.

"I hope Jock, the drover, will keep quiet," said the chairman, with an air of authority.

"Nathan," retorted Jock, "if I'd 'a' thought you'd 'a' gone back on me so quick, I'd 'a' niver nominated yeh fer chairman, an' I give yer fair warnin', Nathan, thet if yeh don't give me a fair show at this here meetin', I'll move thet Muckle Peter be substitooted, an' wot's more, I'll carry it!"

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The noises of approval that greeted Jock's threat indicated that he knew the temper of the meeting better than Nathan, and the latter promptly apologised and subsided. But the reception given to Jock's sally had paralysed the candidate, and it was a long time before he recovered his wind, so to speak.

There was, sitting on the front bench, an old Baldwin reformer, who listened with the deepest pain, and with constant gestures and low muttered expressions of dissent, to the speech of this candidate. Ever and anon this old reformer would mutter in a scarcely audible tone such expressions as these: "Ach, Goad, yer a leear!" — "Hoo can ye lee sae brazenly!" — "Yer a bigger leear nor Ananias!"

The moment the candidate concluded his address the old man, who had been rocking to and fro with eyes shut as he recited his comments to himself, sprang to his feet and exclaimed, in a loud voice: "Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, — Goad, yer a leear!" As the audience was left to surmise whether it was the chairman or itself who was the liar, it contented itself by taking the thing good-naturedly and laughing heartily.

The next speaker had even a harder time than the first. It seems that during some period in his history he had kept a store in the county town, and had run counter to Dooley, the blacksmith. Dooley always claimed (and when he was "under the influence,"

DOOLEY BREAKS UP THE POLITICAL MEETING

claimed vociferously) that this man had "chated him out o' foive pound uv tay."

So, when the candidate began to speak and was waxing eloquent about what he had accomplished in the way of public reform and national righteousness, Dooley, who, standing near the door, was "three sheets in the wind," could stand it no longer. His warm Irish temper was aroused, and the old trouble about the store transaction rankled in his bosom, and would not be put down. So, with his blackthorn shillalah in his hand, he marched up the centre aisle, and shaking his stick at the speaker, said, "Yer a liar, yeh chated me out o' foive pound uv tay."

"Hush, hush, Dooley, my man!" said the candidate, "don't make a fuss here, and I'll fix it all right."

But Dooley was excited and roared: "Yeh did so, an' yeh know d——d well yeh chated me out o' foive pound uv tay!"

The audience became noisy and demonstrative, and Dooley, not knowing whether it was at him or the candidate who had got the start of him on the Young Hyson transaction, leaped upon the platform, and brandishing his stick, roared again:—

"I say he did, an' he knows d——d right well he did, an' th' hull settlement knows he did, an' I'll follv him till ivery matin' an' see thet th' entoire ilitorate knows thet he chated me out o' foive pound uv tay! I'll

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tache th' spalpeen t' chate a poor blacksmith such es he done till me!"

At this, old Nathan, the chairman, thought the time had come to interfere, and so he rose and commanded order in the Queen's name. But this only served to make Dooley more uncontrollably excited than before, and brandishing his stick menacingly over Nathan's head, he exclaimed: "You an' Her Majesty kin be d——d. I'm here t' proclaim t' th' hull world, an' till Her Majesty es well, thet this here shape-stalin' son uv a plucked monkey chated me out uv foive pound uv tay, an' if you or Her Majesty attempts t' interfere wid me, be th' powers o' Mall Kelly, I'll break ivery bone in yer bodies."

Nathan was nonplussed; he did not know what to do. But Jock, the drover, relieved the situation by inviting Dooley out to have a "swig" at the jar. This was perhaps the only way in which the meeting could have been saved.

When Dooley was taken outside, the friends of the candidate who was speaking, locked the door and determined to keep the disturber away. But after Dooley had had his "pull," he returned to the door, and was furious at finding that it was locked. He moved to the window at the head of the school, and just at the moment when the speaker had reached a pathetic point, which he was earnestly driving home, Dooley lifted the

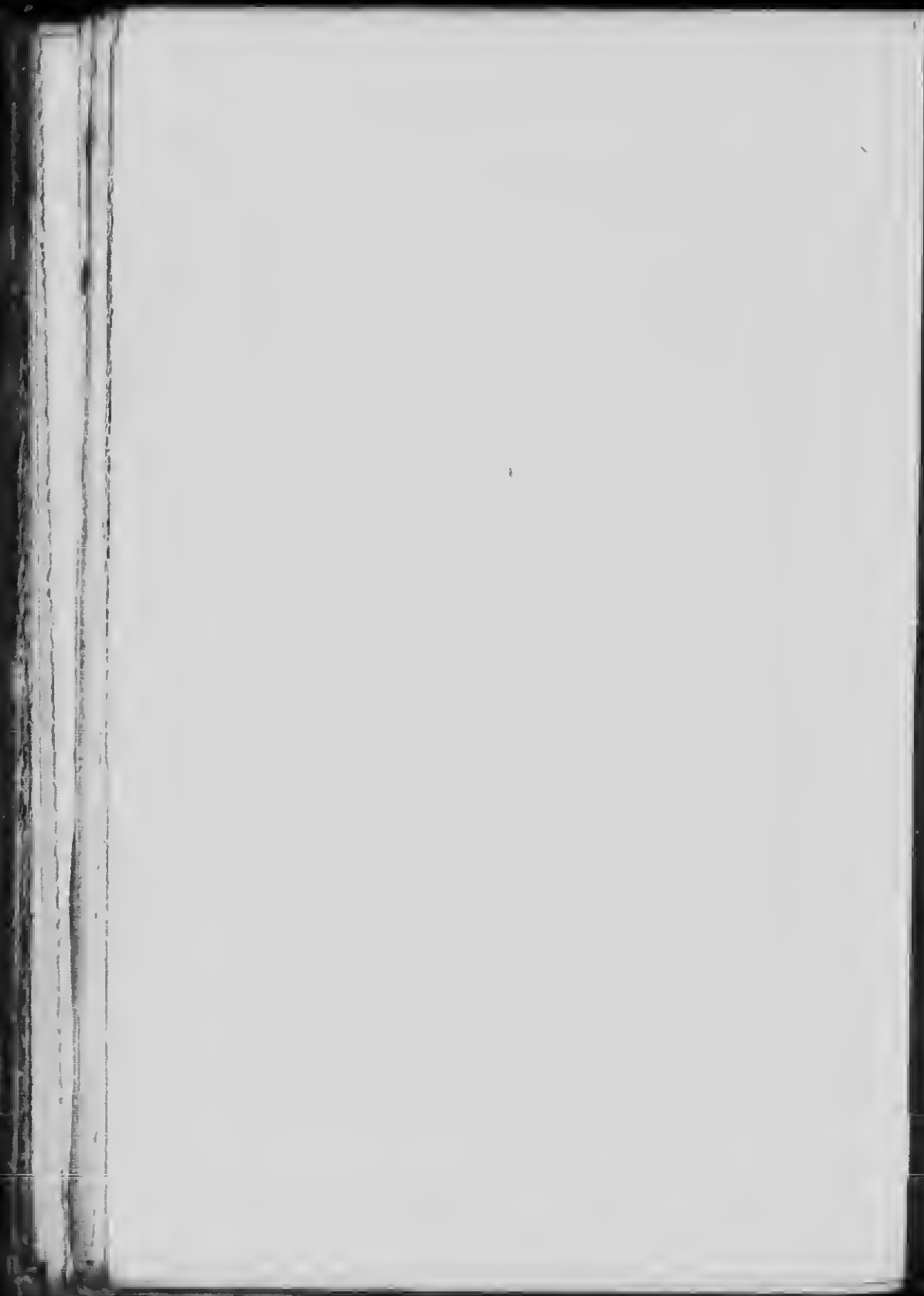
DOOLEY BREAKS UP THE POLITICAL MEETING

window, and sticking his shaggy head through, shouted, "Yer a liar, ye know ye chated me out o' foive pound uv tay."

This was too much for the meeting to stand, and amid laughter, uproar, and confusion, during which some mischievous lads blew out the lights, it broke up in disorder.



PART III
LOVE AND WAR



CHAPTER XXVI

WILLIE'S DARING DEED: A NEWSPAPER EXTRACT

A HERO IN NEW YORK

ONE OF THE MOST THRILLING AND DARING DEEDS EVER PERFORMED IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY. A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRL SAVED FROM AN AWFUL DOOM BY THE ACT OF A BRAVE YOUTH.

ONE of the most thrilling adventures, and most startling if not miraculous escapes, that it has ever been our duty to chronicle, occurred this morning at the N. Y. C. & W. offices adjoining the station. It appears that a spark from an engine fell among some old papers at the rear of the general offices, and all unseen a fire was started which, before it was discovered, ate its way along the sills, and secured a grip upon the building which it was impossible to stay. Indeed, before it was discovered, the lower floor was in flames, and so rapidly did they spread that the main staircase was ablaze, and all escape shut off in a shorter time than it takes to record it. Most of the employees, however, who were engaged on the second and third floors, were able to

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escape, either by jumping or by the use of ladders that were brought into hasty requisition.

It was thought that most if not all of the inmates had escaped, when the figure of a young lady was seen at the small attic window of the fifth floor, calling frantically for assistance. "My God!" said a voice in the crowd below, while the man rushed madly about, and would have thrown himself into the flames in an effort to climb the blazing staircase. "That is my daughter!" It was President Rolphe of the N. Y. C. & W. who spoke, and immediately the interest in the terrible drama that was being enacted, deepened.

It seems that the young girl — Helen Rolphe — had gone to the office to see her father. He was out at the time, and she loitered about waiting for him. It was while she was waiting that the cry of fire was raised, and when she issued from her father's office, the flames had mounted the staircase, and were blazing all about her. She did not know the passages in the building, and instead of taking the one which led to the window from which the others were rescued, she took another one which led to a pair of back stairs. As the flames were mounting these rapidly, there was nothing to do but ascend, and before she was aware of her terrible predicament, she was at the attic, with the hissing flames following close in her wake.

It was only when she appeared at the window,

WILLIE'S DARING DEED

calling frantically for help, that the spectators below, including her half-crazed father, realised her awful position. "My daughter! my daughter!" moaned her father. "Can no one save her? Oh, what will her poor mother do! It will kill her!"

The crowd stood awe-stricken and speechless. It looked as though the young girl's doom was sealed irrevocably, and that no power on earth could save her from the relentless fury of the flames which were rapidly closing about her. The frantic girl seemed to realise the situation, for she was seen to close her eyes and cover them with her hands, as if she contemplated a leap to the stone sidewalk some sixty-five feet below, which meant certain death. The suspense was awful.

Suddenly a young man, not more than nineteen years, but lithe, active, and with a look of determination on his face, sprang from the mute, silent, and awe-stricken crowd, and shouted, "Give me a rope!"

A strong coil of rope was instantly supplied, and throwing it over his head, he rushed to the gable end of the building, where the lightning-rod passed from the ground to the chimney above. He gave it a few hasty jerks, and as it was firm, the fastenings having been built in with the brickwork when the building was erected, he determined to make the attempt. Pausing for an instant, while he raised his eyes aloft to survey the scene, and

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possibly breathe a silent request for strength in his hazardous venture, the young man seized the lightning-rod and began his perilous ascent. He availed himself of every crevice and niche in the brick wall, which fortunately was rough, in order that he should not put too great a strain on the rod.

The spectators held their breath while the young hero slowly but steadily climbed aloft. There was not one who did not regard the adventure as so extremely hazardous that it was almost tantamount to certain death.

Even if the rod should hold out, and he should reach the roof, would he be in time to save the girl? The flames were slowly but surely encompassing her, and it did not look as if she could hold out many seconds longer.

What suspense could be more awful than that which prevailed during the moments of the young man's ascent of the last few feet? The rod seemed to loosen and sway slightly, and a cry of horror went up from the crowd below, but the hero kept on his way, and when at last he threw a loop of the rope about the chimney, and, aided by that, swung himself nimbly upon the ridge-board, a great shout of triumph surged up from the multitude beneath, which must have sent a thrill through the young hero's heart. He could scarcely have expected to reach

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the roof when he started to climb, but there he was. There was not an instant to be lost, and fastening the rope securely about the massive chimney, he slid down to the attic window. The smoke had now so completely enveloped it that the crowd below lost sight of the girl, and a cry went up, "Too late! Too late!"

But this cry gave place to a great burst of applause as the young man, who had leaped into the attic through the window, almost instantly reappeared with the girl in his arms, whilst the flames fairly chased him out. It was a perilous task to make his way back to the ridge-board with the extra burden which he had, but he did it. The great concourse beneath held their breath as they watched the daring youth, with pallid face and teeth firmly set, slowly approach the ridge-board with his precious burden.

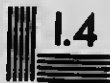
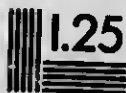
"He's reached it! he's reached it! Thank God, he's reached it!" went up the cry, as the young man regained the chimney.

It took but a moment to fasten the rope around the semi-conscious form of Helen Rolphe, and when that was done, he passed it twice around the massive chimney to check the draw upon it, and holding it firmly in his hands, he pushed the girl's form over the gable. In an instant she was dangling unconscious in mid-air. Her body descended slowly but surely towards the ground as her rescuer let the rope



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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slip through his firm grip. To describe the awful suspense of those moments while Helen Rolphe's form was being lowered, is impossible.

But even when the unconscious girl was safe in her father's arms, and the half-crazed man was bending over her, talking wildly and incoherently, the suspense was far from over, for the bravest youth in all New York was still in mortal peril.

The fire had advanced rapidly; half the roof had fallen in, and unless the young man was quick, his doom was sealed. Despite the awful ordeal and the frightful strain upon his nerves, he still bore up. Fastening the rope about the chimney, he threw himself over and slid rapidly down. He was not an instant too soon, for the fire had seized the rope and burned it so that it broke when the brave boy was within ten feet of the ground, and he fell helpless and unconscious to the earth.

Cheer upon cheer rent the air, but the youth was all unconscious of the salvos in his honour that went up from a thousand throats. He was carried to a drug store close by, and there, after a few minutes, he recovered consciousness. His first enquiry was for the young girl for whom he had risked his life. When assured of her safety, he seemed satisfied. It was not till some time afterwards that the young hero's identity was known, for he modestly sought to treat the matter lightly.

WILLIE'S DARING DEED

His name is William McNabb, and he is a young Canadian who came here from eastern Ontario about two years ago. He has been employed in the offices of the railway of which Mr. Rolphe, the father of the rescued girl, is president. Curiously enough, Mr. Rolphe had not come in contact with the young employee before.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE YOUNG HERO'S MOTHER

DURING the months that were quickly passing, and bringing Colin so rapidly to that period when he must plunge into the world's vortex, and seek what Dame Fortune had in store for him, Willie, in the great city of New York, had been patiently struggling, against hardship, adversity, and discouragement, to make a success of his humble position. He never neglected to write to his mother, and his bulky letters, breathing forth a courageous, hopeful spirit, and full of the little incidents he knew would please her, were happily read over and over again by her. Many times I have been a silent witness of the triumphant joy depicted on Mrs. McNabb's face as she concluded one of Willie's letters. Often the tears came to her eyes as she silently meditated on her son's struggle with the world, but so long as she realised that he was true to the compass needle of honour and truth, she was happy.

Through the long winter evenings she would sit knitting socks for her boys, and if she did put ribs in the ones which she sent to Willie in a parcel at Christmas, who shall accuse her of partiality? Perhaps she

THE YOUNG HERO'S MOTHER

fancied it was much colder in New York than it was in the Scotch Settlement; anyhow, was not Willie with the great folks of that great city, and should he not wear ribbed socks? No doubt the gentlemen there all wore ribbed socks.

Willie had made substantial progress. The man who was over him soon discovered that he could place absolute dependence on him, and that he was faithful, active, and ambitious. These qualities soon procured promotion for the young man, and by the arrival of the second Christmas after his departure from home, Willie was able to announce that he was receiving seventy-five pounds a year, and in the letter containing the announcement, he enclosed ten pounds for his mother. He also sent a box containing some appropriate present for each of his sisters and brothers. He frequently wrote to each one of them, and appeared to take special pleasure in writing to Colin, concerning whose future he was interesting himself. It was his intention to try to secure a situation for him in New York. This he no doubt would have done but for the trend of national events in the Great Republic.

The question of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves was then the all-important, all-consuming issue before the people, and events were rapidly drifting to that awful culmination,—the civil war between the North and South.

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It was of course natural that Willie's feelings should be enlisted on the side of the North. He sent his mother "Uncle Tom's Cahin." The newspapers which he also sent to his home kept us fairly well informed of the critical situation, and we all learned to admire the great central figure in modern American history — Ahraham Lincoln.

It was about this time we (I include myself in the widow's household because I was so much interested that I knew all that was going on) received the newspaper from Willie containing the "Hero in New York" article, which the reader may imagine occasioned no little interest and excitement in the family circle.

When the account had been read to the widow, who suspected throughout the entire article that it was her son who was the hero, her heart went out in deep gratitude that he had been able to accomplish such an heroic act. Indeed, when the facts became known throughout the settlement, Willie's fame was at a high pitch.

"It'll no' be onything less than Preesident o' th' United States they'll be makin' o' hum," said Auld Peggy, the next time she drank a cup of tea at the widow's. "I can see by yer cup, Mustress McNahb," she added, "thet Wullie is gaun tae be a great maun, an' ye ought aye tae be prood o' hum."

The widow did not need the exhortation of Auld Peggy to be proud of her son.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MRS. ROLPHE

IT is perhaps unnecessary to say that Willie suddenly became a popular hero in New York. The newspapers rang with praises of his heroism. Hundreds dropped into the office to see and shake hands with the brave rescuer of Helen Rolphe. It was all very embarrassing to the boy, who was naturally of a modest, retiring disposition. He could not see that he had done anything extraordinary or anything more than any one should do under the circumstances. Naturally he was pleased at his success, and he experienced that glow of satisfaction which always follows the performance of a successful act. In the offices his fellow-clerks treated him with great deference.

Two days after the rescue, when the bustle in connection with the establishment of new offices was subsiding, Mr. Rolphe's messenger asked Willie to go to the chief's office, as he wished to see him. Willie was more nervous as he entered the presence of the influential official than he was when climbing the lightning-rod.

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

"My dear young man," said Mr. Rolphe with warmth, advancing to where Willie stood, and taking both his hands in his, "I would have sent for you sooner to speak of that terrible event, but I could hardly trust myself to discuss it. The nervous strain I underwent had completely shaken me. Helen is my only daughter, and had she been lost, I cannot tell what would have become of her mother." Willie stood silent, not knowing what to say.

"But for your bravery we should have lost her. How you managed to do it, God only knows, and I can but ascribe your success to His will and His mercy. However, you were the instrument, and the debt we owe you cannot be measured."

"Please, Mr. Rolphe, don't think of it in the way you speak," answered Willie. "Why should I not take the risk, when the poor girl's life was in peril? Indeed, it wasn't so much, after all, when you come to think how easy it was for me to climb."

"Mrs. Rolphe has asked me to bring you home to dinner to-morrow evening," said Mr. Rolphe. "She is impatient to meet you."

"Oh," said Willie, naturally perturbed, and not knowing what to say. He wanted to decline.

"You must come," said Mr. Rolphe, noticing Willie's hesitation. "Indeed, I should expect instructions to bring you home by force, if you were to decline. Re-

MRS. ROLPHE

member, to-morrow evening! Mrs. Rolphe says she cannot wait any longer."

Willie left the president's office feeling somewhat worried about the approaching visit, as he had been accustomed, owing to the inferior nature of his own position, to regard that of the president with awe, and he had always surrounded that prominent official with a halo of importance.

When the next evening arrived, Willie, who had "spruced himself up" for the occasion, waited in his little office for the president's messenger. Presently he came, and Willie following him, found Mr. Rolphe in the best of humours, ready to start. A carriage was waiting at the door, and the youth entered it with shyness and trepidation.

As the vehicle rolled along Broadway, towards the residential portion of the city, the boy fancied that all eyes were riveted upon him, and he felt that every one was wondering who that youth might be who was driving with the president. Mr. Rolphe seemed to understand Willie's diffidence, and he talked kindly and in the most familiar strain, seeking if possible to gain the lad's confidence and put him at ease before the house was reached.

Mr. Rolphe lived in one of those rambling old houses in the suburbs which were famous half a century ago for their seclusion and roomy comfort. It was enclosed

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by trees, and had ample grounds about it. The lawns were neatly kept, and there was a pleasing air of order and discipline about the surroundings.

"And this is the lad that saved my Helen's life!" were the words addressed to Willie, the moment he allghted at the door, by a beautiful elderly woman, who stood waiting for the carriage. With radlant face and tear-dimmed eyes she advanced towards Willie, and taking his hand klnedly, she' bent forward and kissed him warmly on the cheek.

Willie thought that, with the exception of his mother (who, to him, was always the most beautiful woman on earth), he never saw a kinder face or a grander looking person than Mrs. Rolphe. She was tall and stately, but comfortable looking. Her hair was prematurely white, and rolled back, exposing a forehead and face instinct with intelligence and motherly affection. Her great blue eyes beamed forth kindness. She put him at his ease at once by saying: "I want you to take a walk with me in the garden to see the flowers and the trees, and the fowls, and other things that will remind you of home, for Mr. Rolphe tells me you were brought up on a farm."

Then, with her charming conversational powers and her womanly instinct, she talked to Willie about the garden, the flowers, the vegetables, and the dogs which came bounding after them, until she realised that he was

MRS. ROLPHE

quite at ease. She also asked him about his mother, and his brothers and sisters, and in a short time she had the boy telling her all about the people at home, and the place where he was brought up. She noted with a smile of approval and pleasure Willie's reverence for his mother.

After this she adroitly directed the conversation to the event that was uppermost in her mind, for she wanted to hear the story from the lips of the rescuer himself. After she had induced Willie to describe the rescue, which he did with more than necessary modesty, she said impulsively, and with tears of emotion that she could not restrain:—

“How can we ever be thankful enough to God for sending you to save our child? I agree with my husband that it was a miracle, but it was so awful. And to think that a strange boy from a strange country should be present to save Helen! Indeed, my boy, I must write to your mother. She is surely proud of a son like you.”

And Mrs. Rolphe did write to Mrs. McNabb a warm, kindly letter, filled with gratitude for the act of her son. The reply received from the widow was characteristic. She wrote very modestly about her son's act, and expressed her devout thanks that he had been the honoured instrument in Heaven's hands of saving the life of Mrs. Rolphe's only daughter. She spoke of the temptations

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which beset boys in a great city like New York, and expressed a wish that Mrs. Rolphe might give her boy any such advice as he might stand in need of. No other reward, she concluded, would so amply repay her for the service Willie had rendered.

Before Mrs. Rolphe had finished her talk with Willie, a pleasant voice was heard from the direction of the house calling "Mother! Mother!"

"There's Helen looking for us," said Mrs. Rolphe, and replying to her daughter's call, they walked towards the young girl.

CHAPTER XXIX

HELEN

AS they turned the pathway to the right, which was enclosed on either side by a hedge of cedars, they met Helen standing with lips slightly apart and with a look of beautiful animation on her face. One glance showed that, while she had her father's dark sparkling eyes, she was plainly the counterpart of her mother. The same forehead, the same wealth of hair (flowing down her back on this occasion), the symmetrical nose, the arched eyebrows, and the rather wide mouth, with lips inclining if anything to fullness. The occasion, which was naturally one of more than ordinary interest to her, lent an added colouring and animation to the face. Her figure had still a girlish slenderness.

Willie, who had scarcely glanced at her when he carried her out of the burning building, might be said to have really not seen her before. He certainly would not have recognised her had he met her under casual circumstances. As it was, he felt sure she was Miss Rolphe before any one spoke, and his silent comment was that he had never seen so beautiful a young girl.

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He would fain have stood in the path and enjoyed the picture, had not Mrs. Rolphe said, "Come, Helen, dear, and greet the young man, William McNabb, who saved your life."

Helen, her face aglow with emotion, came forward, and walking up to Willie, placed her hand in his and looked earnestly into his eyes.

"I hope father and mother have thanked you for your — for your — for saving my life," she said. "I can never tell you how grateful I am. To think what a risk you ran!"

"Please don't refer to it," said Willie. "It really wasn't much, after all, and unless you promise not to talk of it, I shall never try to be heroic again."

So the subject was dropped for the present, the conversation turned to other channels, and by the time the three reached the house, Willie felt himself quite at ease. Helen, too, although shy, did her best to entertain her young preserver by her conversation. The difficulty with these two young people was that each stood in awe of the other. Helen regarded Willie as a great hero, somebody about whom one is accustomed to read in books; and Willie, on his part, regarded the beautiful girl as a creature only a little lower than the angels.

The dinner in the big dining-room would have been quite an ordeal to Willie had it not been for Mrs.

HELEN

Rolphe's tact and good management. He could not fail to experience a sense of awe at the venerable looking gentleman who stood behind Mr. Rolphe's chair, and who was referred to as the butler. He was far more respectable and important in his aspect than the minister at the Scotch Settlement, and eclipsed every one of the ruling elders in their "bests." Certainly, neither the minister nor any of the elders ever wore such broadcloth. Muckle Peter's criticism would have been: "Yoan wuz a veenerable gentleman."

After the dinner Willie was shown over the conservatory and the picture gallery, and by the time the clock struck ten and he felt he must go, he was surprised at the rapidity with which the evening had slipped away. When the lad took leave of the Rolphes, he could not help feeling that an evening with a railway president and his family was after all not such a very great ordeal. When he shook hands with Helen, the young girl blushed as she said she hoped Mr. McNabb would accept her mother's invitation and come to see them often.

Willie promised he would; then he was whirled away in Mr. Rolphe's carriage, and was soon in his little room, tucked up in his homely bed. He dreamed that night of the beautiful vision in the pathway, and the first thought that crossed his mind after he wakened was of Helen. He was too sensible a boy to indulge in

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any foolish thoughts in that direction, for he realised the social gulf that was fixed between himself and the daughter of the president. But while he might control his thoughts, he could not control his dreams; and so he continued to dream of Helen.

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CHAPTER XXX

WILLIE AND COLIN PREPARING FOR WAR

IT was not long after Willie's first visit to the Rolphes, as just described, that the impending national rupture occurred, and hostilities broke out between the North and the South. It was little wonder that thousands of the most worthy young subjects of Her Majesty living in Canada near the boundary of the northern states (the only portion of Canada that was fairly well settled at that time) should share the anti-slavery feelings of the North and hasten to take part in the rebellion. Willie was one of these, and at President Lincoln's call for soldiers, the first thing the young man did was to wait upon Mr. Rolphe and let him know what was in his mind.

"Do you not think that you are a little young and inexperienced?" said the president, eyeing the impetuous young man. He was secretly proud to witness the spirit shown by this young Canadian, but thought it his duty to warn the lad of the dangers and responsibilities attendant upon the step which he proposed taking.

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"Well, it's true I am not very old," answered Willie, "but I am rugged and strong, and my sympathies are so completely with the cause that I feel I could not be happy or contented without doing my share to help it along."

"Well, my brave boy, this is a tremendously serious step that you contemplate taking, and a final decision must not be too hastily reached. You must write to your mother, and I shall do the same. The whole matter must be laid before her, as I should not like to take the responsibility of advising you. Besides, there is no special haste for a few days or even weeks, for it is quite apparent that hostilities, having once begun, will continue a long time. Meantime, I will talk to my brother, Captain Rolphe, about you. He has been commissioned to raise a battalion, and if anything comes of your suggestion, I should like to have you join his force."

Willie was leaving the office after he had expressed his thanks, when Mr. Rolphe called him back and said:—

"I say, McNabb, I understand your mother has a large family, and being a widow, I doubt not but she would suffer if she lacked your assistance. In the event of your going forward with the troops, I would be much pleased to place one of your brothers in your position, and give him such advancement as might be deemed best. In this way the remittance, which I

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have been given to understand you send to your mother, need not be withdrawn."

This was the one thing above all others which pleased Willie. The only misgiving he had about the entire project of participating in the war was the consequent financial loss his mother would experience.

In addition to this, his brother Jamie had grown to be a great strong lad, much older looking than his actual years, and he had been urging Willie for some time to secure employment for him, so that he might be enabled to make a start in the world. Here was an excellent opening, and it seemed to Willie, as he thanked Mr. Rolphe and withdrew, promising to write home at once, that the way was opening for the advancement of Jamie.

As for Colin, Willie had his own thoughts in regard to the lad. He had always, since leaving the settlement, kept up a correspondence with Colin, and the more recent letters that passed between them contained matters and proposals which Colin did not discuss even with me or Mrs. McNabb. As might be suspected, the boys were corresponding about the impending war. The last letter which Willie sent Colin contained the young man's decision to join the Northern army, and he added that if he succeeded he would endeavour to have Colin go with him. They were to go as comrades in arms.

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

It is not difficult to imagine how such a proposal would appeal to the fancy of a lad like Colin. Indeed, a new existence seemed to have dawned for him. There was an elasticity in his step, a new fire in his eye, a buoyancy in his movements, for which none of us were able to account at the time, and it was only after "the plan of campaign" was fully matured and laid before us, that we finally understood the secret spring which had entered into Colin's life.

It was naturally a great shock to Mrs. McNabb when she learned, first through her son and afterwards through Mr. Rolphe, of Willie's proposition; and when she realised that it also entailed the loss from her home of Colin and Jamie, her grief, which she tried to conceal, was deep-seated.

Mrs. McNabb, however, was the last woman to stand in the way of her son's answering what she believed to be the call of God to service in His name. Their lives had been given, she was convinced, to be employed, or if need be yielded up, in His service.

She made one request, however, saying that if Willie decided to go to the war, she would like to have him come home to see her first. She added that she had a nice bundle of warm socks knitted for him, and if he felt that God had called him to take part in the great struggle to liberate the slaves, he could perhaps spare a few days to visit his home, more especially as she

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would like to look over his clothes and give them a thorough overhauling and mending.

And so it fell out that Willie decided to go to the front; and it was arranged that Colin should accompany him, and Jamie should take the vacant position in the railway offices as proposed by President Rolphe.

Willie and Colin were to be attached to the battalion raised by Captain Rolphe, who had been advanced to the rank of colonel before his force moved south. President Rolphe made special representations to his brother on behalf of the two young Canadians, and everything possible was done to assist them, and make their path as plain as possible. It was nearly the end of March when Willie arrived in the settlement to visit his home before joining his regiment.

CHAPTER XXXI

AROUND THE HOME HEARTHSTONE

WILLIE'S return to the home of his childhood created not a little stir in the settlement, especially in view of the announcement that he was "going to the war."

A regular stage service had by this time been established between Brockville and Hornersville, a point beyond the Scotch Settlement, and Willie reached home by that means. The stage-driver deposited him and his little red box at the cross-roads, about half a mile from the homestead. Willie left the box by the fence, to be brought later on in a wheelbarrow or stone-boat, and he walked briskly down the old Ninth Concession line. His heart was filled with emotion as the scenes of his childhood passed before him.

There was the old log schoolhouse, now closed, with two or three of the shutters hanging by one hinge. How old and battered it looked, with the names of the children, carved in all sorts of characters, on the pine door and on the logs! Yes, sure enough, there was his own name, and immediately underneath, the name

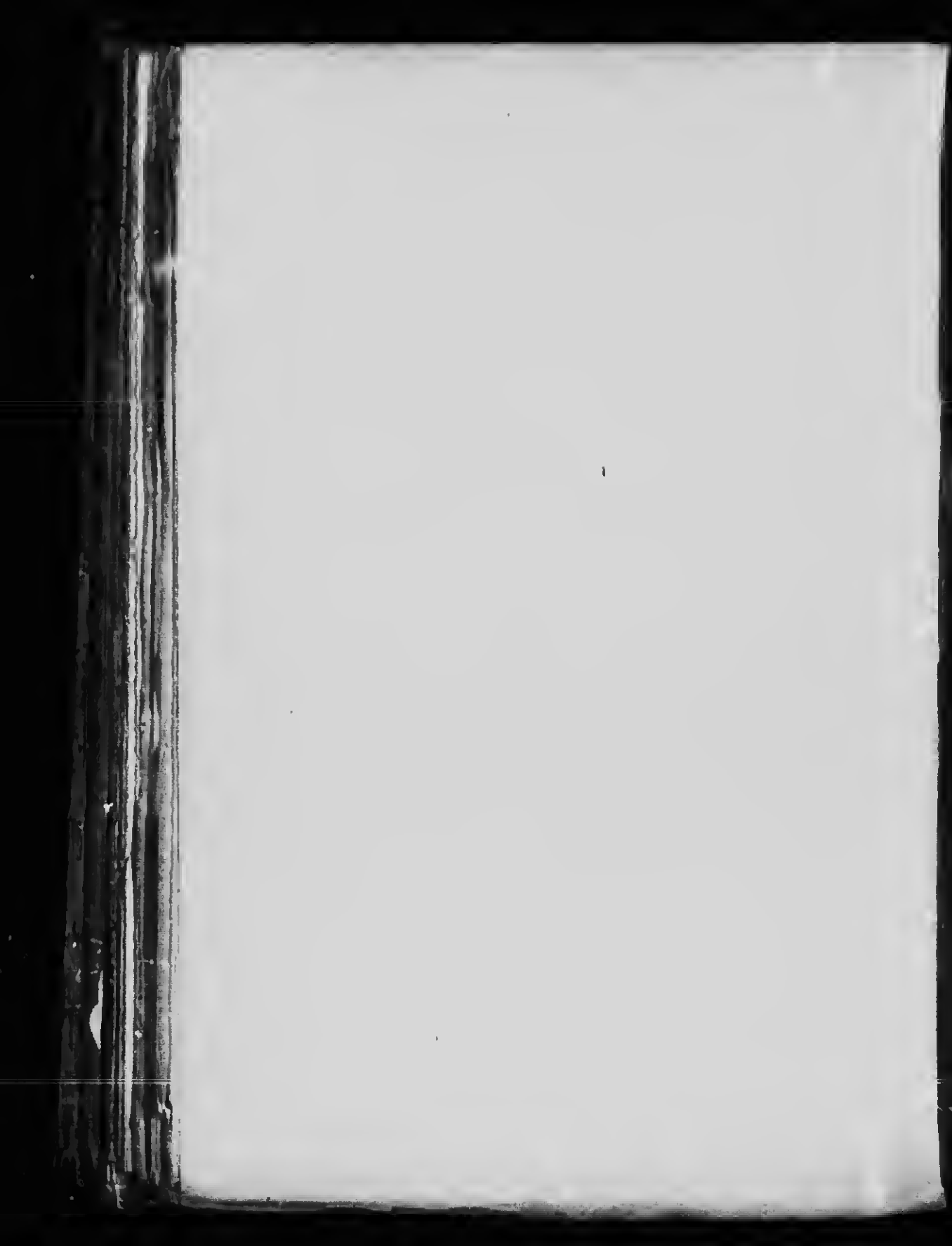
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THE OLD HOMESTEAD



AROUND THE HOME HEARTHSTONE

of Kearnstie, which some waggish scholar had coupled with his. Alas, poor Kearnstie! And there was the big stone where the boys used to crack butternuts and sharpen their knives. Yes, and there were the charred logs on the corner where young Pepper set fire to the building because he had been hammered unmercifully by Simon. And "the poplars," the scene of many a desperate encounter, there they stood, tranquil and all unconscious of the many struggles they had witnessed.

The old school, the old playground, and the scenes and memories associated with them, are sacred to the boy (yes, and to the man of well-ordered mind), and it was no wonder that Willie lingered about the place, and that for the time he was lost with the recollections which crowded upon him. Even the cruelties and brutalities practised by Simon, while they marred the picture for him, did not destroy its sacred beauties. He was recalled to himself by hearing Muckle Peter shout:—

"See here, ye young vagabone, what'll ye be daun about th' skule th' day?"

Willie made no answer to Muckle Peter, but springing nimbly over the fence, ran up to the great Scotsman and said, extending his hand:—

"Why, Muckle Peter, have you forgotten me? Don't you know who I am?"

Muckle Peter scratched his head a moment, looked scrutinisingly into Willie's face, and then a smile over-

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spread his great rough countenance, just as a sunburst through a rift in the clouds on a rainy day strikes a particular spot on the earth and causes it to sparkle.

"Know ye! know ye! Wuillie, maun, why I'd know yer hide in a tan plit!" and Peter shook the lad's hand until the pain almost made him cry out. But he would have allowed Muckie Peter to wring it off rather than hurt his feelings by suggesting a cessation of enthusiasm.

"An' how you've growed!" said Peter, standing and taking an extra good look at Willie. "An' it's a prood woman yer mither'll be th' day tae see ye back safe an' soun', an' lukin' sae weel. Ach, maun, but it dis a lad guid, an' it's a braw thing intil th' bargain, tae get oot intil th' warid an' see what's gaun on. Ah only wush Ah'd gaed oot masel' fufy year ago. It's no' precentin' Ah'd be th' day in a iuttie twal be fourteen kirk. Ah'li no' be sayin' that Ah despise th' sarvice o' th' Loard in a humble way, sic'as we hae here, but it gies a maun na chance tae spread himsel'. Dinna ye no' think, Wuillie, confidentially, that Ah cud raise th' tunes in th' great kirks o' New York es weel es they big buddies they hae thar?"

Willie made this non-committal statement, which pleased Muckie Peter immensely: "In ali my experience in the big city, Muckie Peter, I must confess that I never heard a more powerful singer than your-

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self, and I am quite sure, that if you undertook to lead the Psalmody in any of the great churches, you would create a sensation."

If Peter had a liking for Willie in the lad's boyhood days, he positively loved him from this time forth, and it was pleasant to hear the great Scotsman, Sabbath after Sabbath, as, with the recollection of Willie's doubtful compliment ringing in his ears, he would strain his all too powerful lungs to their utmost, and would "drowned out" (Goarden's expression) the entire congregation with his stupendous notes, in "Old Hundred," "Coronation," "Balerna," or "Dundee."

Jock, the drover, declared that he heard the ceiling crack, and unless some precautionary measures were taken there was danger of the roof being lifted.

It was also amusing to listen to Muckle Peter's covert threats about "resinin' an' gaun whar talent is appreciat' wich it isna in thus Goad-forsaken wulderness." But Peter did not resign, for he continued to "raise the tunes" at the auld kirk until the universal enemy laid hands upon him and his strong voice was silenced.

Muckle Peter walked with Willie to the gate, and when the young man turned in, the Scotsman said: "Wullie, my boy, ye hae a guid mither, an' lad, dinna ye ever forget her, fer she desearves weel o' ye all. It's a prood woman she'll be th' day tae see ye."

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The dog — Willie's dog — barked loudly as the young man walked down the lane. Mrs. McNabb, with her beautiful white hair, calm face, and trim figure attired with scrupulous cleanliness, and wearing an apron, appeared at the door to see what Coaley was barking at.

As Willie approached, the widow looked keenly at him through her spectacles. Then she uttered a cry of joy: "Willie!"

"Mother!" And the two were locked fondly in each other's arms.

Let us draw the curtain, such scenes are too sacred for our gaze.

Before supper that evening, Willie strolled off to the barnyard, and down the lane of the farm, to see his old friends, the animals, and it cheered and warmed his heart to find how many of them remembered and greeted him in their own dumb way.

Passing on to the bush, he wound his way in and out along the paths ("pads" Willie called them in childhood) made by the cattle, until he reached the old spring. The ground about it had been tramped by the animals, but the water bubbled up in the centre just as pure and cool as ever. Willie found a green plot of grass where he could lie on his breast, reach down, and drink until he was satisfied. No water on earth ever tasted so fine to Willie as that from the old bush spring.

He spent a long time by the spring, listening, — now

AROUND THE HOME HEARTHSTONE

to the sound of the distant cow-bell, which came floating across the swamp through the trees; now to the sharp, excited alarms sounded by the squirrels, who would peep at him from the branches, and then scamper away to warn their companions of the presence of a supposed enemy; now to the sound of the industrious woodpeckers, as they pounded away at some dead, hollow trees; and now to the croaking of the frogs in the pools created by the overflowing spring. These sounds were all sweet music to him.

Tradition used to ascribe to the frogs in the Scotch Settlement the practice of chanting in their frog language a reference to a celebrated Dutch swindler, named Whaum, whose notorious operations among the pioneer settlers is remembered to this day. And as Willie listened to the old familiar sound coming from the ponds: "W-h-a-u-m-s-a-r-o-g-u-e! W-h-a-u-m-s-a-r-o-g-u-e!" he smiled to himself. Then when the traditional answer, pitched in a higher frog-key, came back from the colony of frogs in the deeper ponds in the swamp close by: "S-a-n-d-y-t-o-o! S-a-n-d-y-t-o-o!" (Sandy was a brother of Whaum, also of notorious memory), Willie fairly laughed aloud.

But it was growing dusk, and with Coaley bounding at his heels, he retraced his way along the bush paths, pausing at the old beech tree to see that the bark had not grown over his name, which had been cut there

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years ago ; and then, springing over the bars, he hurried up the lane to the house, where a steaming supper, his happy brothers and sisters, and his radiant mother awaited him.

Night after night Willie was the central figure in the domestic group. The widow sat busily knitting or mending, preparing the wardrobes of her three boys for their early departure, ever and anon pausing to listen to some specially exciting point mentioned by her son, as he told of life and scenes in the great city of New York.

The brothers and sisters, and Colin and I, all sat around the hearthstone, drinking in the stories which Willie told, while the great logs in the big fireplace burned briskly, the sparks mounting the chimney, and the blaze of light shooting out into the room and suddenly illuminating it, as Wallace stirred the logs or re-arranged the coals.

Now and again would come the admonition of the widow, as she discovered some defective point in the conversation. How kindly she administered the rebuke ! Indeed, the way it was put and the manner of putting it removed any suspicion that Mrs. McNabb's interruptions were intended as either rebukes or corrections. Before the hour for retiring came (and it seemed the universal desire to prolong those evenings), the widow would look at the great old wooden clock, shake

AROUND THE HOME HEARTHSTONE

her head in kindly protest, and reaching for the big family Bible would say: "Here, Willie, your eyes are young, and mine are tired. Read a chapter, and we'll all to bed."

"What shall I read, mother?" Willie would often say.

"Well, if you don't mind to-night," was the widow's frequent answer, "I would like to hear the fourteenth chapter of John again. It seems as if I would never tire of that."

And as Willie would read about "My Father's house" and the "many mansions" it contained, and farther on, of our Lord going to prepare a place for His own, the widow's eyes would glisten, and we could see that her mind was far away. She never seemed to follow the words of the chapter beyond a certain point— from that point she appeared to be lost in the Celestial City, her mind entirely purged of earthly considerations and her face radiant with pure joy.

When the reading of the chapter was completed, she would give a sudden start, and with a subdued exclamation of, "Oh! are you finished?" she would, in a simple, earnest prayer, spoken in the sweetest tones and most loving words, commend all to Divine care.

CHAPTER XXXII

COLIN AND KATIE

COLIN, since leaving school, had devoted his time to the farm. Hard work seemed to suit him, and he thrived under it. He developed marvellously in stature and strength, and so far as my opinion went, although I realised that I might be regarded as a prejudiced judge, I thought him the handsomest youth in the township. He was tall, straight as an arrow, lithe, and athletic. There were few boys in the district who could hold their own with him in the games and feats of strength practised on the green in front of Dooley's blacksmith shop during the long summer evenings. I knew he would make an ideal soldier, and would look it every inch when he donned his regimentals. How proud I was of Colin!

It was during those evenings spent about the widow's hearthstone that I gathered something of the depth of affection that existed between Colin and Katie. Katie had grown into a lovely girl, and gave excellent promise of being a woman worthy of her mother. It was not that she could be set down as handsome, judged

COLIN AND KATIE

by the strictest standards, for there were several features to which a critic could take exception. It was a tribute to Colin's discernment and to his instinct, that he discovered in Katie that which universal experience has demonstrated as being the womanly grace that ensures happiness. Katie inherited this rare gift from her mother. The sunshine in the girl's life was but a reflex of the strong, steady, ever-present effulgence in the mother's. But it must not be supposed that Katie was not good looking as well. Her features were quite regular, her eyes bright and brimful of spirit, and she had a glorious head of hair. A fondness for out-door occupations had aided her healthful physical development. Poor though her mother was, she never hesitated to make any sacrifice in order to provide her children with the best literature that the times and circumstances afforded, so that their minds were stored with the contents of the best available books.

It was little wonder, as the youthful lovers contemplated their early separation, under circumstances which afforded no certainty of a future reunion, that they felt themselves specially drawn towards each other, and that very tender love passages and protestations of fidelity passed between them.

Mrs. McNabb placed no harriers in the way of the youthful sweethearts. They spent most of the re-

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maining evenings together, and it was a charming picture to see them as they wandered about the farm (for the weather this spring was phenomenally mild) visiting favourite spots, and stopping, as they passed the cows and horses, to speak to the appreciative dumb brutes.

They were wont to pause by the great stone in the lane. Katie would sit on a fence block close by, while Colin, leaning upon the stone, would look into her eyes, and the two would talk about the future and build castles in the air.

"You know, Katie dear," Colin said one evening, at the stone, "it seems hard to separate from you now, but you know there is no future for me here, and I'm so confident that I can master the world and make a success of life. Something has always told me that there was a task for me to perform, and lately I have been so impatient to set about doing it."

"But, Colin," Katie answered, "if you were not going to the war it would not seem so bad. You know how horrible a thing war is. It makes me shudder to think of the danger to which you will be exposed," and Katie's voice trembled.

"Please don't think of that, Katie. Just think how proud you and all the others will be of me when we return!"

"But, Colin, do you really feel sure nothing awful will happen to you?"

COLIN AND KATIE

"Why, yes, Katie, I feel quite sure. And just think, what use would there be in my staying here? I have no ambition to become a hired man, like Goarden,—do the calling off at dances, and put in my time attending the threshing-mill, doing the road work, and sometimes going to the shanty, where they speak such atrocious French."

Katie caught at Colin's picture, and the light in her eyes, shining through the tears that stood in them, fascinated the boy.

"Do you know, Katie," he said, enthusiastically, stooping down and taking both her hands in his, "you never looked half so beautiful as you do at this very instant! If I had the power of the magician and could with magic touch fix you forever as you are now, I think I would do it."

"Oh, please don't," said Katie, rising to her feet, and laughing. "I should not like to share the fate of Lot's wife and be transformed into a pillar; especially, sitting down. It would not be quite so bad standing up. So you would like to have me petrified, would you, Colin?" added Katie, roguishly.

"No, no, indeed; I would not," said Colin, hastily. "But you did look so handsome, Katie, laughing through your tears. But now that you have spoiled the picture and become natural again, the desire to see you transformed has vanished."

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"So I'm not handsome when I'm natural," said Katie, with a playful expression on her face.

"Oh, no, I didn't mean that!" answered Colin.

"Well, that is what you implied," said Katie; "but of course if you are in the habit of saying things you don't mean, it doesn't matter."

Colin knew that Katie was merely bantering him, and he did not make any direct reply to her remark.

The two stood in silence by the great stone for some minutes, looking at the red horizon where the sun was sinking, each busied with different thoughts. It was Colin who broke the spell.

"Do you know, Katie," he said, "since we have grown up we have never said anything about being engaged. As children we grew up together, thinking we were intended for each other, but since we have reached maturer years we have never renewed our vows. It is not that even the possibility of unfaithfulness on your part has ever darkened my mind, but now that we are going to separate, perhaps for a long time, I think I could bear the separation with a stouter heart if we were bound to each other by some band more formal than a mere tacit understanding."

Katie stood before him, silent, but with dewy, lustrous eyes.

"Let us take this great stone as our witness, Katie dear," said Colin, taking her right hand in his.

COLIN AND KATIE

Katie was passive, and Colin led her a step or two to the stone, there, with hands clasped across it, they plighted their troth. That stone, which remains in the old lane to this day, was always a sacred object to Colin and Katie.

They lingered about it till long after the reddish hue had disappeared from the horizon. Then, hand in hand, like the children they had so recently been, they walked up the lane to the house.

"There is something on my mind, Katie, which I would like to tell you before I go away," said Colin, as they approached the barn.

"Well, let us wait in the moonlight at the well here," answered Katie, as they approached it.

They sat down on the edge of the well-worn trough, and Colin said :—

"You know that when I came to your home, I was so young that I remember hardly anything of my earlier life, and your mother has always been a mother to me. Yet I had another mother, and a father, in England. A few years ago, when I realised this, I asked Uncle Watty about it, and he told me that my father and mother were dead. Then, when young Bill Pepper taunted me with being brought to the settlement by Wasby, I asked Uncle Watty again how that came about, and he told me that I had been taken from home. But why was I stolen? Who caused it? What was the

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motive? And why does Uncle Watty not tell me more?"

"I have often wondered too," said Katie, "though I did not like to ask about it."

"It is not that I have not confidence in my uncle's affection for me," said Colin. "You know what friends we have always been, and how he has helped me and looked after me ever since I came to live at your home."

"Yes," answered Katie, "I have often heard mother speak of it, and she used always to say that no father could be better or kinder to a son than Watty was to you."

"That's it," said Colin, rising from the trough excitedly and taking a step or two; "that's it! There is something mysterious about the matter. Uncle Watty's silence seems so strange. Yesterday morning, when I was in the harnyard doing the chores, I heard his voice suddenly in the granary. He mentioned my name and said something about a promise he had made to some woman. He must have been thinking aloud. I have been greatly exercised about the matter since. I thought once or twice to-day that he was going to make some important communication to me, but he did not do it, for just at that moment Goarden came along and began to talk to us. If he does not offer to speak to me again about it before I go, I mean to ask him myself."

COLIN AND KATIE

They remained talking for some time, and then went on to the house. We were all seated about the fireplace that evening, listening to Willie's stories about New York, when the latch was lifted and Colln and Katie entered and joined the circle. They blushed as Jamle made some remark about "the cows having been lost," but nothing further was said. The widow beamed kindly upon both, and the conversation went on as briskly as ever.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE THRESHERS' FOOD AND FUN

DURING the two weeks which intervened before the date set for the departure of the boys there was a festive time in the settlement, and many invitations came to them and their sisters to participate in dances, sugar-bush parties, and other pastimes. The phenomenally mild weather of the winter and of the first week in April was succeeded by severe cold and storms, which lasted longer than usual. However, the sun's rays were growing more powerful daily, and King Frost soon began to recede before them. This was the period when the settlers tapped their trees, for the district abounded in maple woods, and most of the inhabitants made sufficient sugar to last them the year round. They also reaped a rich harvest in maple syrup, and besides having sufficient to supply their own wants for the year, they were able either to sell considerable quantities at the county town, or exchange it for such necessaries as they required.

The maple sugar was very much better than the "muscavado," for which they were often taxed sixpence

THE THRESHERS' FOOD AND FUN

a pound; and as for the syrup, it was far superior to the "black strap" that was sold at the general store. Goarden, the hired man, was the only individual who attempted to maintain the superiority of the latter. He said it was impossible for novices to speak of the merits of "black strap," as it was never served in all its original purity except in the shanty, where they gave you pork and beans "as was pork and beans," along with it.

"Mojee!" Goarden would exclaim; "but it makes a magnificent poultice, an' lasts a man a hull day if he only gits enough."

Just what Goarden's idea of "enough" was, is still a mooted question, as no opportunity was ever afforded in the settlement of testing it, for he invariably finished what was within his reach. In the matter of eating, Goarden had a great rival in Tugal Cameron, who in addition to his famous consuming ability at the table, was known in the settlement as a man that called everything "she" but a tom cat, which he spoke of as "her."

The threshing season which came in the fall was a rare time for Goarden. The goodwives of the settlement vied with each other as to which could put up the finest "layout" for the men, and the latter, in order to perpetuate the "snap," did not fail to let it be known by their gossip where the best "layouts" were obtained, and who were the finest cooks.

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It was generally the custom to kill either a pig or a sheep for the "thrashers," because it would be deemed a reflection on the house to offer the men anything but the finest poultry, or other fresh meat that was going. There were, however, exceptions to the rule, and at the homes of these exceptions, threshing time was regarded as the golden opportunity to work off all the rough meats and coarse viands that had been allowed to accumulate for months. Naturally, this practice occasioned much gossip and adverse comment, and it can well be surmised that Goarden was loudest in his protests. "Crasee mojee!" he would exclaim; "it would take a block an' tackle to separate that goose we had to-day!"

A description of the annual "thrashin'" would scarcely be complete without giving the bill of fare presented at the leading homes in the settlement.

THE MCKERCHERS

- Breakfast.* Fried fresh mutton chops mixed with liver and kidney and buried in a platter of gravy.
Boiled potatoes.
Green tea.
Horse-radish.
Bread.
- Dinner.* Roast mutton.
Boiled potatoes.
Gravy (in large quantities).

THE THRESHERS' FOOD AND FUN

- Beet pickles.
Green tea.
Buttermilk.
Caneele bread.
- Supper.* Cold roast mutton.
Potatoes het up.
Green tea.
Red cabbage pickled.
Scones.
Bread.
- Snack before retiring.* Sweet milk.
Bread and butter.

THE McGLASHINS

- Breakfast.* Fresh fried pork smothered in "lashins" of gravy.
Soft boiled potatoes, a trifle wet and soggy.
Green tea.
Apple sass.
Beet pickles.
- Dinner.* Fresh roasted pork, the swarth carved in stripes.
Wet potatoes.
Beet pickles.
Maple sugar.
Green tea.
Horse-radish.
More beet pickles.
- Supper.* Cold roast pork (very fat).
Wet potatoes het up and smothered in pork gravy.
Buns (which Mrs. McG., being Irish, advises each and all to "lay hould uv wan aiche, although they didn't roise to me satisfaction").
Beet pickles.
Green tea.

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Snack before retiring. Ditto the McKerchers, with a dish of beet pickles on the table.

THE MCPHERSONS

(Who had just killed an old cow.)

Breakfast. Beefsteak (fresh killed), very thin and tough, with coloured water doing duty as gravy.
Sweet boiled potatoes (they had been frozen).
Cucumber pickles.
Homemade cheese (hard and tasteless).
Green tea.
Hot scones.

Dinner. Dry fresh-killed roast beef in abundance, but too tough to dissect.
Beet pickles.
Horse-radish.
Mustard.
Sweet boiled potatoes.
A dish-pan full of apples for dessert.

Supper. The remains of the beefsteak left from breakfast and the balance of the roast beef left at dinner chopped up with an axe and stewed in a soap kettle ; the whole intermixed with sweet potatoes and flavoured with onions, summer savory, and sage, to say nothing of soap.
Side dishes : Beet pickles, buns, and mashed turnips hot over, and green tea.

Snack before retiring. Buttermilk, and the remainder of the cold buns left over from other meals.

THE McCUTCHANS

Breakfast. "Sausengers" (made, Goarden declared, from "bull beef which wuz cheap at a penny a pound").

THE THRESHERS' FOOD AND FUN

Stale bread.

Green tea warmed over.

Dinner. Roast meat (kind not stated, threshers unable to guess, very old and very tough. Goarden hums the Dog Song tune and winks at Dooley). Company eats bread and beet pickles principally.

White streaked butter.

Green tea warmed over.

Bread pudding made of stale material.

Supper. Same old meat cold.

Limited quantity of potatoes.

Het over stale buns.

Sour bread.

Cold green tea.

Snack. Cut out, as threshers had to move first thing in the morning.

The following is a short extract from

GOARDEN'S DOG SONG

Oh, you all know the tavern that stands on the hill,
By the side of the mill-dam at Landon's sawmill.
Three jovial young fellows together did meet
For to have some whiskey and something to eat.
And you're welcome, all of you, heartily welcome,
Gramacree welcome, every w-a-n.

Oh, they looked in the cupboard and all things looked blue ;
They saw nothing there that was fit for a stew.
Out spoke Jimmy Landon, a jokish old man :
" If you listen to me I will tell you a plan,
And I think I can get you all out of this jam.
We'll go down to John Landon's and steal a fat lamb."
And you're welcome, all of you, heartily welcome,
Gramacree welcome, every w-a-n.

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

So it's off to John Landon's old Jimmy did run,
And he told them all there he was up for some fun.
He told them old Nero was getting so old
That some day next winter he'd die of the cold.
"We'll kill him and skin him, take him down to Banfam,
And they'll never know but he is a fat lamb."
And you're welcome, all of you, heartily welcome,
Gramacree welcome, every w-a-n.

During the jollity after the threshing supper, the men would sometimes call on Goarden to sing his Dog Song. After the song it was usually the custom to tell a few choice stories, and often half an hour would be spent in playing tricks.

I can recall two or three of the latter. A circle about six inches in diameter would be drawn on the wall with chalk. Then the boys, one after the other, would be blindfolded, and each would try how near he could come to putting his index finger within the circle. When the turn came of the one upon whom it was usually the custom to "run the rig," one of the boys would stand where the circle was, and with open mouth receive the finger and give it a severe nip with his teeth, and while the victim would cry out with pain the others would roar at his discomfiture.

Another trick was to seat one of the men on the floor, with his legs spread out and extended at full length. A cupful of water would be poured on the floor between his knees. The seated man would be

THE THRESHERS' FOOD AND FUN

given two sticks to strike the operator, who, cloth in hand, was endeavouring to wipe up the water. Suddenly, when the chap on the floor was off guard, the operator would seize him by the feet, and in a twinkling drag him over the water, thus wiping it up in a manner which occasioned as much chagrin and discomfort to the victim as it did merriment to the crowd.

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CHAPTER XXXIV

HELPING IN THE SUGAR-BUSH

AS indicated in the opening of the previous chapter, the inhabitants, taking advantage of the ideal sugar weather which had arrived, all began to "tap." The McNabb family had a very large bush, and ever since the boys had grown strong enough to attend to the work, they always tapped a large number of trees. It was no small task, and although they usually succeeded in earning something by their labours, still it was often doubtful if it really paid. This spring, however, would probably be the last in which the work could be carried on extensively, as both Colin and Jamie would be gone with Willie, and only Wallace would remain to do the work of the farm, which, according to the will of the late Mr. McNabb, was to become the property of the eldest son on the death of his mother. There was therefore no incentive for the other boys to remain on the homestead, and their mother, realising that the place offered no future, did not feel it right to prevent them leaving to seek their fortunes in the world. All the boys, Willie included, turned in with a will

HELPING IN THE SUGAR-BUSH

this spring and assisted in the sugar-making. In the first place a large number of additional troughs to hold the sap were required. These were made out of young ash trees, about nine or ten inches in diameter. With the aid of great oaken wedges and mallets, these young trees were split down the centre, and then cut into lengths of about three feet.

They were hollowed out with an axe, and when finished, each would hold three-quarters or more of a pail of sap. After the troughs were prepared, the work of tapping the trees had to be proceeded with. In those early days the process was quite different from that of to-day. Instead of using an auger, a concave gouge sharpened on one end like a chisel was used. This was driven into the tree about half an inch, and then a cedar spile, split by means of the gouge and trimmed and sharpened at one end (so that it was an exact fit for the opening in the tree), was driven into the aperture. Then the operator, with mallet in hand, would drive the gouge into the tree about three inches above the spile. Withdrawing it, he would reverse it and drive it in again, so as to form a junction with the fresh cut. By prying out the bark and wood within these two cuts, an opening was formed in the tree from which the sap would trickle. Adjusting the trough so that the sap trickling down the spile would fall into it, the operation was complete.

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Then a "camp" or boiling-station had to be established at some central point in the bush, where the sap had to be boiled down and reduced to either syrup or sugar, as was desired.

At the boiling-station, one or more large barrels or hogsheads were required in which to store the sap. In addition to this, another barrel was needed for gathering the sweet material. This barrel was usually fastened tightly to a "trauvoy" or "jumper."

To this a strong horse was attached, and through deep snow or shallow, one of these well-trained animals hauled the "jumper," dodging trees and stumps, and obeying the directions of the sap-gatherer, who lifted the small troughs, emptied the contents into the barrel, and continued at this till it was full, when he drove to the boiling-station, emptied his barrel into one of the hogsheads, and started off again.

Just as soon as all the barrels and receptacles provided were filled, the boiling-down process began. For this purpose, two large trees about ten feet apart were chosen. Then two stout saplings (iron wood preferred), forked at one end and about five feet in diameter and fifteen feet long, were procured. These were sharpened at the unforked end and inserted in holes prepared for their reception in the frozen ground. The forked ends leaned against the two big trees, and a strong crosspiece extended from fork to fork. By this

HELPING IN THE SUGAR-BUSH

means a perfectly strong and reliable bar was secured, from which the coolers in which the sap was boiled could be suspended by means of strong chains. Then two great backlogs would be rolled on either side of the coolers, between these the dry firewood was placed, and in a few minutes a roaring blaze would be doing its subtle work underneath the coolers. As the sap was steadily reduced, the attendant replenished the coolers from the hogshead close by. It did not take long, with two or three large boilers and a roaring fire, to reduce a hogshead of sap to syrup.

There was always the greatest danger when the sap was well reduced, of the contents boiling over and thus wasting the precious fluid. To avoid this, a very simple and effective expedient had been discovered. A piece of fat pork, tied to the end of a stick plunged into the bubbling caldron, would immediately cause the boiling syrup to subside and avert all danger of loss. Consequently, if the attendant found it necessary to leave the boilers for a time, he just fastened a piece of pork to a stick and tied the latter to the handle of the cooler, so that the pork would be an inch or so below the rim of the cooler. In this way insurance against loss was secured.

CHAPTER XXXV

AULD PEGGY'S LOVE STORY

EVERY boy or man brought up on a farm doubtless has his favourite memories and experiences, but to my mind there is nothing equal to those associated with the sugar bush. What scene can be more inspiring than the sugar camp on a glorious night in the spring-time? With the camp arranged with boughs and trees so as to form a perfect shelter from any wind that might blow, and with such rough seats as the resourceful genius of those accustomed to bush life could improvise, how glorious it was to sit there and watch the flames mounting up around the coolers, while the boiling sap fairly sang! What weird shadows one saw in the surrounding darkness as the leaping flames sought to pierce it! And what strange voices of the night disturbed the silence that reigned beyond the camp!

I once asked Auld Peggy where the young folks in the earliest days of the settlement did their "sparking."

"Maun, Watty, lad," she replied, while her eyes seemed to glisten and sparkle as long-forgotten memories shot across her mind, "hae yeh no heered hoo thet

AULD PEGGY'S LOVE STORY

mair matches waur made aboot th' camp-fire than at aither times plit together! Why, Watty, me maun," she went on, "uf Ah wis but tae rin ower th' list richt here in this settlement, it wad surprise ye. In th' auld days when folks aye lived in sma' shanties wi' but ane room, there wisna th' sma'st opportunity afforded th' young lads an' lassies tae dae ony coortin' ava, an' there wis nathin' for 't but tae 'tak' tae th' woods,' as Muckle Peter's faither used tae pit it. An' sae it cam' aboot thet th' maist o' th' sparkin', an' th' majority o' th' match-makin', wis aye dune aboot th' camp-fire in th' sugar bush. Ay, but it wis a braw place till spark," said Auld Peggy, as her face lit up with the recollection of some special courting event in which she was possibly one of the principals.

"Tell me, Peggy," I said, taking assurance from the old body's smile, "is that where you did your sparking, when you were a girl?"

"Weel, weel," answered Auld Peggy, with a droll expression on her face, "Ah'll no' be denyin' thet Ah did ma share like th' rest, but it wisna there thet Ah met th' hulk wha sae basely deceived an' deserted me, gaun aff tae West Constant wi' yoan bold strumpet an' leavin' me an' th' twa bairns tae mak' oor way alane thru th' warld es best we could."

The recollection of her unfortunate nuptial alliance caused Auld Peggy's face to darken. All pleasant

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recollections about her girlhood days and her sparkings in the sugar-bush seemed to give place to darker and more gloomy thoughts, and she turned to go.

"Peggy," I said, moving towards her and placing a hand kindly on her shoulder, "tell me, did you love him once?"

She gave me a surprised and excited look, and then she exclaimed, while her features betokened her earnestness: —

"Love him! love him! Ay, Watty, lad, thet Ah did! Hoo caun ye ask sicna queestion? In th' lan' frae whuch ye cam', there may be planty o' people wha marry wi'oot lovin', but in th' lan' frae whuch Ah sprung, whan a Scoatch lassle gies her hairt an' her han' tae a maun, it seldom happens thet she disna love hum wi' her hale saul."

"Did your man's affection begin to wane soon after marriage?" I ventured.

"Hoot maun," answered Peggy, quickly, "th' creature naver hed ony affection! He wis aye a deceiver es Ah sune foond oot after oor waddin'. Why, th' maun fairly gied me a scunner th' first year, be tallin' me Ah wis na huswife at a' at a'; thet he hed been marrit afore, an' oor marriage wisna legeetimit. Ah didna believe yoan yarn, but Ah sune hed abundant cause tae doot hum in ither ways, an' afore Ah knew whaur Ah wis, he hed rinned aff wi' th' hussy es Ah jist tell't ye.

AULD PEGGY'S LOVE STORY

Ay, they men is worth a-watchin', Ah can tall 'e, Watty, an' whan aince they tak' tae rinnin' after strange women, weel, ye know what Solomon said, an' A've been given tae understaun that he hed muckle experience."

"Poor Solomon!" I remarked.

"Dinna ye no' say puir Solomon tae me!" said Peggy, with warmth. "What about a' they women he wis aye flirtin' aboot wi'? Dae ye think he hed fu' llcense tae trifle wi' all their affections in th' way he did?"

"But we are told, Peggy," I replied, "that he had a hard time of it, after all."

"Weel, puir maun, p'r'aps he hed, an' p'r'aps he de-sarves oor sympathy; f'r mind ye, Watty, neither me nor ye iver knew what it wis tae luv' wi' several hunner women at th' same time. Some say it's hard eneuch tae luv' wi' ane, an' it may be sae in a great mony cases, an' sae we musna be too hard on puir auld Solomon."

As Peggy was leaving I placed a shilling in her hand.

"May th' Loard bless an' prosper ye, Watty," she said, "an' aye cause Hus licht tae shine on ye. An' noo, Ah guess Ah'll jist be daunderin' awa doon tae hae a bit crack wi' th' wuddow, f'r I hear her boys is all gaun aff tae th' war."

It was always observed, when gifts were bestowed upon Auld Peggy, that she was most lavish in distributing the blessings of Providence. In this practice, she has usually had plenty of imitators.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE SUGAR-BUSH PARTY

IN view of the anticipated early departure of their brothers, Lizzie and Katie McNabb persuaded their mother and brothers to have a sugar-bush party, with all the accompaniments, such as "sugaring off," "pulling taffy," and the like.

Mrs. McNabb was persuaded to attend too. Indeed, she thought it but proper that she should be there although there were other chaperons.

Wallace drove her down to the bush on the "jumper," and I never saw a more pleasant picture at any party than she presented that evening. She seemed to be thinking of the comfort and enjoyment of all the guests, and as she moved about dispensing sugar, taffy, and other good things to the merry company, I am sure, from the manner of all, and the respect shown her, that they shared my feelings.

Most of the company came in cutters or on bob sleighs, and it was a cheering thing to hear the sound of the sleigh-bells mingled with the merry laughter of the boys and girls as they came trooping into the camp.

THE SUGAR-BUSH PARTY

The evening was an ideal one, and as we all sat about the camp watching the roaring flames mounting over the great coolers filled with boiling sap, while the babel of voices mingled with laughter rent the night air, it was impossible to resist the merry contagion or to fail to be carried away with the scene.

"Dave, the fiddler," was there; so was Goarden, the hired man, and the entire clan McLean, including such numbers as Muckle Peter, "Black Pete," "Short Pete," "Red Pete," "Long Pete," "Grizzly Pete," "Pete beyant" from Hornersville, and a number of other Petes connected in some way, remote or otherwise, with the clan. They were all nicknamed in the manner described, so as to distinguish one from the other. To this day they are known by the nicknames mentioned, although some of them, alas!—for they were a fine lot, the McLeans—have "slippit awa'," and the place that knew them once so well, now knows them no more.

"Dave, the fiddler," at first pretended that he had come without his instrument, but after he was pressed a bit, he disappeared in the bush and soon returned with the fiddle in his hand. Then, after a deal of coaxing, he tuned up the instrument, borrowed some rosin from Goarden, and in a moment or two the camp was enlivened still further, if that were possible, by the strains of "The White Cockade," "Money Musk," "The Irish

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Washerwoman," and a number of those other fine old inspiring airs which have warmed the hearts of many a merry company at the country dances. If there was one tune more than another that Dave delighted to play it was "Pop goes the Weasel." After playing it a number of times, Dave, when he came to the note which stood for "pop," instead of playing it in the usual way, would give one of the strings a jerk with his little finger and then finish the "goes the weasel" with the bow.

This was deemed a great triumph in musical art, and it especially excited the envy of Goarden, who thought himself eclipsed by Dave's "Pop goes the Weasel" performance. But Goarden's time invariably came after Dave got through, and the present was no exception.

"A song! a song!" being loudly demanded, Goarden lost no time in responding.

Here is a stanza I can recall of his first song. Goarden, according to the prevailing custom, sang it sitting down, and with his elbows on his knees, his face resting on his hands:—

It was in the flowery month of May,
Just at the dawning of the day,
I heer'd a young man sigh and say,
"I've lost my fairest j-e-w-e-ll!"

To the inevitable "ancor," Goarden responded with a song, the chorus of which ran thus:—

THE SUGAR-BUSH PARTY

Oh, dig my grave both wide and deep.
Put a marble stone at the head and feet.
And on my breast a turtle dove,
For to show the world I died of love.

Once started, there was no stopping Goarden. So long as any one continued to shout "ancor" (and there was always some one who would do it, to have a bit of fun with the hired man), Goarden would sing. He went through the entire repertoire, which embraced such songs as "The True Shanty Lad," "The Faded Coat of Blue," "Daisy Dean," "Don't you go, Tommy, don't go," "Pompey Snow," "Ri tourel I oural I oural I a"; the song which had the chorus, "Whack fal the did'll all, the did'll all, the dido," and then he wound up with his famous French song.

After a couple of jolly hours spent in listening to Dave and Goarden, it was announced that the taffy was ready, so everybody got a lump of snow or ice, and the McNabb boys went about with large dishes full of hot taffy, which they lifted out in ladlesful, pouring it on each one's snow or ice.

Just as soon as this cooled off the fun began. When left to cool long enough, the taffy became quite brittle and hard, but most of the company began eating it while it was still warm, and in consequence there were many who got badly tangled up with it. But they all ate to their hearts' content, Mrs. McNabb and the girls

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having brought a liberal supply of "twisters" and cakes for the guests.

One large pot was still kept over the fire, boiling down a quantity of thick syrup to a condition in which it was ready to be converted into sugar. When that period arrived, the pot was lifted off, and the contents poured into a large pan, and there stirred vigorously until it turned into beautiful maple sugar. Each guest was invited to come forward and help him or herself, which they all did, eating the sugar with a relish.

Ah, those were glorious nights spent in the sugar bush! The present generation does not know much about them, for sugar and syrup-making have been reduced largely to a purely commercial industry. But to those of us who have sat about the old roaring camp-fires in the dense bush, drunk the thin, sweet syrup, chewed the taffy till our teeth were tired, and eaten the sugar till we could eat no more, there is nothing on earth that we would take in exchange for those memories.

Before the jolly company separated we all joined hands and sang, "Should auld acquaintance be forgot."

I noticed that Colin stood beside Katie, and held her hand as we sang. Tears stood in the girl's eyes as the chorus welled forth. She and Colin had been rather silent during the evening, for they were thinking of the early separation. Love was speaking eloquently,

THE SUGAR-BUSH PARTY

if silently, to them both. The widow noticed Katie's tears, and in sympathy she whispered to her daughter: "Dry your eyes, my lass. There are happy days in store for you."

Then the "good-nights" were said, the jingle of bells was heard again, and the laughter and songs were renewed as the sleigh-loads of merry folks went their different ways. But there was one present for whom that was the last "sugarin'-off."

CHAPTER XXXVII

COLIN RECEIVES HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE

BUT the pleasant days sped all too rapidly, and at last the hour came when the three young men must say good-bye and plunge into the great world which held so much of uncertainty for them. I shall not dwell upon the parting scenes or attempt to depict the regret that was experienced over the departure of the boys. They were all very popular with the young people in the settlement.

I may be partial (perhaps it is natural that I should be), but I think the keenest regret was felt in parting with Colin, especially among the boys and girls of the place. Colin's brightness, cheerfulness, and readiness to lend a hand made him the friend of nearly every one.

It was arranged that Wallace should drive the boys to Prescott. The trip would occupy three or four days, and I had managed to be included in the party. The St. Lawrence would be crossed at that place, and the remainder of the journey to the nearest railway point was not long. The night before the boys crossed the river, I took a walk with Colin. It was a beautiful

COLIN RECEIVES HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE

moonlight night, and we strolled down the road by the river several miles.

"Colin, my boy," I said, as we were retracing our steps, "you are going to the war, and while I do not desire to alarm you in the slightest, it is only right that you should realise the risks you are taking."

"I think I am not unmindful of the danger," Colin answered; "but I believe I am following the path of duty, and I hope that I shall return in safety and honour."

"Please God it may be so!" I answered. "There has been something on my mind for a long time that I wanted to tell you, and I think it but right that you should know it before we separate, for God only knows how long."

"Please don't say that!" replied Colin, adding enthusiastically, "you and I have been such chums all these years, haven't we, Uncle Watty?" And he placed his arm affectionately across my shoulders. I felt a thrill of joy, for I loved the lad, on his own account as well as that of my sister.

"Do you remember that beautiful picture in the locket that I showed you some time ago?" I said.

"Remember it?" answered Colin. "Could any one forget a face like that?"

"Well, that is the picture of your mother," I said.

I had never had much conversation with Colin about

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himself. He knew that he was not Mrs. McNabb's son, and he knew that I was his uncle, but he never questioned me closely, and the story of his father and mother was too sad a one for me to discuss with him, more especially in view of the shadow that rested over the marriage of his parents. We both appeared, somehow, to avoid the subject. The first time it ever came up was when Colin was about eight years old. He came home from school one evening furious because Bill Pepper's boy had in an angry moment told him his father was a murderer and that his name was Wasby. He was so very young when he went to the widow's to live, that he scarcely remembered he was not born there, and it was not until he grew up that he began to wonder why he was not told more.

I had shown Colin the picture of his mother a week or two before, but owing to some interruption which occurred at the time, I did not explain to him who it was. Now, however, I determined to give the boy the locket, so that he might carry his mother's likeness with him to the war.

Colin gazed long and earnestly at the portrait, even though the bright moonlight afforded but an indifferent view of it. He was returning it to me, when I said: "No, Colin, it is yours. I brought it with me, intending to give you the locket, that you might carry it to the war with you."

COLIN RECEIVES HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE

Before we reached the inn, I told Colin everything except that the validity of his parents' marriage had been assailed, and that otherwise he would have been the heir to great estates. I could see, as we walked along the old road by the great dark stream, across which the beams from the moon cast a bar of silver, that Colin was preoccupied. He was thinking about his mother, whose beautiful face had stirred him deeply. I left him to himself and to his thoughts, and the rest of the walk that night was in silence, broken only by the noise of our footfalls, and the rippling of the water as it struck upon the shore and receded.

"Why, where on earth have you two been?" said Wallace, who was standing in the doorway looking for us, as we approached the inn.

"Away down the road for miles," I answered.

"We feared you were lost, and we were just thinking of organising a search party," said Willie, coming out of the hostelry.

As it was late, and the boys were to start very early in the morning, we soon retired.

After a hurried breakfast, the ferry-boat was announced as being at the wharf, and in a few minutes the boys and their boxes were aboard. The good-byes were quickly said, and the boat pushed off leaving Wallace and me standing on the bank waving our handkerchiefs, while the three stout-hearted lads

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answered us in the same way, until their figures grew small and they were finally lost to sight.

Two days later Wallace and I were back on the farm, where the old routine was taken up. At the earnest solicitation of Mrs. McNabb, I consented to become one of her household, making my home there when I was not absent from the settlement. The place seemed dreadfully lonely for a while.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII

JAMIE ASSISTS JOHN B. GOUGH

FOUR weeks after the departure of the boys, the following letter was received from Jamie, and you may be sure we were delighted to get it, for we were all so bound up in the lads that we thought and talked of little else.

NEW YORK, May 17, 1861.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND ALL: Willie and Colin have asked me to write you a letter containing the general news regarding ourselves, and they promise to write special ones. We had no difficulty in reaching here, which we did the second day after leaving Prescott. It was all so new to Colin and me that we enjoyed the scenery wonderfully, and we were almost sorry when we reached this great city. Do you know, it seems far worse to get lost in a city than it does in a bush, for you can keep three trees in a line in the bush and so make your way out, but you cannot keep three houses in a line here and have it help you any.

Mr. Rolphe seemed pleased to see us, and he has been very kind to us all. I think he took a special notion to Colin, for he asked him a lot of questions about himself, and he said to Willie afterwards, "That's a fine boy, your second brother; he has enough of the man in him to make his mark." He didn't say anything complimentary to me, although he was very kind,

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and told me I would be sure to get along in the railway work. He invited us to his house for Saturday evening, remarking that Willie was quite a favourite there.

Willie and Colin were accepted by Colonel Rolphe yesterday, and received their outfits. They look very handsome and smart in their uniforms, and I am sure, mother, that you and the others, including Watty, would be proud of them, so striking do they appear in their suits of blue. They spend four hours each day drilling at the armoury, and will continue to do so until ordered to the front. I always stay around the armoury till drill is over, and then the three of us go off and wander about the city until we are tired and glad to rest. Colonel Rolphe is only awaiting orders to start.

I am often lonesome for the fields and bush, and for the animals, and I know Colin is too, but he does not like to admit it. Willie, who is used to it here, seems quite at home, and it is very lucky that we have him with us during our rambles, or we would often get lost.

We are all very much interested in a rescue home here,— a drunkards' rescue home, which two excellent and philanthropic men have been conducting on Broad Street for a long time. Willie used often to drop in, and one evening he took Colin and me. There was a wonderful man speaking the night we were there. His name is John B. Gough. He is a man who was once an abandoned drunkard, but was rescued from the gutter, and he is now stirring up the people against the drink traffic as no other man in the country ever stirred them. We boys agreed that we never listened to such an address. It seemed impossible to hear his burning, earnest words and not be fired with a determination to fight the curse of drink while life lasts.

JAMIE ASSISTS JOHN B. GOUGH

The pictures of misery, squalor, and crime which he presented, and which we knew were true, because he drew them from his own experience and observation, burned themselves into my soul, and when, at the close of the meeting, the good men who conducted the mission and who call themselves Brethren (Plymouth Brethren, some call them) asked for volunteers for work, I promptly offered my services and pledged myself to do what I could to uplift my fellow-creatures and try to save them from the consequences of drink. I trust I shall prove faithful, for there is such great need, such overwhelming need, of work in that direction here in this great city, where hundreds and hundreds of saloons are filled from morning till night with poor creatures who are spending the money which should be used to clothe and feed the children at home. My evenings and all spare time will be taken up in this work.

As Willie and Colin will be writing in a day or two, just as soon as marching orders are received, I will not say anything more, but will close by sending my sincerest love to you all, and by asking to be remembered to those in the settlement who ask for me.

Tell Auld Peggy that there are plenty of people here who tell fortunes and who profess to be able to find hidden treasures, bring lovers together, and all that sort of thing. She would have no chance here reading cups.

Lovingly, your son,

JAMIE.

The widow felt grateful over her son's letter, and especially for his volunteering to take up the work of rescue.

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A number of letters from Willie and Colin followed. Most of Colin's letters were to Katie, and I doubt not are to this very day stored carefully somewhere, tied in a packet with faded ribbons, for I recall Katie's eager eyes as she took the precious missives when they came, and went off to some quiet retreat to enjoy them alone.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WILLIE AND HELEN SAY GOOD-BYE

THE evening spent at the home of President Rolphe was, for the boys, a "red letter" one. Mrs. Rolphe exerted herself to entertain them and make them feel perfectly at home, and Mr. Rolphe ably assisted her. Helen's beauty made a great impression on Colin and Jamie, unaccustomed as they were to visions of maidens radiantly adorned.

After the company had participated in a number of games, in connection with which Mrs. Rolphe exercised the greatest tact in seeing that the boys found pleasure and amusement, refreshments were served, and the boys were brought face to face with the imposing butler. Jamie felt, every time he came near, as if, instead of offering to help him to fruit or cake, he might suddenly confront him with some such question as, "What is the chief end of man?" or "What is the eighth commandment?" But he did nothing of the kind, and was very attentive in looking after their wants.

After supper, Mrs. Rolphe, who had heard her husband sounding Colin's praises, took the young man off to the

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conservatory, where she talked about such subjects as she thought would interest him. She adroitly drew him out and got the boy to talk about himself freely.

Meanwhile, Helen had been telling Willie about a black pony, which her father had sent her for a birthday present a few weeks ago. The hostler brought Darkie around to the driveway, and after the spirited creature had been duly inspected, the young folks sat on the old-fashioned piazza overlooking the west lawn.

"So you are going to the war?" said Helen, turning the conversation, after Darkie had been duly extolled.

"Yes," answered Willie, and not knowing what to say further, like a very sensible boy, said nothing, and there was an awkward pause.

"And you're not afraid of being shot?"

"Oh, dear, no!" answered Willie. "I'm a bit of a Calvinist, like mother, and if I'm not born to be shot, I shall not be; and besides," he continued, "Colin and I have both unbounded confidence that we shall come off all right."

"After your rescuing me when the railway offices were burning, I don't need to be convinced of your bravery and contempt of danger."

"Pray do not speak of that," answered Willie. "Do you know, it takes more courage for me to talk to you than it did to rescue you from the fire."

"I don't understand what you mean," answered

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Helen. "And if I were to place a literal interpretation upon your words, I fear the result would not be flattering to myself. Won't you please explain to me?"

"Of course, I don't mean that I am not pleased beyond expression to sit near you and talk to you; but somehow, you seem so elevated and so far removed from me."

Helen (she was still but little more than a child) was somewhat startled and amused at Willie's speech. "Having escaped from the burning building, I have no intention of flitting from the world, for a time at least," she said playfully.

After she had spoken, she felt that she had not said exactly the right thing, and so she added: "Please be quite frank with me, Mr. McNabb, and tell me what is in your mind. I'm not really so very different from other girls as you seem to think."

"You have been brought up in a different world from mine. You have had a training and lived a life that I have not, and if you will pardon the simile, you resemble one of those lovely hyacinths blooming in the conservatory yonder, while I, like the common grass found along the road, have grown up amid the plainest and homeliest scenes of backwoods country life. From childhood I have been obliged to participate in the struggles and hardships incident to that life, and to assist in maintaining an existence on the homestead. Please do not mis-

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understand my allusions to my home life and history, for there was an honest dignity about them that I would not exchange for princely lineage. The man who would offer any apology for such a home and such a history as ours, and for such modest, short, and simple annals as filled our little world in the backwoods of Canada, I should despise as I would a coward. I am very proud of it all, but I am not unmindful that the world recognises a great difference in our positions."

Helen laughed, and her laugh was always sweet music to Willie's ear. "Why, you great, silly boy," she exclaimed with enthusiasm, "what a long, serious speech you have made!" Then gravely, "Do you know, I had rather be the author of that speech, serious and long as it was, in which you refer to your home and to your manly struggles, than I would be — why, than I would be — President of the United States!"

Willie was swept off his feet by the generous enthusiasm of the girl. With the idealism of youth and love, he had placed Helen upon a pedestal so elevated that anything beyond an occasional pilgrimage for the purpose of indulging in worship and adoration before the shrine, appeared a sacrilegious presumption that might call down swift retribution.

Before he had time to reply to Helen she increased his astonishment by adding: "It was very nice of you

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to liken me to a hyacinth, and if you will allow me, I shall reward you by giving you 'yonder hyacinth.'"

In an instant she passed into the conservatory, and returned, hearing the flower. She pinned it on the lapel of his coat, and as she did so, her face was so close to Willie's that he almost fancied he could catch the warm glow. He could feel her breath, and as she bent down lower, her wealth of hair flowed over her shoulders.

For an instant, just one instant, the boy was seized with a wild, exultant desire to take the beautiful girl in his arms and press her to his heart. He felt that he would have hartered his existence for the joy of just one such moment.

Love was awakening, as by magic touch, emotions the existence of which the young man had never before conceived. But the next instant that wild, passionate desire to embrace Helen and call her his was gone, and he inwardly returned thanks that he had been saved from doing so.

Such is youth. As an old moralist has dryly written, "Young men often view matters of this nature in a remarkable and exaggerated manner." When Willie came to himself, he was seated by Helen's side, with the hyacinth pinned on his coat. Helen sat calm and thoughtful, while Willie was consumed with excitement, joy, and — well no doubt the reader knows more about it than I do.

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"I suppose you will forget all about us when you go to the front," said Helen, quietly.

"Indeed, no!" answered Willie. "And if you will let me, I shall send you occasionally an account of our doings."

"I'm sure I should be delighted, and father, who is so much interested in the war, will be greatly pleased to hear from you."

"Perhaps I had better direct the correspondence to your father," said Willie, drawing a bow at venture.

"Oh, dear, no!" responded Helen, with a shade of disappointment in her tone. "I want you to write to *me*, and I'll only read to papa what you say about the battles. You can tell me a lot of things about yourself and your observations. And don't forget to let me know if you find any finer hyacinths than the one I have pinned on your coat."

Willie said solemnly — so solemnly that Helen smiled, "Miss Rolphe, I never want to."

"So we are to be friends, are we?" said Helen, emphasising the word "friends."

"Well, that is the way you honour me by putting it," answered Willie. "I would gladly be your slave."

"You are going to war," said Helen, as she rose, "to help set the slaves free, and who knows? you may prove your own liberator."

It was not until Willie had spent two or three years

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in camp, and had learned something of what active warfare meant, that the possible significance of the words of Helen "Who knows? you may prove your own liberator," came to him; and as he pondered over them, they kindled in his soul a hope that lightened his knapsack over many a weary march, and proved an inspiration to him in moments when the finest nerve and most dauntless courage were required to honour the flag under which he was fighting.

CHAPTER XL

IN THE THICK OF THE WAR

A DAY later, Willie and Colin had said farewell to Jamie, and were off with Colonel Rolphe's detachment to fight under Abraham Lincoln's banner for the maintenance of the Union and for the emancipation of the slaves.

The battalion was hurried forward to join the command of General Scott, who for a short time after the commencement of hostilities was commander-in-chief of the Union forces. Colonel Rolphe's detachment failed to come up with the Union army in time to take part in the battle of Bull Run, the first real struggle of the war. From that time forward, however, the boys participated in almost every battle of importance fought by their brigade.

Space will not permit us to follow the boys through the long campaign, and we must confine the story to the relation of a few incidents in which the young men participated.

Their battalion had been sent to Illinois to join General Grant's command, and in the early part of 1862,

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when the general advanced into Kentucky, it formed a portion of the Union force. The boys' first real baptism of heavy fire occurred at the capture of Fort Donelson.

Following closely on this was the battle of Pittsburg Landing, where the Union forces narrowly escaped a crushing defeat, due to the strategy of Johnston, the Confederate leader. Grant, however, by virtue of superior generalship, the fighting qualities of his troops, and the reinforcements he had received, converted the day into a victory, and the Confederates were driven back with great loss.

In this battle Colin and Willie, who had been fighting side by side, taking such shelter as they could find, became separated, and did not see each other until late in the day, when they were united under somewhat thrilling circumstances.

The battle had waged fiercely for hours. Towards evening, when the troops were pretty thoroughly exhausted, Colonel Rolphe rode along the line, rallying his men and encouraging them to press forward. The regimental standard was some distance in advance and to the right of the detachment, and Colonel Rolphe did not notice, as he wheeled his horse and made off to the left, that a small body of Confederates, taking shelter in a long, irregular growth of brush, were advancing stealthily, with the evident design of capturing the flag.

Colin, who was at the extreme right of his company

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which had deployed, noticed the Confederates, and realising their design, he shouted a warning to his captain, but his voice was drowned in the din and roar of musketry. The Confederates, seeing that the moment had come to strike, made a wild rush for the standard, bearing down the soldier who held it and scattering those about him like chaff.

The incident occurred so quickly that for a moment the Federals seemed nonplussed. Unless some one acted instantly and with courage, the flag was gone. With a loud cheer, Colin sprang forward, shouting to his comrades to follow, and rushing on the Confederate company, a sharp tussle ensued. Colin went straight at the tall soldier in gray who had seized the flag, and striking him down with the butt end of his rifle, he tore the ensign from his hands and was bearing it back, when he in turn was stricken to the earth by a stinging blow.

He had just sufficient consciousness left to hold on to the flag. Raising his eyes, he encountered the gaze of a soldier in gray about to strike, when the whizz of a bullet was heard, and his opponent rolled over helpless. A moment later Colin had recovered sufficiently to stagger to his feet. His companions were still engaged in a desperate encounter with the grays, and as the latter greatly outnumbered their antagonists, it would have gone hard with the Federals had not succour

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in the form of a small detachment been observed approaching. Before the detachment arrived, however, the grays made a determined effort to recapture the flag.

Two stalwarts rushed upon Colin. He got in a blow at the nearest of his enemies and laid him stunned upon the ground, but the other was overpowering him. His antagonist was fighting at close quarters, and in a moment it would have been all up with poor Colin; but suddenly there was a shout, a wild rush, and the Confederate was knocked sprawling to the ground.

The rescue party had just arrived in time. Colin was dazed for a minute or two; he was exhausted, had lost a good deal of blood, and had received some very hard knocks. When his head cleared, Willie was standing over him, trying to give him some brandy.

"Why, Willie, is that you?" Colin said.

"Yes, old fellow," answered Willie. "You have had a close call."

"Has the flag been saved?"

"It has, thanks to your bravery, and here it is," added Willie, exhibiting the ensign.

Colin smiled as they surveyed the flag, and he felt happy and at ease as his comrades carried him to the hospital tent, where, however, he was obliged to remain for a week or two.

The affair was reported to the commanding officer,

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and Colin was mentioned in the despatches forwarded to Washington. The war correspondents also made much of the incident, and the lad's praises were sounded throughout the North.

There was a thrill of joy, thankfulness, and pride when the news of Colin's heroism reached the Scotch Settlement, as it did some months after the occurrence. Naturally, we all read with eagerness the American newspapers which reached us in those days. We received many letters from the boys, telling us all about their experiences, but these letters were generally so long delayed in reaching us, owing to the defective arrangements for carrying the mails, that we had long before received the more important news through the medium of the newspapers.

CHAPTER XLI

WOUNDED AT GETTYSBURG

THE following year, shortly after President Lincoln had issued his Emancipation Proclamation, setting at liberty all the slaves, I received a letter from Colin, informing me that Willie had been badly, he did not think fatally, wounded, in the great battle of Gettysburg, where a terrible slaughter had occurred. Colin's letter, which I have preserved to this day, was as follows:—

GETTYSBURG, July 4, 1863.

MY DEAR UNCLE WATTY: We have just had a terrible battle (over fifty thousand lying dead on the field, blood flowing in rivulets down the slopes), something so awful that it would horrify you if I set it down here. I escaped as if by a miracle. The bullets rained about us for hours. The smell of the smoke and the roar of musketry appear to bring out all that is savage in a man's nature, and after a time I seemed to revel in the work. But now that it is over, I feel satiated with war, and if it please God to bring me safely through this campaign, nothing but the most urgent call of my country will ever induce me to take up arms again. If the world could have but looked on the spectacle during the last three or four days, and witnessed for itself the awful scenes that were enacted here, I would be safe

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in saying that there would be fewer wars. Willie was severely wounded in the engagement. I don't think the wound is fatal, although it is of such a nature that it is difficult to tell for some days what the result will be. He was shot through the right lung. Fortunately, I was near him and saw that he was immediately conveyed to the rear and placed in the hands of the surgeons.

I'll tell you how it came about. As you perhaps know, we were both promoted after the flag incident at Pittsburg Landing. We had received stripes before, but after that we received commissions. We are still in the same company, and were fighting together. It was growing dusk on the second evening of the battle, and we were expecting to receive orders to cease firing. I noticed that a considerable detachment of mounted Confederates was moving swiftly in the direction of our staff, which was stationed upon a little hillock. General Meade, the commander, was seated upon his horse, in the centre of the group. It was growing dark so rapidly that none of the staff noticed the approach of the enemy. I had been watching the movements of the detachment, and suspecting the object, I hurriedly rallied the men of my company, and hurrying forward, we interposed between the general and his staff, and the approaching enemy.

Of course our forces were unequal, but we checked the oncoming detachment. The angry grays slashed right and left as we came into collision, and for a time we had a tough encounter. We could not have been more than three hundred yards from the knoll upon which the staff was located, and I could easily distinguish the commanding general in the midst. So could our antagonists, and one of them, bringing his rifle to his shoulder, was taking deliberate aim at Meade, when

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Willie, observing the action, swung his rifle round with terrible force, and just as the Confederate's gun exploded, he was knocked sprawling to the ground, stunned and bleeding. But Willie, while he may have saved the life of the commander, paid dearly for his act. He had scarcely time to turn his head when another Confederate, who had witnessed the act, drew a pistol from his breast and emptied its contents into Willie's chest. I shall never forget the feeling that came over me as Willie fell near my feet.

Flinging my rifle to the ground (for what cared I for other things, when Willie lay, as I thought, dying at my feet), I raised him in my arms, and looked into his face. He was stunned at first, and I thought him dead, but he suddenly opened his eyes and said :—

"Is that you, Colin?"

"Yes, it is Colin," I answered. "Are you very badly hurt?"

"Well, I don't think so," answered Willie. "I have a stinging feeling here [putting his hand over his right breast], and I know I was hit by a bullet."

"Well, don't talk any more, like a good fellow, and I'll have you taken to the hospital."

Another minute, and the Confederates had given up their enterprise and retired.

In a moment we had Willie on a stretcher and had him carried to the hospital, where the surgeon examined him. He found that the hullet had entered his right breast and passed through the lung. The bullet was so near the surface on his back that the doctor was able to extract it without difficulty. The lung hled a little, hut the doctor told me that unless blood poisoning set in, he believed he would recover. It was, of course, a very serious wound, he said, and it was impossible to

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tell what complications might occur, but the young man was strong and hardy, and he hoped for the best.

And now, dear uncle, I don't want you to let mother know how badly Willie has been wounded. I would not have her endure unnecessary pain for all the world. I think, however, that she should know something about it, in case the worst happens.

You cannot imagine how terribly lonesome I shall be without Willie, for we have been inseparable companions. The doctor thinks that even if he recovers, he will not be fit for active service for three months.

With best love to you all, I remain,

Yours affectionately,

COLIN.

CHAPTER XLII

"DONALD DISHART," THE SPY

BUT Willie did not die, on the contrary, he recovered, and recovered quickly. The manner in which the young man had been wounded, and the incident connected with it, had been duly reported to the general, who in return reported it to the war department, and it got into the newspapers. It was recalled that this was the same young man who had rescued Helen Rolphe from the burning railway offices some years before. It can easily be imagined that Helen Rolphe's pulse beat double-quick time as she thought of her young hero.

In his letter to her after he had recovered sufficiently to write, Willie made light of the incident; indeed, he was somewhat ashamed of having been wounded. As he lay on his cot during convalescence he thought of the last words of Helen, "Who knows? you may prove your own liberator." And he greatly wished to be liberated, for he lived in such a world of uncertainty with regard to the girl that he often felt like a being bound by thongs that he could not loosen.

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Her replies to his letters gave him no cue as to what her feelings were. While they were nice, friendly, chatty letters, breathing a domestic atmosphere, there was nothing in them to indicate that he was more to her than "My dear friend," as she began her epistles. She frequently spoke of Jamie, who, she said, was making good progress, and who, "true to the instincts of the Scottish race, would one day be president of some railroad." In one letter she sent, with a jocular remark, a lock of her hair tied with a piece of blue ribbon, and another time she sent a small photograph of herself. Both Mr. and Mrs. Rolphe sometimes enclosed notes for Willie and Colin, when they were writing to their brother, Colonel Rolphe. The colonel was very friendly to the boys, and took advantage of every opportunity to show his kindness. During Willie's convalescence he used to call and enquire for him whenever he happened to be in the hospital quarters.

But the war was rapidly drawing to a close. The Confederates were being slowly but surely pushed southwards, and were abandoning one stronghold after another. General Grant, after his brilliant campaign in the west, superseded Halleck as commander-in-chief, and he then turned his attention to Richmond. Sherman was conducting his marvellous campaign in Georgia, sweeping everything before him, while Sheridan had cleaned out the great fertile Shenandoah Valley, thus removing the

"DONALD DISHART," THE SPY

danger of an attack upon Washington, and inflicting a severe blow upon the resources of the Confederate forces.

It was just before the fall of Richmond, in April, 1865, that the last incident worthy of special mention, as affecting characters in this story, occurred.

Grant had pressed the Confederates so hard, that General Lee hurriedly abandoned Richmond and was retreating with his army towards Danville, with the hope of effecting a junction with the other wing of the Confederate army under Johnston, when it was intended to make a final stand. The morning after the fall of Richmond, there was some little stir in the Federal camp over a spy who had been caught. This person had originally been employed as a spy by the northern secret service, but it had been learned that he was receiving pay from both sides and betraying information to both. A hasty court-martial was summoned, and, as documents of an incriminating character were found upon his person, he was ordered to be shot.

Colin was named as captain of the squad told off to shoot the spy, and Willie happened to accompany him. The name which the unfortunate wretch had given to the officers was Donald Dishart, and, as he gave Canada as the country from which he hailed, the boys were naturally curious to see the victim.

CHAPTER XLIII

"THE MASTER" BEGS FOR HIS LIFE

AS the spy was led out between two armed guards, his face was ghastly pale, and he looked the personification of craven misery.

"Why, as God lives!" exclaimed Colin, excitedly, "it's Simon Smallpiece."

And sure enough it was Simon. The mean face of "the master" looked meaner than of old; the features, which had seemed offensive in the earlier days, now appeared disgusting. Colin afterwards said to me that he never read so startling and so plain a page of history as was printed on Simon's face, as he walked that April morning to the place of execution.

Simon's first impulse, upon seeing that he was discovered by the stern young officer, whom he instantly recognised as the pupil who had thrashed him, and as the one person upon earth whom he had hated above all other mortals, was to give no sign of recognition, but the craven nature of the man asserted itself. A sudden gleam of possible hope shot across his perturbed mind, and he exclaimed: "Oh, Colin McNabb, for God's sake,

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save me! I'm innocent of the charge brought against me, as Heaven is my witness!"

Colin knew that this was a lie, for he had examined with his own eyes the documents found upon Simon. However, he did not care at such a moment to tell the miserable wretch that he lied. He gave command to stop the procession, being determined to have a word with Simon before he was shot. Willie joined him, and the two going close up to the victim, Colin said:—

"Simon, it is not within my power to save you. If it were, and I could honourably do it, I would not hesitate. You have been captured within our lines; a court-martial, after a fair hearing, has condemned you, and there is no power on earth, Simon, that can help you. The most that lies in my power to do for you is to delay your execution a few brief moments."

Simon pleaded piteously for mercy, appealing first to Colin and then to Willie to intercede with the commander on his behalf. "I can't die as I am, boys," he said. "I've been an awful bad man, and unless I get time to repent, Kearstie's soul [he had evidently heard of her fate] will rise up against me in hell and taunt me throughout eternity. I must be given time to repent. Oh, for God's sake, boys, as you hope for mercy yourselves, try and save me!"

Both young men knew it was hopeless to attempt any intercession. Throughout the entire war they had

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never known of a single case where a convicted spy was allowed to escape, and the evidence against Simon was absolutely conclusive.

"We assure you, Simon," said Colin, slowly and solemnly, "that it would be perfectly futile to make any effort to save you. We can only warn you to prepare for the doom that awaits you. May Heaven have mercy on your soul, Simon, and forgive you, as I do," added Colin, sorrowfully, for he could not but pity the wretched man.

Simon's face was horrible. He was about to make reply, when Colin advanced to his side and said: "Simon, had I realised as a boy how terrible a thing the wrath of God is, and that it is wrong to anticipate His vengeance, I would not have thrashed you as I did that day in the school. I would not have taken the task out of His hands; I would have been content to wait. Could I have looked into the future and beheld your misery as I behold it to-day, could I have seen how fine the mills of the gods do grind, as I see they have done in your case, I would have rather let my right hand wither than raise it against you."

During Colin's speech, malice and hatred were depicted in Simon's countenance. He realised that his doom was sealed, and that pleadings would avail him naught. "Curse you, Colin Wasby!" he shrieked, and uttered a string of oaths and imprecations.

"THE MASTER" BEGS FOR HIS LIFE

Realising that it was useless to prolong the talk, and that nothing could be done with or for Simon, Colin commanded the squad to guard the prisoner closely for a moment or two, while he sought the commanding officer. "Not knowing who the victim was," he said to him, "I accepted command of the firing squad to-day, but I know the man personally, and I beg to be relieved."

An officer was sent in his place, who, without a moment's loss of time, gave the command, "Fall in! March!"

The squad marched down the valley, towards a little stream some five hundred yards distant.

"Halt!" commanded the adjutant, as the party reached a newly dug grave prepared for the execution. Willie and Colin followed at some distance.

The soldiers tied Simon's hands behind his back and stood him in front of the grave. Simon gave a dreadful shudder, and his face was terrible to look upon as he peered into the gaping opening in the earth, which was to be his sepulchre. The firing party took up its position about fifty yards up the slope of the valley. The adjutant was cool and hard, and his voice rang out, "Ready" — a brief pause.

"Present" — another brief and awful pause.

"Fire!"

* * * * *

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A dozen rifles cracked, Simon's body reeled, and then suddenly collapsing, tumbled into the gaping pit. Colin and Willie walked sorrowfully away without pausing to witness the shovelling of the earth upon his miserable body.

When the word reached the Scotch Settlement, as it ultimately did, Auld Peggy exclaimed, as she sat down to a cup of tea at the widow's :—

“Losh me, Mustress McNabb, an' is no' yoan an' awfu' fate which hes overtook th' maister. Weel, weel, Ah aye kent he wis bawd an' thet bawd would come o' hum, but wha would hae thocht sicna fate would overtak' hum! But Ah'll tall 'e, Mustress McNabb, thet I hae aye nawticed thet th' maun wha betrays an' descarts a woman, maun come tae some bawd end. Ah'in jist waitin' tae hear o' McCallum bein' haing't in West Constant. Th' hulk is shair tae meet some dreadfu' doom f'r rinnin' aff wi' yoan hussy an' desertin' me an' th' twa bairns. Thus thing aboot Simon upsets me waur nor onything thet hes happened syne 'the burnin'.” And Auld Peggy puffed away at her pipe, as she reckoned confidently upon the fate which was sure to overtake her husband.

CHAPTER XLIV

A LOVER'S ANXIETY

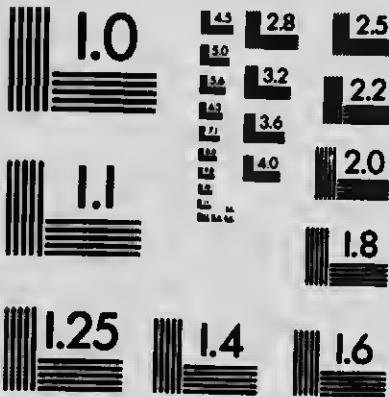
IT was but a very few weeks after the shooting of Simon that hostilities ceased, and the Union troops returned to the North. The two young Canadians, who with thousands of their countrymen had participated in the great struggle with honour to themselves and credit to the cause, shared in the plaudits which greeted the troops as they marched through the northern towns and cities upon their triumphant return.

Both Willie and Colin bore marks of the struggle from which they had just emerged. None of the wounds which Colin had received were of a serious character, although some of the marks he will carry to the grave with him. Willie's had been more serious, and he had a number of minor scars which to the present day he is proud to exhibit. The two young men were treated in the most generous and flattering manner by the military authorities. Willie was offered a commission in the standing army, and decided to accept it, — for a time at least, or until he should settle upon his plans for the future. Colin was also offered



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COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

a position, but as the bent of his mind was against war and a military career, he declined it. At the time of disbandment, he had attained the rank of captain, and was gazetted to that of major in the militia, but as he was not fond of military titles, he declined to use his in after life.

As might be expected, the Rolphes gave the two young men the warmest kind of a welcome, while Jamie was delighted beyond measure over the safe return of his brothers and their honourable record.

Willie, who had learned much in the war, and who had developed wondrously, was soon upon the best of terms with Helen, who, during the four years of his absence, had grown into womanhood. The young man, if he was in love before he left, was fairly enraptured upon his return. She treated him with the utmost frankness and respect, his career-in-arms having strongly appealed to the young woman. She had always regarded Willie as a hero, since he had saved her life at the burning building, and when he joined the troops she looked for a corresponding distinction. Indeed, she would have concluded that some evil genius had intervened, if Willie had not distinguished himself upon the field, and she regarded his promotion as the most natural thing that could have occurred. In a word, she was proud of Willie, and when a girl is proud of a young man, the path to her heart, if it has not already been trodden, is an easy one.

A LOVER'S ANXIETY

Even Willie, who was not an expert lover, and who stood in great awe of the gentler sex, was not slow in realising the altered condition of the situation since he had left, over four years ago, and it may easily be surmised what joy was in his soul as a consequence.

He was often at the Rolphe home, where both Mr. and Mrs. Rolphe extended him the most genial and hearty welcome. He could not but feel from the nature of their conduct towards him, and from the uninterrupted freedom of intercourse which they permitted between himself and their daughter, that he was regarded as worthy of her. If they did not positively encourage his attentions to Helen, they at least approved of them. Truth to say, both Mr. and Mrs. Rolphe were proud of the young man. They respected his noble courage and the manliness of his character, and if the time ever came when the happiness of their much-loved daughter had to be entrusted to another, they would prefer such a son-in-law as they knew the young man would make.

But it was not the disposition of Mr. or Mrs. Rolphe's minds that Willie was anxious about; it was the nature of Helen's feelings towards himself that caused him the keenest anxiety.

CHAPTER XLV

HELEN'S ANSWER

THE boys with Jamie were spending an evening at the Rolphes' home about three weeks after their return from the war. Dinner was over, and Mr. Rolphe had withdrawn to the smoking-room with those who cared to share a cigar.

Willie suggested to Helen a stroll in the garden, and with the kindly and hospitable Mrs. Rolphe nodding approval, the young pair tripped off down the pathway leading to the orchard. There was a pleasant greenhouse reached through two rows of currant bushes. The greenhouse was completely covered with a thick growth of interlacing vines, whose foliage afforded a perfect protection from the sun's rays. Towards this picturesque shelter the steps of the young folks seemed to be instinctively directed.

Seating themselves on a rustic bench, they looked into each other's eyes, and while both had much to say, neither seemed to know exactly where to begin, and there was an awkward pause. It was, however, broken by the girl, who said mischievously, "Why did you bring me to the greenhouse, Mr. McNabb?"

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Willie was never a diplomat; indeed, the marvel is that he ever succeeded with a woman at all.

"I didn't bring you, it was you that brought me."

Helen would have been annoyed at any one but Willie making such a reply; but she understood the young man's blunt way of speaking, and she realised that it was the outcome of his frankness. At the same time, she determined to punish him, and so she said: "Why, Mr. McNabb, I quite fail to understand you! That I should beguile an innocent young soldier and lead him against his will into a greenhouse!" And she rose and pretended to be going.

"Oh, but you didn't beguile me, Miss Rolphe!" said Willie, excitedly, and quite angry with himself for having spoken so bluntly and stupidly. "And what's more, you didn't lead me against my will! I wanted to come to the greenhouse, and now that we are here, please sit down and talk. You will forgive me when you reflect how unutterably stupid I am as a courtier."

"You are forgiven this time, on condition that the next time you lead any simple and confiding girl to a greenhouse, you will not lay the blame on her."

Willie perceived, by the merry twinkle in Helen's eyes, that he was quite forgiven, and being thus reassured, he proceeded, "Do you remember, Miss Rolphe, the small photograph of yourself that you sent me after Gettysburg?"

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"Did I send you a photograph?" queried Helen, with a mischievous expression in her eyes. "How forgetful I am. One would think I would remember such an incident perfectly."

"Yes, you did," said Willie. "And do you know it reached me when I was in the hospital?"

The mention of the wound softened Helen, and she murmured audibly, and in a sympathetic tone, "Poor boy, poor boy, how you must have suffered!"

"Oh, not more nor as much as thousands of others," answered Willie. "But when your picture came, it brought joy and gladness to me, and the nurses used to tease me by saying it saved my life, for I began to improve from that time."

"Then," said Helen, with a look of mischief chasing away the tears which had started to her eyes at the recollection of Willie's sufferings, "then we are quits; you saved my life and now I have saved yours, at least my photograph did, and that is just as good," and through her glistening tears the girl laughed merrily.

Willie enjoyed Helen's lively humour, and would have given much to hear the music of her bright laughter continue, but an expression of sadness instantly succeeded the girl's merriment, and she said, placing her hand kindly on Willie's arm: "Won't you please forgive my levity this evening? You have done so much for me that there is nothing I would not do for you in return."

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Willie never liked to hear any allusion to the adventure at the burning building, more especially from Helen, who, he fancied, might think that he based some claim for friendship upon the service he had then rendered. Taking Helen's hand in his own, while his blood flowed more swiftly through his veins, he said slowly :—

“Miss Rolphe, there is no risk that I would not take to save you, and you are dearer to me than life itself, but the memory of that adventure years ago, which was but a simple act of humanity, troubles me. It has had a tendency to place a restraint on me with regard to yourself, the nature of which you can divine. While I have always appreciated the generous nature of the friendship and confidence you and your family have bestowed upon me, the fear that it might be due to gratitude places a restraint upon me which often makes me wish that it had been some one else than I who rescued you.”

“But I would not have it any one else,” broke in Helen, impetuously, while Willie proceeded :—

“If the incident could only be forgotten and wiped out of our lives, I think it would be much easier for me, because I don't want to have even the shadow of a claim of such a nature upon your friendship.”

“But I don't want the incident wiped out of our lives, and I don't see why you should object so much to having

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some claim upon me. You may be quite sure, Mr. McNabb, that you are in no way misunderstood by either my father or mother, and I shall not pay you so poor a compliment as to offer any explanation with regard to myself."

Willie was comforted and his mind set at rest. He said: "I have often wished that my introduction into your family had come about in a natural and spontaneous way, instead of being the result of the little service I rendered."

"But who knows," answered Helen, while her eyes twinkled again, "that that 'little incident,' as you call it, was not the plan adopted by Providence to bring about greater events? If it had not been for that, you and Colin would not have been in the war under my uncle; you would not have saved the commander at Gettysburg, and had General Meade and his staff all been slain who can predict what the consequences would have been? Don't you see upon what 'little incidents' great history-making events are suspended?"

Willie had got through an awkward explanation about the rescue and the gratitude it was likely to beget, and he was well pleased with the result. Now that he had got safely past that milestone (indeed, Helen's words convinced him that it was an advantage rather than a drawback), he was anxious to declare his love, for it was beginning to dawn even upon his own

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dense consciousness (for in matters of the heart Willie was denseness personified) that Helen was not unsympathetic towards him.

"What are you thinking about now?" asked Helen, who observed by Willie's face that a conflict was going on in his mind.

"I was thinking about you," he answered.

"What an uninteresting subject!" she rejoined.

"To me it is all-absorbing," said Willie, suddenly warming up, and being seized with a desperate resolve to make the plunge.

"Wouldn't you like to change the subject?" said Helen, banteringly, and the rippling laughter that followed quite drove the desperate resolution from Willie's head.

Suddenly, thinking of the hyacinth that she gave him the night he said good-bye to her four years ago, he produced the precious treasure from the recesses of its hiding-place, and holding it up before her, said, "Do you know what that is, Miss Rolphe?"

"Perhaps it is some flower you gathered in the South, and which you keep to remind you of some event; I see you have handled it carefully."

Willie rightly suspected that she knew perfectly well the origin of the flower, and without choosing to notice her answer, he availed himself of the liberty she had just bestowed upon him, and said: "Helen, do you

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remember what you said to me when you pinned that flower on my coat?"

"What did I say?" asked Helen, who remembered very well the words she had addressed to the young man at parting.

"You said, after hearing me speak of my desire to take part in the work of liberating the slaves, 'Who knows? you may prove your own liberator.'" Then, "Do you know, Helen dear," said Willie, growing bolder as he realised that he was not meeting with any repulse, but that on the contrary the "enemy" was yielding perceptibly to his advance movement, "do you know, the remembrance came rushing upon me one day, and it brought hope into my life, and now, Helen, I want you to tell me if I am 'liberated'?"

"Are you quite sure you were in slavery?" asked Helen.

"Need you ask?" answered the young man, warmly. "You must have realised, from the day we met in the garden, that I was as completely your slave as if you had purchased me on the market." And he went on to talk as lovers have talked from the beginning of time.

"Willie, Willie," Helen at last exclaimed, "you are 'liberated'!"

Willie folded the beautiful girl to his breast, gazed into her eyes, and smoothed back her flowing hair while he kissed her fondly. He was too happy to speak.

• CHAPTER XLVI

THE SCOTCH SETTLEMENT WELCOMES ITS HEROES

WILLIE and Colin had been delayed two or three weeks beyond the time they had set to visit their home in Canada, but as soon as certain business arrangements could be completed, they lost no time in hurrying back to see their mother and their brother and sisters. Jamie did not accompany them, as he could not at the time be spared from his work in the office. The railways had so much to do moving troops and supplies that it was a particularly busy time with them. For that matter, they had been very busy ever since the beginning of the war, and this had opened the way to promotion for Jamie. He had proved an industrious and worthy employee, and at the conclusion of the war he had become assistant freight agent, a position which gave him ample scope for activity and industry, and enabled him to send his mother a liberal allowance every six months, so that the widow had long since ceased to feel the stress experienced in earlier days.

In addition to his duties in the office, he had continued his work in connection with the mission on Broad Street

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for the shelter and reform of drunkards. The longer the young man continued in the work, the stronger became his conviction of its deep importance, and often it was borne in upon him that he ought to devote his entire life to it. But he was ambitious to make his mark in the railway world, his mother needed his assistance, and he contented himself with carrying on the work in the evenings and on Sundays and holidays. He was a sturdy, strapping lad, and it was well that he was, for many a tussle did he have, and many a long weary vigil did he keep, with the unfortunate victims of drink. Every rescue which he effected brought him into direct contact with the domestic misery and poverty caused by the traffic, and Jamie wanted no more powerful argument against the saloon than the pale, pinched faces of the wives, and the half-starved, half-fed, half-clothed bodies of the innocent children of the drunkards.

A letter apprising the family of the day on which the boys would leave the metropolis had been received at the homestead, and a hasty meeting of the settlers was convened in the schoolhouse to arrange for a reception. Naturally, everybody in the settlement was proud of the two young men, for the most had been made of their exploits, and they were regarded somewhat in the light of conquering heroes returning to their home after the accomplishment of great deeds. An arrangement was made at the meeting by which a speedy messenger

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would be sent from Brockville when the boys reached that point, so that we would know what time to move out to meet them.

The day came at last, and the people, old and young, turned out to greet and welcome the boys. Wallace drove the widow, his mother, while I drove Lizzie and Katie. Poor Katie, how her heart beat and how her cheeks glowed at the prospect of so soon seeing her lover, who was returning in triumph!

Nathan Larkins was in the procession, quoting Scripture and fearful lest he should not be called upon to make a speech or "put up" a prayer. Jock, the drover, was also there, cracking his dry jokes at Nathan's expense.

Goarden, the hired man, was there in "all the pride and glory of his fame," as one of his songs puts it. He wore a new fancy flannel shirt with a blazing red front, and he also had on a pair of new long-legged boots with red tops. For this occasion he was mounted on a white horse, and undertook to act as marshal for the procession.

Dooley, the blacksmith, came along, mounted on an old nag, which he had borrowed for the occasion from Sam Latt, he of untruthful notoriety mentioned in a previous chapter. The animal, in the language of Dooley himself, looked as if "the main stay was gone."

Auld Peggy, with short-tailed Dugal at her heels, and

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with a black clay pipe in her mouth, with the bowl upside down, trudged along in the rear, talking alternately to herself and to her dog.

"Aye, aye," she was heard to say, "but yoan's a graun day f'r th' wuddow; an' it's a prood woman she maun be wi' her twa bairns returnin' in sic triumph frae th' war. What wad Preesident Lincoln hae dune uf it hadna been f'r th' laddies! Ah'm told they uncanny slavery creatures wad naver hae been sat free. Weel, weel, weel, wha'd 'a' thocht it, wha'd 'a' thocht it! Ah can reca' th' verra day wee Wullie wis born, an' a gay scrawny, cryin' brat he wis intil th' bargain. The wud-dow (tae be sure she wis nae a wuddow tnen) asked me uf Ah couldna dae onything f'r hum. Ah wis about tae gie hum a dose o' salts an' senna, whan th' wuddow call't me an' askit me what Ah wis dain, an' whan Ah tell't her she made me bring th' wain tae her at aince an' sae Ah didna get th' chance o' curin' th' pain in th' child's waim, whuch Ah'm sae weel satisfied tae thus day th' bairn wis sufferin' frae. An' as f'r wee Coalin," continued Auld Peggy, "wha'd 'a' thocht he'd ever hae amoonted tae onything! What a fearfu' narrow escape th' lad hed frae ha'in' his heed knockit aff agen yoan wa' by thet awfu' brute Wasby, whan he kill't a' th' rest o' th' hoosehold!"

And so the garrulous old woman talked away as she trudged behind the rest. The procession had not

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marched out more than a mile and a half when a turn in the road showed a vehicle coming swinging along at a rapid rate, which we knew contained the young men. Nathan cried "halt," and the company came to a standstill just at the turn where the occupants of the vehicle could not see them. They ranged themselves along either side of the road and awaited the arrival.

I shall never forget the expression on the flushed and beautiful face of the widow, and I could notice the excitement and nervousness which had grown upon her in late years, but which she tried so hard to repress. As the carriage containing the young men swung around the corner, Nathan led the cheers that broke forth from scores of admiring, enthusiastic settlers.

The young men looked as striking as two brave, handsome young men could look. They were taken by surprise at the unexpected reception and honour paid them, and for a moment they were nonplussed. But it was only for a moment, and springing from the carriage, they both hurried to the objects dearest to them. Willie and his mother were soon locked in a fond embrace, while Colin had kissed Katie three times in quicker succession than he could fire a repeating rifle. Meanwhile the company continued its cheering for the returning champions.

After Willie had released his mother, Colin went to her, and as he folded the dear figure in his arms

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and kissed her with a fondness scarcely secondary to that bestowed upon Katie, great tears stood in his eyes.

After the hoys (for I love to call them hoys and to think of them as such) had exchanged greetings with the members of their family, Colin turned to me, and the affectionate greeting he gave satisfied my heart. After a general hand-shaking all round, Auld Peggy came in for particular notice, which pleased her immensely.

Nathan called out "Bring the chairs." Eight stalwarts approached the young men, bearing the two chairs. The hoys were made to seat themselves. Each chair was picked up by four men and lifted to their shoulders. The crowd fell in behind, and the procession started for the "old" Ninth Concession, on which were located the schoolhouse, the "auld kirk," the toll-gate, Dooley's blacksmith shop and the widow's homestead.

It was deemed a rare distinction, and it is doubtful if such an honour was ever before conferred upon any person in the settlement, outside of successful politicians who, sometimes, after the announcement of their success, were formally "chaired" at the hustings in the county town. The boys were borne to the schoolhouse, where they were deposited on the platform, and then there were loud calls for a speech. Both young

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men expressed their thanks for the honours shown them by their old neighbours and friends, and protested that the honours were out of proportion to their deserts.

After they sat down, Nathan felt that his turn had come. He had, in preparation for the event, had recourse to the Bible, and had read up everything in it relating to war, so he gave the audience the benefit of his study, and beginning with the slaughter of the Shechemites because of the defiling of Dinah, he went on down through sacred history, covering every struggle, great and small, in which the people of God had been engaged, and finally wound up with a brief but forcible allusion to that warlike act on the part of the apostle Peter when he drew his sword and smote the servant of the high priest, cutting an ear from that menial's head.

"It's a pity we hadn't Peter's sword handy so we could cut a yard or two off your tongue, Nathan," sang out Jock, the drover, whereat Nathan spoke of the terrible fate that was in store for blasphemers. Jock minded not Nathan's words, but maintained a steady fire of jokes at him until the old man was glad to sit down. Then the refreshments were passed around, after which the company separated and all went to their homes, it being almost dark by the time the formalities were ended.

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The time Willie had set for his furlough was six weeks, while Colin had formed no definite plans for the future. Eight days from the end of his furlough an event occurred that brought a dark shadow across the widow's home and across her life.

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PART IV
COLIN COMES TO HIS OWN

CHAPTER XLVII

BREAKING THE NEWS TO MOTHER

THREE days before the time set for the departure of Willie for New York, a messenger arrived at the home of Mrs. McNabb, having come with the greatest despatch straight from that city. He bore the following letter from Mr. Rolphe, addressed to Willie.

NEW YORK, June 20, 1865.

MY DEAR WILLIE: A great calamity has happened, and my heart almost fails in the effort to break the news to you. Prepare your mind for a great shock. I have scarcely the courage to tell you that your noble brother Jamie is no more. His young life has been rudely cut off in the midst of its great promise and usefulness. I am coming myself with the remains, and will be but a short time behind the messenger. Have all arrangements made for the burial. I was with the poor boy at the end, and he expressed a wish to be buried at the foot of the orchard, near his favourite apple-tree. He said the sound of the little burn, as it rippled over the stones, would help him to rest peacefully. He added that he had a strange fancy he would be lonesome if laid away in the cemetery. He would like to be on the old homestead near where the cows, the sheep, and the horses would graze. Poor lad, he was so cheer-

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ful, and so willing to die! His only regret seemed to be the shock that his death would cause his mother. I hope God will give you all grace to bear this sorrow. You will know how best to break the news to his mother.

Trusting God will sustain you all in this sore trial, I remain,
Your faithful but sorrowful friend,

JAMES ROLPHE.

Willie was down at the barn when the messenger delivered the letter, and for a time after he read its contents he could hardly realise what had happened, so sudden and startling was the news. He hastily sought Wallace and Colin, and imparted the sad intelligence to them.

While the boys, with blanched faces and bated breath, were discussing the best plan for breaking the awful news to their mother, she came upon them unawares, having been in the barn on some errand. Her instinct told her, as she looked from one face to another, that something terrible had happened.

"What is it, my boys?" she asked. "Some calamity has befallen us."

"Yes," they answered, but they remained silent.

"You, Wallace, tell me what it is," said the mother, appealing to her first-born. I had always observed, during my intercourse with the family, that Mrs. McNabb, in all critical instances, appealed to Wallace. Somehow she leaned upon him as her chief prop and

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family bulwark, and, to his credit be it said, he never failed her.

Wallace remained silent for a moment or two, and then he said: "It's Jamie, mother. It's about poor Jamie. He's"—but he could get no farther; his voice choked, and he turned his face away from her.

"What has happened to Jamie?" asked the now faltering mother. "Did that stranger that drove down the lane a few minutes ago bring evil tidings of my boy?"

"Yes, mother," answered Colin, who was the coolest of the three.

"And what news did he bring?" asked the mother.

"Very bad news, mother," answered Colin, slowly, approaching Mrs. McNabb, and taking her hands kindly in his own.

"Not the worst!" she gasped.

Colin bowed his head, and with a voice choking with emotion, said, "No; but, mother dear, Jamie is dead."

The blow was too great for the widow's now weakened heart. She tottered against a bench, trying to sit down, and then relapsed into unconsciousness. The boys bore her tenderly to the orchard close by, and there laid her on the grass, while they tried to revive her.

But it seemed a long time to her anxious sons before there was any sign of returning consciousness. Colin

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told me afterwards that he thought her dead, so pale and placid she looked, as her form lay prone and silent upon the sod. Indeed so peaceful and oblivious to all trouble did she seem, that the lad could scarcely resist a feeling of regret that she must awaken to the heartrending realisation of her sorrow.

She opened her eyes wonderingly at last, and gazed on her boys bending over her. She lay very still and quiet on the green grass, but when she looked at her sons a second time, her eyes wore the light of intelligence. She appeared too weak in body to move, but she breathed naturally, and the boys knew she was conscious and was silently wrestling with her burden. At length the heartbreaking silence was broken.

"God's will be done!" she murmured. "'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!'"

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE BAR-ROOM TRAGEDY

WORD of Jamie's death had spread with rapidity, as disastrous news always does in a country settlement, and long before Mr. Rolphe arrived, the home of the widow was filled with neighbours. The widow stayed in her little parlour, with her daughters and a few women friends. She was pale and spent, but calm and resigned. Such comfort as could be administered by her friends was offered, but these Scottish women well understood Mrs. McNabb's nature; they realised that mere words were of no avail, so they contented themselves by assisting in such little preparations as were necessary before the arrival of the body.

The moments seemed weighted with lead, so slowly did they pass, but the sound of wheels was at last heard, and in a moment all was bustle and suppressed excitement. The casket was deposited in the little parlour, and soon the lid was removed and the widow and her children were permitted to view by themselves the face of the departed.

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Mr. Rolphe's greeting of Mrs. McNabb when she came to speak to him, after the scene at the casket, was respectfully sympathetic, and as cordial as the occasion would admit. He gazed earnestly into her pale, fine face, and as he took her hands in his own and pressed them warmly, he yielded to what appeared to be an impulse of the moment, and bending, reverently kissed her brow.

"I am honoured," he said, "in meeting the mother of such sons. I have brought your last born home to you, and although his voice is stilled, the work he did will live after him. Many a home in New York is blessing his name; for under Heaven he was permitted to bring light and hope to many weary mothers' hearts and succour to many famishing children. Why this promising life should be cut off in the midst of such great usefulness and necessity is one of those mysteries we are not permitted to penetrate."

Taking her hand, he led her reverently to a seat, and placing himself beside her, related to the mother the story of her son's death.

"No doubt," he began, "you knew of his devotion to the rescue work among the saloons of our city. The lad had an inveterate hatred of the drink traffic, and I think I never knew any one so terribly in earnest in a desire to see it utterly annihilated. He often told

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me that it was the pictures of want, squalor, and misery among the unfortunate wives and children of drink's victims that impelled him. And when Jamie enlisted in any cause he was a real force and a vallant soldier.

"I am not going to recount the work he did," continued Mr. Rolphe. "You will hear all about that from lips other than mine, for one of the men who established the drunkard's rescue home on Broad Street, in connection with which Jamie coöperated, will be here, and if you agree, will preach the boy's funeral sermon. He has long desired to visit some friends in Canada, and so took the present opportunity of coming. He will tell you all about your son's work. I must confine myself to telling you of the manner in which he met his death.

"There was a family named Sheppard living down on one of the streets that lead to the river, which Jamie had become intensely interested in, for the mother was a Canadian, and belonged to a good family in Montreal. She had four interesting children, but the dark shadow caused by drink had entered the home. Sheppard had fallen from a good social position to be a poor despised drunkard. Naturally the family was speedily reduced to the direst want, and it was only by plying the needle, while her children sold newspapers, that it was possible to keep body and soul together. This was the way Jamie

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first knew about Sheppard; he saw him reeling along the street one night, and Jamie, learning his address from a policeman, took him home and sat with him and his wife, until the former's stupor had passed, when he learned all their sad history.

"Well, your son had a terrible time with poor Sheppard, and had he not possessed the patience of Job, he would have relinquished the task of reform long ago. But he stuck manfully to the work, and every time the poor drunkard would fall, Jamie would hasten to the rescue and endeavour to stand him upon his feet again. He told me he could not endure the hopeless expression that would flit across Mrs. Sheppard's face, whenever he exhibited the least symptom of despair in regard to her husband's case. 'For he is my husband, after all,' she would say to him, 'and I can't give him up.' And so Jamie persevered.

"Last Friday night, as he was quitting the railway office, one of Sheppard's children, very much excited, accosted him and said her mother wanted to see him at once about the father, and would he please lose no time. Jamie hurried to Sheppard's apartments, and was met at the door by the unhappy woman, who told him that her husband was in a terrible condition at the saloon around the corner.

"Jamie hurried to the place, followed by Mrs. Sheppard. He entered the grogshop, while the woman

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remained at the door. A number of brawling, intoxicated men were quarrelling as he went in, while upon the floor lay poor Sheppard, helplessly drunk. One of the men gave him a kick, telling him to get up.

"Jamie expostulated with him, and was immediately set upon by the entire semi-inebriated gang. He would have succeeded in extricating himself but for the interference of the landlord, who, because of Jamie's notoriety as an enemy of the saloon, had conceived a deep-seated aversion to him. Passing from behind the bar to the room where the scuffle was going on, he directed the operations of the inebriates that were attacking the young man. One of these — a foreigner — fired a pistol which he kept concealed in his coat. The aim was deadly, and poor Jamie fell.

"A messenger from his bedside reached me two hours after the crime, and I hurried to obey the summons. I found him calm and resigned. The surgeon had given him to understand that he could not recover, although he might linger for some hours. I remained with him till the end came, which was not until ten o'clock the next morning. His mind never wandered for a moment, and when he felt that the end was at hand, he asked me to turn him on his right side, so that he might take a last look at the sun. He complained of thirst during his last hours, and often said that if he could just stoop down at the

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old spring on the farm and drink a long, cooling draught, he could die easily. He talked about you all, and said how much he would like to live, because he wanted to do something in life to make his mother proud of him."

"My poor boy, my noble Jamie!" sobbed the widow, burying her face in her hands.

"Yes," went on Mr. Rolphe, "and he recalled many incidents connected with his life on the farm. After he had made me write down a score of messages to his old friends and schoolmates in the settlement, which I promised to deliver, he closed his eyes for a time and appeared to rest. When he opened them again, he seemed to wonder for a moment where he was. Then, coming to himself, he said there was one thing upon his mind, about which he had hesitated to speak.

"'Speak freely to me, my boy,' I said. Then he told me he had always feared the loneliness of a cemetery; and he asked that he be buried beneath his favourite apple-tree, at the foot of the old orchard. He wanted to be near the brook and the animals he loved so well, and he wanted to be near his brothers and sisters. I promised him that his wish should be carried out. He grew weaker very rapidly, and soon lapsed into unconsciousness. But he opened his eyes at length. I had lifted the window, and the curtain being up, the morning sun was streaming into the

THE BAR-ROOM TRAGEDY

room. When he recognised it, he smiled, and whispering a word about the glory of the eternal sunshine, he closed his eyes and was gone."

And so we buried Jamie beneath his favourite apple-tree at the foot of the orchard. The brook runs close to his humble sepulchre, murmuring its soft music. The memory of Jamie has faded from the minds of most of those who knew him in childhood, but the brook has not forgotten him, nor will it ever forget him. He asked for its companionship, and until the Heavens are rolled up that companionship will not be withheld.

* * * * *

Long years afterwards Willie and I visited Jamie's grave in the old orchard. The mound had disappeared and the grass was growing over the spot. The place is marked by a simple white marble slab with Jamie's name and the date of his death engraved upon it, while underneath are these words suggested by the widow from her favourite fourteenth chapter of John:—

"I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Many changes have been wrought in our lives, and in the lives and fortunes of those dear to us, since we laid Jamie to rest, and I think it was because Willie's mind and mine were so filled with thoughts concerning these changes, and of reminiscences we could not drive away,

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

that we were silent as we stood by the grave, watching the sun sink into the glorious west beyond the great horizon of forest.

The brook flowed on with its music. The music was tranquillising to us, and the quietness and placidity of the scene almost made us envy poor Jamie his peaceful repose. I think Willie felt, as I did, that Jamie had chosen the most enviable spot on earth for his long slumber, in the peace of the old orchard and homestead.

CHAPTER XLIX

AULD PEGGY AND MUCKLE PETER OBJECT TO REVIVAL MEETINGS

IT is not the purpose of this volume to record all the important happenings at the Scotch Settlement during the period in which the *dramatis personæ* of the story were upon the stage, else would I pause to tell in detail of "the great Revival," which followed close upon the passing of poor Jamie.

Mr. Dinnie, who worked in connection with the Broad Street Mission in New York, and who had reached the widow's home in time to preach Jamie's funeral sermon, decided to remain in Canada, as he found the change beneficial to his indifferent health, and he inaugurated a series of revival meetings.

But there were two characters in the settlement who to the last would have nothing whatever to do with "they loud meetin's," as they called them. These two were Auld Peggy and Muckle Peter.

Auld Peggy said she "cudna unnerstaun hoo ony sensible-like folk could be carried awa' wi' every wund o' doaktrine. Here th' folk he' aye hed a graun'

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maun in their ain preacher, f'r nigh unto forty year, an' whiles he hadna appeared tae lead mony souls intil th' Kingdom, still he wis aye graun' on doaktrine, an' whan it cam' tae preachin' hell-fire, why, maun, ye could a'most see th' flames an' smell th' smoke. Ah'm great on hell-fire," Peggy was wont to say, "bekase uf it were no' f'r thet, what coansolation could a puir auld body like me hae? Wha'd iver get even wi' McCallum f'r desertin' his wife an' bairns, an' rinnin' aff wi' yoan hussy, uf he disna catch it in th' flames? Uf it isna made hoat f'r hum, then it'll be a sair disappointment tae Auld Peggy."

"Maun," she exclaimed, speaking to Jock, the drover, one day, "Ah goat sicna scunner last Sunday night. I hap'd intil th' meetin' in th' skulehouse merely oot o' curiosity, an' yoan maun wis talkin'. It wis about th' twa thieves on th' croas, an' he wis tryin' tae mak' us a' believe thet thar wis nathin' sae muckle bawd f'r a maun til doo thet would shut him oot o' Heaven. Weel, I kent unco better nor yoan, f'r uf there's a chance f'r McCallum, then, what becomes o' me? F'r A. wouldna gang tae th' same place uf Ah hed tae be drawn an' quartered f'r it, like yoan brute Wasby. Indeed, speakin' o' Wasby, Ah'd much prefer tae be sent doon wi' hum then ta tak' ma place in th' celestial coir wi' McCallum. Na, na, Jock, ye caun tak' ma word f'r 't, wings an' McCallum is uncongruous; they winna ride tegither.

OBJECTIONS TO REVIVAL MEETINGS

McCallum is elected f'r th' ither place, else wha'd hae ony faith in th' eternal justice o' things?

"It's a' muckle weel tae blether about th' thief on th' croas, but fufty thieves on fufty croases can't compare wi' McCallum, an' there's an end till't. Ah cudna staun th' maun's preachin', an' sae Ah up an' tell't hum sae, addin', as Ah walkit doon th' aisle, thet a maun wha wad preach salvation f'r McCallum didna know what he wis talkin' aboot.

"Na, na," added Auld Peggy, after a pause and a whiff or two from her pipe, while she kicked the sleeping Dugal to see if he was alive, "Ah'm no' gaun back tae th' meetin's again. Ah've hed ma fill, an' eneuch's es guid es a feast f'r Auld Peggy. Ah've no' been sicna bawd woman all ma days, an' Ah'll tak' ma chances wi' th' rest o' ye.

"Come, Dugal," she said, giving the dog an admonitory kick, "we'd better be daunderin' awa' doon th' Concession; th' childer will be wantin' us hame." And she trudged off, muttering imprecations upon the man who would preach salvation to the uttermost.

The other person who was down upon "the meetin's" and the evangelists was Muckle Peter, and very bitter was the good Scotsman. The rock upon which he professed to split with the evangelists was the doctrine of election. But Jock, the drover, who was by all odds the shrewdest observer in the settlement, and

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who understood the weaknesses of his neighbours as did no other man in the district, assured me privately that Muckle Peter was piqued because he had not been asked to do the slinging at the meetings.

"Jist think o' an evangelist," Muckle Peter was once heard to remark in Dooley's blacksmith shop, "holdin' meetin's wi'oot onybody tae raise th' tunes! Why, 'twas an insult tae oor musical edication tae hear yoan maun start thet tune which he pit till th' words."

Peter referred to a song often used at the opening, doubtless for the purpose of calling in the settlers, who were wont, through habit, to loiter about the door, and sit on the top rails of adjoining fences, until the service actually commenced.

It is, however, only fair to Muckle Peter that the official objection which he gave to the evangelists should be recorded, and in order that no controversy may arise in the future as to the exact bearing of Peter's objections, I give them in his own words.

"Ye see, it's jist like this, Watty," for it was to me that he made the statement. "Ah wis brocht up a strict Presbyter, an' Ah believe in th' doaktrines o' th' kirk frae th' boatum up, er uf ye like it better, frae th' toap doon. Weel, it's like thus; ma mither taucht me frae th' cradle, an' ye'll aye fin' it in th' guid buik f'r yersel', Watty, if ye'll but tak' th' trouble tae hunt it oot,

OBJECTIONS TO REVIVAL MEETINGS

that 'What is tae be wull be.' Noo, Watty maun, there's na gettin' roun' thet text."

I pointed out that his quotation was not a text.

"Thet disna matter a pin, Watty," he went on. "Th' Scriptures an' th' Westmunster Confession air baith alike, an' baith air sae thoraly inspired, thet it's hard tae till ain frae th' ither. Hae Ah no' th' hull buik aff by hairt th' same's Ah hae th' Shoarter [he meant the Shorter Catechism] an' th' Psalms an' maist o' th' Paraphrases es weel? But uf supposin', Watty, lad, ye were richt, an' there wis a dufference betwixt th' twa buiks, can onybody coantrovert th' graun' roak boatum truth thet 'What is tae be wull be?'

"Ye canna get roon' it yersel', Watty, an' Ah hae great respeck f'r yer buik larnin'. Hoo could ony maun coantravert sicna truth es thus? A maun wha's born tae be heng't canna by ony poassibility be drooned. Noo, there's a poser f'r ye, Watty!" And with a look of triumph in his face, as if the final word had been spoken, he leaned back in his chair and awaited my reply.

"You say that every person is born with an inevitable fate, and an inevitable destination before him; one man to be hanged, another to be drowned, another to be shot, and so on?"

"Aye thet's exactly what Ah coantend; na, it's what Ah maintain agin a' comers, an' ye canna get roon

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it, Watty, me maun!" Peter replied, with perfect confidence.

"So that if I were sliding down a precipice, it would be utter futility to put forth a hand to grip a shrub and save myself, because if I were destined to be saved I would be saved anyhow, and if not, I was born to have my life crushed out at the botom of the precipice?"

Muckle Peter seemed slightly worried for a moment; then his face lit up, and he replled with this statement, which he regarded as one that utterly demolished me:—

"Why, Watty maun, dinna ye no' see that uf ye stretched oot yer haun' an' gripllt th' shrub, ye were no' elected tae hae yer brains knockit oot at th' boatum o' th' precipice?"

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UNCLE WATTY

CHAPTER L

FATE BUSY WITH COLIN

WILLIE deferred his departure for New York until a week after Jamie's funeral, and Mr. Rolphe remained too. He liked the quiet respite from work, and the long drives he took through the country with the boys were particularly agreeable to him. Besides, the wholesome, homely fare, the honest welcome, the kindness of the brothers and sisters, the frank, simple atmosphere of the widow's life, and the long conversations that he had with her, appealed especially to a man of his nature.

He talked with Mrs. McNabb about the relationship that existed between her son and his daughter Helen, and so deftly did he approach and discuss the subject, that the perturbation Willie's communication regarding his engagement to Helen caused her at first, owing to the disparity of fortune between the two, was entirely dissipated. Mr. Rolphe exacted a promise from her that she would visit New York the following year; he desired that she should meet Mrs. Rolphe, as well

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as Helen, who would naturally be anxious to meet Willie's mother.

After Mr. Rolphe and Willie returned to New York, the latter, on Mrs. Rolphe's advice, retired from the army, and entered the service of the railway company, taking up the work Jamie had been doing. By the most assiduous application to business, the young man rose in the service of the company, and soon came to be regarded as one of its most efficient and trustworthy employees. As the fiancé of Helen Rolphe, he was naturally a welcome visitor at the Rolphe home, while the distinction he gained in the war made him a young man of some celebrity, all of which, added to his natural frankness and good breeding, caused him to become very popular. He had lost his shyness and diffidence, but he was constitutionally of a retiring disposition, and as long as he lived was never fond of general society. Indeed, I have often thought that his ideal of happiness would have been banishment to a secluded island in the sea, with Helen as his sole companion.

As for Colin, he remained at the homestead for a time after Jamie's death, not having settled upon any plan for the future. He would link his arm in Katie's and wander with her about the farm. Sometimes I fancied I liked Colin so well that I was jealous of the attentions he bestowed upon others, but this jealousy did not obtain in Katie's case. I loved the girl, I think,

FATE BUSY WITH COLIN

quite as fondly as a father; she was so bright and cheerful, and withal so wise, thoughtful for others, and self-forgetful.

How often, in the evenings, I have sat in the lane beneath the old butternut tree, and shaded myself behind its great trunk, as the lovers went by! I think the shadow cast over their young hearts by the death of Jamie served to enhance the earnestness of their intercourse, and to bind them more closely together.

I was sitting under the butternut tree one evening, in the twilight, when I saw them coming. When they reached the tree, Colin said, "You're tired, Katie dear, let us rest here for a moment, before we go into the house." Katie agreed, and the lovers sat down. There was nothing for me to do but to make my presence known. At the risk of startling them I arose hastily, and said:—

"I thought you two would have wandered to the end of the lane, and not disturbed an old bachelor in the enjoyment of his reveries and his pipe. I was willing to allow you to pass without breaking in on you, and you might have been equally considerate of me, but I shall leave you now to yourselves. I observe that you manage to bear up with Christian fortitude in each other's company."

I was backing away when Colin said: "Oh, please, Uncle Watty, don't run off like that! Katie and I

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have no secrets, and nothing to say to each other that a dear old soul like you could not hear. As a confirmed old bachelor, you might not understand our language, but I assure you, it is quite harmless and perfectly rational. Is it not, Katie?" And Katie's eyes gleamed with delight in the soft moonlight which was stealing upon us.

Ah, yes, I could see that Katie knew all about it! But I was still fearful lest the lovers desired to be alone, and was again preparing to leave, when Katie said: "Please, Uncle Watty, for my sake, if you won't for Colin's, sit down, and let us all three talk. You know such glorious evenings as these can't last, and you know how good a thing companionship is."

Katie's gaze was fixed upon the far-off hill, over which the moon had just risen; there was moisture on her long eyelashes and in her glistening eyes. I knew that she was thinking of Jamie. So I sat down quietly near her feet, and smoked in silence. A charmed spell seemed to have touched the scene. Katie's words, I think, turned our thoughts to Jamie, and we three sat silently there. I don't know what Colin and Katie thought of that hour, but it lives with me. Ah, those sacred hours of silence on the old farm, close to nature and to God! It was Colin that spoke first.

"Uncle Watty," he said, "I have been greatly exercised in mind of late with regard to my future. You

FATE BUSY WITH COLIN

know I can't afford to waste my life here, and I must be up and doing, for when Katie and I get married there will be two of us to support. I must come to some decision very soon, and I do wish you would help me to decide."

This was what I well understood must come, although I had tried to keep my mind from contemplating the subject. I was growing old, Colin was all I had on earth to care for, I had grown to love him very much, and I viewed with pain the prospect of the inevitable separation; for I well knew that the young man's ambition would carry him away from the homely, simple life and scenes among which I had cast my lot for life. I thought deeply for a moment or two before answering, then I said,—for I think procrastination has always been one of my besetting sins:—

"Don't let us worry ourselves to-night about the subject, my dear Colin, let the present moment be sufficient to us. To-morrow you and I shall have a talk about your future, and perhaps decide on the best course to pursue."

Colin seemed satisfied, and we sat in silence again for a time. Presently a sound came floating across the fields. We all bent our ears and listened, and soon the words of a song came to us. In the name of all that is incongruous, it was Goarden, the hired man! In an instant the whole spirit of the scene had changed. He

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was returning from making a call on the young widow who kept the "far toll-gate," and who, it was reported, had her cap set for Goarden. He was singing that old song "Lottie Lane," and as it was a full quarter of a mile to the Concession, the effect seemed much more pleasing than when sung by Goarden at close range. Here is a verse I recall:—

Oh, I once was gay as a lark in May,
And my young heart beat in tune;
For my way was bright, and my step was light
As a linnet's wing in June.
All is sad and drear, all is darkness here,
As I wander in my woe,—
But sometime again I will meet Lottie Lane,
Though never here below.

How often we have all stood at the door of the homestead of an evening and listened to Goarden, as he trod the Concession light-heartedly, and sang his songs! I think he fancied that the settlers used to listen, for he sang with as much gusto as he would at a "hoe-down," or when the hoys were gathered about the fireplace after a logging bee. Goarden usually sang with special gusto upon his return from the county town late in the evening of a fall fair-day. He generally returned "three sheets in the wind," or, as Muckle Peter would say, "a trifle high"; but as he always had his pockets full of sugar sticks, "black man," hulls' eyes, peppermints, and such like for the

FATE BUSY WITH COLIN

children, who would gather about him and cry, "Me farin' on you, Goarden, me farin' on you!" he was usually a welcome visitor. Drunk or sober, Goarden dispensed his hospitalities with a lavish hand. By the time he was opposite the gate to the homestead he had finished "Lottie Lane," and after whistling a bit, he struck up a livelier song, which opened like this:—

Oh, if ever I get married, it will be in June,
When the flowers and the meadows they are in full bloom.
It was then I spied my true love by the light of the moon,
All on the banks of the Roses.

Chorus

Oh, it's come, lassie, come, won't you come along with me;
From your daddy and your mammy I'll soon set you free.
I will fold you in my arms, love,
And happy we will be,
All on the banks of the Roses.

Goarden had reached only the thirteenth stanza when his voice died away in the distance, as he drifted over the hill and disappeared in the black ash swamp. His singing had broken the spell that was upon Colin, Katie, and myself, and as the last faint note reached us from over the hill and died away, Katie said, "I think we had better return to the house; mother will be growing anxious about us, and we must have been here such a long time."

Colin rose at once, but I was still inclined to give my

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

thoughts, which were busy, full play; so I said: "You might leave me here, children, for another pipe; the night is too glorious to forsake, and besides, I want to turn Colin's affairs over in my mind, and see what suggestion I can make."

But I had no need to exercise myself over Colin's future. Fate was busy with that subject, and was doing the work far more swiftly and effectively than a hundred poor instruments like myself could have done.

I watched with fondness the retreating figures of the lovers as they walked silently, arm in arm, up the lane. They were happy, and I was not unhappy. I lay till midnight under the old tree. I watched the moon, after she had risen above the hill, mount the heavens, and as she mounted, so mounted my hopes and aspirations for the future of the two young people who were so dear to me.

CHAPTER LI

A DEATH-BED CONFESSION

“SEND for Bartley. I have something to confess. I cannot die with it on my conscience.”

These words were spoken in a querulous voice by a man who lay sick unto death in one of the oldest country-seats in England. The attendants knew that the hand of death was upon him, and his physician had at last told him his days—nay, even his hours—were numbered.

Archibald Stanhope lay dying. As if by the mockery of fate, he had, during his last sickness, entered into possession of the earldom and the estates he had coveted, and of which he had dispossessed his brother's son. Weighed down by guilt, visited by all the terrors a superstitious mind could evoke, he cried out for mercy when the time for reparation, if not even for repentance, had gone by. Eagerly he now sought to undo the wrong he had done, so far at least as it could still be repaired, hoping desperately that he might then seek for mercy, and perchance find pardon.

The physician, having feared for some days that the

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

illness would result fatally, and thinking it probable that various legal dispositions would require to be made, had already warned the lawyer to be on hand. Only a few moments, therefore, elapsed between Lord Archibald's summons and the entrance of Mr. Bartley. A few brief words of explanation, and the dying man proceeded to dictate the following statement :—

“I, Archibald Stanhope, by supposition fourth Earl of Beaumont, being on my death-bed, and learning from my physicians that I have but a few more hours to live, desire to make such reparation as lies in my power for a crime committed against the rightful heir of the title and estates that are now held by me. My eldest brother, Edwin, married against my father's will, and shortly afterwards went abroad. At Naples he contracted a fever, from which he died. Eleanor, his wife, returned to her home. A son, whom she named Colin, was born. But for the birth of this child I should have been heir. I regarded him as an interloper, who had deprived me of that which I coveted. His mother, a stranger, to whom I had hitherto been indifferent, now was the object of my resentment, too. I brooded over my ruined prospects, and from that I fell to contriving plans for regaining what I had lost.

“Edwin's marriage had been a runaway affair hastily and informally celebrated before chance witnesses, by a clergyman who had been induced by money to waive

A DEATH-BED CONFESSION

the usual enquiries, who was not in charge of any parish, and who had no regular means of livelihood. I conceived the project of impeaching the validity of the marriage. Edwin's wife knew nothing of the clergyman; Edwin himself was dead. The clergyman and witnesses, I found, were ready to sell their silence for gold. I bought it. I also procured false affidavits, setting forth that the marriage ceremony between my brother Edwin and Eleanor had been performed by a lay impostor, that in consequence the marriage was illegal, and Colin's birth illegitimate. I went so far as to produce a confession from the man who was supposed to have performed the ceremony. Our evidence was accepted as conclusive. Eleanor was dismissed to her uncle's roof, and I was recognised as the earl's successor.

"One step in wrong-doing led to another. So long as Colin was alive and near at hand, there was danger that some of my purchased accomplices might betray me, in the hope of reward. I arranged to have Colin abducted and placed on board some emigrant ship, in such a manner that all trace of his identity would be lost and also of the man who delivered him. The plan miscarried, for persons who had seen him in the ship wrote to his people, on reading the account of the abduction of a child corresponding to his description. Eleanor's brother Walter immediately went in search of him, and

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succeeded in recovering him. But in the meanwhile, Eleanor died, and Walter decided to remain in Canada. All enquiries set on foot by Walter to find some trace of the man who had delivered Colin on board the vessel, failed completely, but from that time forth I lived in continual dread lest some chance should lead to the discovery of my crime, and to public shame and irretrievable disaster.

"Time perhaps might have lulled me into security but for the new anxiety that came to me on behalf of the children my wife bore to me. Of her death and theirs I shall not speak. I felt that God's wrath was upon me, and as one after another was taken from me, I lived in terror and apprehension; but, hoping to appease Heaven by religious zeal, I still clung to the heirship I had wrongfully secured. In another hour or two I must leave it all. May God have mercy on my unhappy soul!"

Two days later Lord Archibald was buried. Mr. Bartley, aided by information received from him, had already procured full legal evidence of the validity of the marriage between Edwin and Eleanor; and his partner, Mr. Briggs, at once prepared to cross the ocean to personally convey the news to Colin.

CHAPTER LII

COLIN HEARS STARTLING NEWS

SIX weeks after the death of the earl, and the day following the evening spent by Colin, Katie, and myself under the old butternut tree in the lane, Mr. Briggs appeared at the Scotch Settlement. I recall so well his arrival at the McNabb homestead. Colin and I were seated on the trough by the barn pump when Katie approached and announced that a stranger had just arrived at the house and was asking for us.

"I think he is English, from his accent," Katie mentioned, "and he was very precise in his enquiries about you both."

We three proceeded to the house, where we found the stranger awaiting us in the kitchen. He was engaged in conversation with the widow, as we entered. When we approached, he rose, and bowing courteously, said:—

"Have I the honour of addressing Mr. Ross?"

I bowed acquiescingly, and he went on, "May I have the privilege of a few minutes' private conversation with you?"

COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

I led the way to the "front room," and after I had rolled the curtains, to admit the twilight (for the room was growing dark), we both sat down.

"Perhaps I'd better light the lamp," I suggested; "it is growing dark."

"Thank you, no; I prefer the twilight."

There seemed to be something significant in his manner, and an impression as of something important impending took hold of me. We sat in silence for a few moments, for the stranger did not appear to have settled in his own mind how to open the conversation. He gazed at me fixedly, and then, removing his spectacles, he moved his chair closer to mine and said, "Mr. Ross, I think you came from Warwickshire?"

It was so long since I had heard the name of my old home mentioned, that it rather startled me; more especially in view of the circumstances under which it was recalled. I, however, made no answer beyond the monosyllable, "Yes."

I think the lawyer gathered from my manner that, if I was not suspicious of him, I was at least disposed to be on my guard; so he said, with a directness and frankness that at once disarmed me:—

"Pray do not mistrust me, Mr. Ross; my mission here is of a character that cannot fail to interest and please you."

Then, without further circumlocution, he told me

COLIN HEARS STARTLING NEWS

what his mission was, and in brief and direct sentences he related to me the story told by Lord Archibald in the previous chapter. Now that I recall the lawyer's manner of telling the story, I can see how and where he softened it, at points where the relating of the facts concerning my dear, dead sister Eleanor would have reopened an old wound.

When he came to that portion of his story touching the marriage of Edwin and Eleanor, after exhibiting the proofs of the legality of their marriage, he declared:—

“Your nephew, Colin Stanhope, is the legal and rightful master of the great Beaumont estates. He is Earl of Beaumont.”

At first, I could think only of my wronged sister, and exclaimed, “Thank God the imputation that rested upon Colin's birth and upon my sister's marriage has been cleared away!” Then I added: “Mr. Briggs, the young man has never been made aware of the cloud which, in view of the facts, I must now blame myself for allowing to remain so long over him. I could surely have cleared it off had I made the effort, but all my efforts and enquiries seemed to result in nothing. Then, too, the attack Edwin's brother made upon the legality of the marriage seemed so completely substantiated by evidence.”

After some further conversation, Mr. Briggs suggested that I should summon Colin. The young man,

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tall, erect, alert, and with his characteristically firm step, entered the room. I could never help being proud of him, and already found myself thinking that he looked every inch a worthy representative of his line. The lawyer bowed when the young man entered, but as neither Mr. Briggs nor I spoke, Colin looked rather awkwardly and expectantly from one to the other.

"Colin," I said, "this gentleman, whose name is Briggs, and who is a lawyer from England, has an important communication to make to you."

Colin opened wide his eyes and looked from one to the other of us in bewilderment.

"To me, Uncle Watty, did you say? Why, what possible communication could an English lawyer have to make to me? Uncle, you are having a joke with me!" and he gave a merry laugh.

"No, Colin," I replied; "there is no joke about it. Mr. Briggs has come to announce to you that you have fallen heir to one of the largest estates in Great Britain, and that you are at the present moment the Earl of Beaumont."

If Colin was surprised and incredulous before, he was an utter sceptic now. After looking us both in the face, he burst into a ringing laugh, and exclaimed, "Oh, come now, Uncle Watty, this is not the first of April!"

"But Colin, my boy, I assure you that it is no practical joke, and that what we say is gospel truth."

COLIN HEARS STARTLING NEWS

"That it is, that it is, every word of it!" put in Mr. Briggs, and he looked so very grave and so very much in earnest that Colin's countenance began to change. It grew more serious, although the doubtful expression still lingered.

"You know, Colin," I said, "that your father died before you were born. Well, your father was the eldest son of a nobleman, and heir to the estates. You were his rightful successor, but a wicked man criminally cheated you out of your birthright."

At this stage Mr. Briggs interposed, and as there were facts connected with the story, and especially touching the sufferings of the young man's mother, that I could not trust myself to relate, I allowed the lawyer to complete the story. This he did with great tact, giving the substance of the earl's confession, but sparing Colin's feelings at every point in the sad story. The lawyer, who was armed with plenty of documents, produced them at appropriate stages to clinch his representations.

Frequently, as the conversation progressed, Colin would appeal to me for confirmation, and when, at the conclusion, he was finally convinced that he was in reality the Earl of Beaumont, he remained in deep thought for a time, and then turning to me said, with some traces of emotion in his voice:—

"Uncle Watty, we shall not need to worry about my future now." Then after another pause:—

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"I hope God will make me worthy of my new lot, Uncle Watty," he added, putting his arm about my shoulders in the old, familiar way; "you, and all the dear ones sheltered by this roof, must share my good fortune. Only to think how easily I can now discharge the mortgage!"

He could say no more at present, and went out for a walk in the fields.

CHAPTER LIII

AULD PEGGY SPREADS THE ROMANTIC STORY

WHEN Colin returned to the house and joined the company, a glance told him that everything had been talked over in his absence. His lover's instinct detected the shade of sadness in Katie's face, and his first act was to walk to her side, bend fondly over her, stroke her hair, and kiss her, as he told her how fortunate he was to have her by his side in entering upon his new responsibilities.

I think this act upon Colin's part pleased the widow. She had always been so proud of him, and it touched her to think that the young man's first act, after receiving the news, was to honour her daughter and his own sweetheart. She beamed kindly on the young man, who went over to her side, took her hand in his, and gazing into her blue eyes, while the tears stood in his own, said, "Mother dear, won't you give me your blessing?"

Mrs. McNabb stroked the young man's head, and kissing his brow, she said, "Ah, Colin, my son, God will honour you in proportion to your faithfulness and usefulness in the high position to which you are now called."

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The news of Colin's inheritance soon became known throughout the settlement and the adjacent country-side. Undoubtedly the most industrious relater of the story was Auld Peggy, who declared that it was the "maist excitin' piece o' tidin's since 'th' burnin'.'" Many a good cup of tea the old body secured at the homes of settlers whither she carried the news. It was glorious to listen to Auld Peggy as she unwound the story, embellishing it here and there, and supplying an amplitude of detail varied in its character to suit the peculiarities of each listener.

"Losh me," she would begin again, "an' did ye hear th' news, Mustress McPhairson? It's aboot yoan lad na Mustress McNabb brocht up. Weel, weel, it's jist like this; Coalin's mither wis th' wife o' an earl er a prince er some great maun high up in th' gentry, an' he ups an' dees wi'oot leavin' a chick nor a chiel, an' Coalin's mither, wha wis Watty's sister, she dees too, an' sae th' entire estate gangs tae Coalin. Ah'm told, but Ah canna vouch f'r 't, thet Coalin may be heir tae th' Brutish throne. It's like eneuch; there's na tellin' wha' may happen in these days o' surprises."

Then Auld Peggy would drop into a reminiscent mood, and continue: —

"Ah remember unco weel, Mustress McPhairson, th' mornin' o' th' burnin', whan th' little scrawny bairn wis rescued frae th' awfu' place. Ah didna think thar

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wis onything speecial about th' lad, but he ay growed up till be a youth o' great proamise an' pairts, an' whan he thrashed Simon, th' skulemaister, Ah made up ma mind thet he wis destined tae be a great maun. Wall, whan he distinguished humsel' in th' Yankee war, Ah wis preparit f'r onything, sae thet, tae tall 'e th' truth, Mustress McPhairson, Ah'm no' sae muckle surprised thet he hes won his way richt up intil th' aristocracy o' England. Ay! he's a gae pushin' lad, is Coalin, an' can be coonted 'upon no' till rest until he hes Queen Victoria's place. I aye thocht, whan Preesident Lincoln wis shoat doon by yoan blackguard Wulkie Booth, thet th' Yankees wad hae selecktit Coalin f'r Lincoln's post, an' Ah'm still conveenced they wad hae dune it, only Jock, th' drover, talls me they hae tae hae a maun wha's born in their ain countree."

With the prospect of an extra cup of tea Auld Peggy would canter along:—

"Aye, aye, Mustress McPhairson, an' they tall me tbet Katie's gettin' her waddin' trowso made a'ready, an' thet it's tae be th' finest in th' lan'. They say thet it'll coast mor'n sax poun sax, f'r silks an' satins come gey high th' noo, but Ah'm no creditin' yoan statement. They also say thet Katie wull hae a keeridge an' fower, an' thet she'll hae maids tae wait on her, han' an' fit. Weel, weel, it's no' her mither thet hed sicna time whan she wis a lassie. Why, Ah waitit on her masel' whan

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ivery ain o' her bairns wis born, an' Ah pit th' first shirt upo' each o' their backs, but Ah hae na doot they'll a' forgit puir Auld Peggy in thar new-foon walth an' poseetion, although it wadna be like th' wuddow hersel' tae dae it. 'Twould be liker th' bairns, although Ah canna say that they iver showed pride tae Auld Peggy, an' whan Ah met Coalin on th' toon-line th' ither day, he aye stoppit me an' made me promise Ah wad write till hum in his graun' country-seat in Englan'. Ah'm no' thinkin', Mustress McPhairson, that he meent a word o't, but 'twas rail kin' o' hum, onyway. He slippit twa shillin' intil my han' es he said guid-bye, an' he proamised whan he cam' intil his kingdom, those were his verra wo:ds, that he'd remember Auld Peggy, an' Ah believe he wull."

After delivering herself of the above, Auld Peggy threw Dugal, who wagged his stub tail expectantly, a crust, then lighting her pipe, she mused a long time. Presently she said, speaking to the dog, "Dae ye think, Dugal, es Coalin wull remember us whan he comes intil his kingdom?" Dugal wagged his tail, and his remaining watery, light-coloured eye blinked.

"Oh ye dae, dae ye? Weel, weel, p'r'aps he wull. An' than, Dugal, it'll be easier f'r us baith; f'r truth tae tall 'e, Ah'm becomin' weary o' th' rawd, an' Ah'm thinkin', puir Dugal, ye are weary es weel."

Colin did not forget his promise to Auld Peggy.

CHAPTER LIV

COLIN DEPARTS FOR ENGLAND

"IT'S only for a few months, at most," said Colin, looking fondly into Katie's eyes, as the lovers strolled over the farm the evening after the great revelation, "and then I'll be back to claim your hand and make a countess of you. Does it not sound fantastic and strange, dearest Katie? You a countess and I an earl, after all our plain experiences!"

Katie's only answer was a sigh, and she wore a troubled expression.

"Please don't look so distressed, dearest," said Colin, with a roguish look in his eyes, and, bending down to kiss the rosy lips, "I remember reading in a book some one lent me during the war, of an earl and countess who were really quite happy. I know it's unusual, and the author may have been only romancing, but it might be true, and you and I must not despair."

"Oh, Colin," said Katie, "stop your bantering nonsense!"

"If I were quite sure of your constancy," said Colin, for the humour was on him to tease Katie, "when I am

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outshone by a host of more accomplished admirers, I think I should be able to face the future with greater fortitude. I have so often read of the social dissipations of London, that I contemplate the future with fear and trembling."

"Oh, Colin, how can you!" said Katie, pouting ever so little, for she did not like banter from Colin, who had always been her noble knight and her paragon of perfection.

"Will you promise, sweetheart, that you will be true to me while I am gone to prepare the house in England for your coming?"

"Colin," answered Katie, "I'll have to box your ears and dismiss you altogether, if you continue to talk to me like that. Don't flatter yourself that because you are an earl now you can rally your country sweetheart. I shall not make any rash promises as to what I shall do while you are away."

Colin's answer was to steal his arm gently about Katie's waist, and despite her show of resistance, once more touch her lips with his.

"I am afraid, Colin, you are becoming rather presumptuous since you have inherited your title. I don't believe I like you quite so well as I did the modest, less confident Colin."

"There, now," Colin answered, "I told you I could hardly believe that book I read during the war!

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Don't you tremble for the future, Katie, and wish there was some retreat?"

"Indeed I do not tremble in the least, for I have perfect confidence in my Colin, and do not intend to have him start wrong."

And so the happy sweethearts, who had never had a lovers' quarrel since the days of their childhood, chatted away as the evening sped. It was the last talk they would have together for some time, as Colin, Mr. Briggs, and I were to start for England the next day. It was not anticipated that Colin would be gone longer than five or six months; at least, he promised to return in about that time, and he told Mrs. McNabb he would like to carry Katie off when he came back.

We left early the following morning, and at Colin's request called upon the lawyer in the county town who looked after any legal business that Mrs. McNabb had. Colin ascertained the exact amount owing on the mortgage on the homestead, and making a memorandum of it, he told the lawyer to have a discharge drawn, ready for signature upon his return. This done, the journey was resumed.

We went by New York, as swifter vessels could there be commanded. Needless to say, Willie and the Rolphes were delighted to hear of Colin's great good fortune. We spent the only evenings we had at our disposal in the home of the Rolphes, where

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we found Willie blissfully complacent, as the fiancé of Helen. As we returned to our lodgings, we did our best to laud her to his satisfaction, and partially succeeded.

He had already conducted me to the scene of Jamie's death. The saloon had been closed for some time; indeed, it had been converted into a branch rescue home and shelter for drunkards. A large brass plate had been attached to the stone wall near the door, bearing these words, in chaste black letters:—

This plate is placed here to perpetuate the memory of Jamie McNabb, a brave Canadian youth who died near this spot, a martyr to the noble work of rescuing the victims of drink.

I learned that Mr. Rolphe had caused the plate to be placed there, and that he had coöperated with the missionaries who carried on the Broad Street shelter, in having the saloon where Jamie met his death converted into a branch home, as the best possible monument that could be erected to the memory of the brave lad. I noticed, the morning we sailed for England, that Willie and Colin had a long and earnest talk on the wharf before the vessel weighed anchor. They seemed to be arranging for some event of importance. The boys were devotedly attached to each other, and I am sure that Willie was more pleased

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to see Colin inherit an earldom than he would have been to fall heir to it himself.

The Rolphes all came down to see us off, and as Colin and I stood upon the deck waving our handkerchiefs to the party on the wharf, I said, "What a beautiful girl Helen Rolphe is!"

"Yes," answered Colin; "I know of but one more beautiful, at least in my eyes, and you know whom I mean."

CHAPTER LV

THE MORTGAGE IS PAID

THE voyage was uneventful, and we reached England in due time. When we landed, Mr. Briggs sent a telegram to Beaumont, announcing our arrival so that a suitable welcome might be accorded the new master. The reception was all that could be desired; indeed, it was more hearty and spontaneous than the circumstances led us to expect.

Colin bore himself in his new circumstances with becoming modesty and dignity. It was remarkable what a favourable impression he made, not only upon his own people but also upon the neighbouring country gentlemen, who took the earliest opportunity of calling to welcome him, but who, having heard that his earlier circumstances had been spent amid rude surroundings, had half feared to find a rather uncongenial sort of person. He was, indeed, unfamiliar with many conventionalities of etiquette, but this was something of vastly less importance in their eyes than in the minds of persons not "to the manner born"; while his manliness, straightforward sincerity, and unaffected

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good breeding, were qualities they held in the highest esteem.

I parted with Colin for a time, to call upon those of my own acquaintances who were still living, — my guardian had long since gone to his rest. But as the reader is not interested in my affairs, I shall not weary him with an account of my visits.

Mr. Briggs and Mr. Bartley lent Colin invaluable assistance in transacting the necessary business of the estate. When the false Earl of Beaumont died, it was thought by many that the estates were heavily encumbered, but this popular impression was doubtless due to a report as to the financial condition of affairs when he succeeded to the earldom. By dint of careful management, all debts had been wiped off, and there was a satisfactory surplus in the treasury when Colin succeeded to the title.

The six months mentioned by Colin to Katie being up, we prepared to return to Canada. I could see that Colin was longing to see his sweetheart, with whom he had maintained a weekly correspondence. So we set sail from Liverpool, and reached New York three weeks later. After a day or two spent with the Rolphes, during which Colin and Willie had a number of confidential conferences, of the nature of which I was not informed, we set out for Ontario, and in a couple of days were at the old homestead again.

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"My dear mother," said Colin, addressing Mrs. McNabb, the second morning after our arrival (he loved to please the widow by calling her mother), "for sixteen or eighteen years there has been one special service to you that I have cherished in my heart and have been anxious to perform. Nothing would induce me to forego the pleasure of rendering the little service that for so many years I fondly dreamed of. Here is a legal discharge of the mortgage upon your homestead," and Colin deposited the document in the widow's lap.

Tears rolled down her faded cheeks as she looked at the parchment. Nobody but a woman placed as she had been for years can form any conception of what a mortgage on the homestead means.

It means a perpetual fear upon the soul lest, by any failure to meet the interest, the home will be lost, and the family turned adrift upon the world. It means a constant leaden weight upon the heart, lest the creditor will swoop down some day, claim his money, and turn the family adrift without any means of making a livelihood. To a fond and anxious mother it means many a sleepless night; many a deep sigh as she goes from bed to bed to tuck up the dear ones, who, all unconscious of their mother's anxiety, are sleeping sweetly and peacefully; many a deep sigh lest the roof which shelters to-night may be seized to-

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morrow ; it means when the interest is overdue, many a roundabout circuit through the town to avoid the man who acts as collector ; it means living in perpetual fear, when arrears have accumulated, lest every stranger who drives down the lane may be the sheriff coming to seize the household goods, and to expel the family penniless upon the world.

Ever since Colin had been adopted by the widow, I had seen to it that she was much more than repaid for any expense to which she was put on his behalf, and I had always contrived to have her in a position to pay the interest in good time. But to pay the mortgage off was beyond my power, and during many years before Colin's adoption there was not one of the experiences just described through which she had not passed. Aye, and further experiences did she suffer, experiences which man with his rougher instincts and nature is unable to comprehend, much less describe. Deep into her soul had the iron entered.

Little wonder that tears flowed down her cheeks when she looked at the document and heard Colin's words. Yes, and let the tears flow ; let them flow freely ! It will take an ocean of such tears to efface the deep furrows in the forehead and the lines about the eyes, and to wipe away the sorrow and heaviness in the heart, the weariness in the mind, the startled, anxious look in the face, left by years of painful anxiety and torturing

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suspense. The emotion that swept over the good woman's soul as a flood covers the land when the dyke is thrown down, would not be restrained; for thirty years it had been pent up. When duty, stern duty, had to be faced, the widow faced it bravely, but now that full relief had come, she gave way.

Colin was deeply moved by her emotion, for he had never seen her yield before. It touched the young man greatly to witness the breakdown of this staunch nature. It was with difficulty that he could restrain his own tears. He held the widow's hands tenderly in his, and stroked her bowed and gray head lovingly, while the tide continued at the flood. Then when the wave was spent and began to subside, Colin spoke to her tenderly and sweetly about her life, and about all she had been to her children and to himself.

The widow listened in silence, then, raising her eyes to Colin's, she said: "My son, God has been good to me, indeed. All my sons have proved worthy, honest boys, and my girls too have been all that I could ask. And then He sent you to me at a time when the oil was very low in the widow's cruse. I think it was to try my faith, but how gloriously He has kept His covenant to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow!"

Colin bowed his head, and the widow went on: "How darkly we at first see through the glass, Colin,

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my son; but as the years have passed, how wonderfully He has unfolded His plan. And soon," she added, while a calm light shone on her beautiful countenance, "'we shall see face to face.'"

While Mrs. McNabb was handling the mortgage discharge which Colin had placed in her hands, a small document fell out of its folds and fluttered to the floor. Colin picked it up and placed it in her hand.

"What is it, Colin?" she asked.

"You must read it for yourself, mother," answered Colin. "Here are your glasses."

Mrs. McNabb adjusted them, and read slowly, as she made out the words: —

THE BANK OF ENGLAND

Pay to the order of Mrs. McNabb of the Scotch Settlement, Upper Canada, the sum of One Thousand Pounds Sterling, and charge the same to my account.

(Signed) BEAUMONT.

The widow's eyes opened wide with surprise as she finished reading. "Why, what can this mean?" she said, addressing Colin.

"I suppose, mother dear, it means what it says; it is a check on the bank of England in your favour for a thousand pounds sterling."

"Yes, but who on earth is Beaumont, and why should he give me a thousand pounds sterling?" said the widow, in surprise.

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"Can't you guess who he is?" said Colin, with a roguish smile on his face.

"Beaumont — Beaumont?" said the widow, slowly and reflectively. And then suddenly the light broke upon her, and she said: "Why, bless your heart, Colin, it's you! I had quite forgotten that you were an earl, and that your title is Beaumont. To me you are just plain Colin, and if you were an earl a thousand times over, I am afraid it would make no difference."

"But I would not have it make any difference," answered Colin. "Why should it? Am I not just the same boy that you took to your home and heart and befriended?"

"Yes, that you are!" answered the widow. "And I am so glad that God has given you the right kind of heart to accept and appreciate His favours. But why have you given me this?" she added, holding up the check. "I am sure I do not need it, now that you have paid off the mortgage and my boys are doing so well."

"I am merely Heaven's ambassador," answered Colin, "sent to discharge the covenant made so long ago with you that the 'barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail,' and it is in that spirit that you must accept it."

Mrs. McNabb sat silent for a time. After a while Colin told her that he was going to take Katie back

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with him to England, and he asked her if she would not come with Lizzie and visit them in their home in the old land.

At first the widow demurred, but later on, when the girls began to coax her, she gave a half promise that she might go. She did not like the sea, and she had lived so long in the settlement that she feared if she left it she might never get back again. But the more the projected visit was discussed, the more reconciled did the widow become, and before a week had elapsed, the girls had so worked upon their mother as to exact a definite promise that she would visit the old land.

CHAPTER LVI

AULD PEGGY'S GRATITUDE

DURING the days that Colin remained in the settlement, he went about among his old friends, and sought by every means possible to have them realise that the changed conditions of his fortunes had made no difference in the disposition of his mind. Indeed, he sought to be plainer and more homelike than ever; for he realised how sensitive his old neighbours would be, and how likely even to misunderstand and exaggerate any act, however trifling, if they fancied he was conscious of the position to which he had fallen heir.

The worst danger that he had to fear arose from the national pride of the Scottish people. There were many whom Colin would have liked to assist, but he did not dare to propose it, for fear of offending them, and lest they should think he was seeking to make a display of his newly acquired wealth. But he helped those whom he could without risking any offence.

Meeting Auld Peggy on the road one day, he stopped her to ask how she was getting along.

"Muckle bawd," replied Peggy, who conceived that

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her expectations would be more likely to be realised by putting on what she called "a poor mouth," when talking to Colin. "Ah'm sair troubled wi' th' rheumatiz; an' as f'r Dugal, ye can see he's waur crippled up nor masel'. Aye, aye," she went on, as if ruminating, "pov-erty's an unco inconvanient thing, thet it is, Coalin, lad. But ye'll naver hae ony experiences yersel' th' noo, wi' yer graun' hoose an' a' yer servants tae wait on ye, haun' an' fit. Aye, but 'twill be th' lucky woman 'll get ye, Coalin. But iverybody unnerstauns thet thet's a' settled an' arranged f'r, an' thet yer gaun tae tak' th' wuddow's Katie aff wi' ye whan ye start f'r th' auld countree agen."

Colin smiled good-naturedly, and told Auld Peggy not to be too sure, as there was "many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

"Aye, thet there is," answered Peggy, ruefully. "Whan Ah marrit McCallum, ower fufy year ago, Ah little dreamt thet Ah wad hae tae mak' ma ain way thru th' warld. Although Ah thocht thet he wis a' richt, an' Ah wis anxious-like tae get marrit an' hae a hame o' ma ain. Ah hae aye regrettit iver syne thet thar hadna hae been a slup 'twixt th' cup an' th' lup, an' thet afore he marrit me, McCallum hed not rinned awa' wi' yoan hussy thet he took aff wi' hum tae Wast Constant. But Ah'm no' complainin', f'r, as ye know, th' Laird is guid tae His ain, an' Auld Peggy's no' been

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thet bawd thru life es tae forfeit a' claim tae His protection. Ah hae aye been es guid's ma neighbours, an' sa lang's ma bonnet wis fut tae wear tae meetin', Ah wis aye tae be foon in ma seat, whuch, es ye know, Coalin, wis th' second ane till th' back on th' maun's side."

It should be explained that in the old established kirk in the settlement, the men sat upon one side of the aisle, while the women sat upon the other side. The entire congregation remained seated during the singing of the Psalms, and stood up with their backs to the minister during prayer. Colin assented to the words of Auld Peggy, and she proceeded:—

"Ah naver made much noise aboot ma releegion; Ah wisna like they Methody folk wha tried tae stairt a kirk in th' settlement an' wha aften thank Goad thet they hae been regenrit f'r th' eleventh or twalth time. Ah dinna believe in yoan, dae ye, Coalin, lad?"

Without waiting for an answer, Auld Peggy continued: "It hes aye been ma opeenion thet we're saved by grace, an' no' by ony lang prayers an' blitherin' experiences, sic es auld Nathan Larkins tawks aboot whan he's pittin' up what Jock, th' drover, ca's ain o' his 'powerfu' peteetions.' Ah hae aye been thankfu' thet Ah hae been regenrit aince, tae say naethin' o' a dizen er twa o' times. Ah canna staun' they blitherin' Methodys, onyway, can ye, Colin?" said Auld Peggy, appealing to the young man.

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Colin did not share the old woman's antipathy to the Methodists, but knowing how mightily she was down on them ever since they endeavoured to establish an organization in the neighbourhood, he gave an evasive answer.

"Ma opeenion hes aye been," continued Peggy, anxious to give a parting shot to the denomination which she so much disliked, "thet they Methodys are entoorely tae familiar wi' th' Almichty. They tawk tae Hum es uf He wis ain o' theirselves. Th' verra presumption o' th' creatures. Ah hae aye felt like takin' aff ma shoon whan Ah enter Goad's hoouse, but they presumptuous people wad walk in wi' their hats an' caps on, an' Ah'm no' verra shaire thet they wadna wear moggasins uf they hadna shoon. Ah'm shaire th' Loard hates presumption, Coalin, f'r disna th' guid buik say, 'Blessed are th' meek an' lowly in hairt'? Ah'm fear't whan it comes tae distributin' th' rewards at th' great white throne, thet there'll be some people wha'll come gae shoart."

It was with difficulty that Colin could switch the old lady off her favourite theme, "the Methodys," and induce her to talk about herself, for he wanted an opening to tell her what he had decided upon. "You'll not be travelling the road this winter?" he asked.

"Losh, maun, an' what wad Ah dae tae keep boady

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an' saul tegither? Ma bairns hae growed up an' gane aff an' left me tae fish f'r masel', an' uf Ah didna stick tae th' rawd, what'll become o' us — Dugal an' me — f'r we maun jist stairve."

Here was Colin's opportunity, and he told her that he had arranged to give her a small allowance every month, sufficient to provide for her wants. The poor old woman was so filled with gratitude that for a time she could scarcely find words to express herself. Instead of trusting herself to speak to Colin, she stooped down, and patting Dugal, who wagged his stub tail industriously, she talked to him instead.

"An' we're tae hae na mair trampin' aboot th' rawds in th' cauld, Dugal; na mair journeyin's in th' weet an' slush an' rain. We're tae hae planty o' wood an' planty o' meat an' planty o' averythin'. Aye, won't it be a graun' day, Dugal, whan we can gang till oor ain cupboard an' fin' planty thar tae eat an' drink! Aye, Dugal," sbe added, patting the faithful dog vigorously, "ye may weel wag yer bit tail, f'r it's mony a bane that Mother Hubbard 'll fin' f'r ye in th' cupboard after thus. Sae, Dugal, oor troubles are a'most ended, f'r th' Loard hes keppit His proamise tae provide f'r th' wuddows, an' noo that we're baith grown auld an' no' es able f'r th' rawd es we aince were, He's cam' tae us in th' person o' oor auld frien' Coalin, an' He jist tak's th' burden frac aff oor backs, sae that we're like Christian in

AULD PEGGY'S GRATITUDE

Bunyan's "Progress," whan th' load wis lifted frum aff his shouthers. Ah can scarcely believe it's true, sae aften hae we been disappointit in th' years gone by. It's no' that Ah would like tae say that Ah wis losin' coanfidence in th' proamisc, but Ah must freely admit that Ah wis beginnin' tae think that it wis lang aboot comin'. But th' airm o' th' Loard isna shoartened, es we see th' day, Dugal, an' we musna forget th' means o' deluverance. What wull we say, Dugal, tae oor frien' an' benefactor wha staun's afore us, an' through whase boonty oor troubles are tae disappear?"

Dugal, the brief stub of his tail wagging vigorously, turned his eye gratefully towards Colin, when the old woman pointed to him.

"Don't mind any thanks, Peggy," said Colin, in the kindest tone. "I have more than I need, and why should I not share it with a poor old woman who was kind to the widow's family in the days of need? I would not be quite happy, Peggy, in my house in England, if I felt that you and Dugal were in want in this settlement. I have arranged with my lawyer in town to send you ten pounds every month. I think that will help you to keep the wolf from the door."

"May Goad bless ye, Coalin, lad, f'r this!" said Auld Peggy with emotion; and Colin noticed that her withered eyes, which had not known tears for perhaps two score years, were moist, and that her voice, always

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strong and masculine, trembled. "Aye, an' He wull bless ye!" continued Peggy, "f'r it's happy ye hae made twa hairts th' day! Mo an' Dugal wull naver forget ye!" And followed by her abbreviated and faithful though now crippled companion, the old woman, in her own language, "daundered awa' doon" the Concession line, talking to herself and to Dugal, and calling down, blessings on the head of her young benefactor.

Colin watched her till she was out of sight and then, quickening his pace, for the evening shadows were lengthening, he hurried homewards.

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GOARDEN

CHAPTER LVII

GOARDEN APPLIES FOR A NEW JOB

COLIN found an old friend waiting for him at Mrs. McNabb's. It was no less a personage than Goarden Weaver, the hired man. Goarden had just returned from "the drive" (the floating of logs down the streams to the sawmills). He had spent the entire winter in the shanty, working with a large gang on the Opeango, a small tributary of the Grand or Ottawa River. On the break-up in the spring, Goarden followed "the drive" down to Quebec, where, true to the practice of the average "shanty lad" (to say nothing of his own instincts), he had gone on a spree, and wound up without a penny of his hard-earned wages left. He was, in fact, obliged to borrow from a chum who was less prodigal than he in his carousings, in order to pay his passage home. He had heard of Colin's good fortune, and determined to apply for a job.

"Yeh see, it's jist like this," said Goarden, hitching up his braceless trousers, which always had a tendency to hang down and "bag." "I've about decided t' cut th' hull bizness an' make a noo deal. Th' cards hasn't

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come my way uv late, an' I'm so down on my luck thet I want a noo deck altogether. Tb' sbanty's all right, an' th' boys is all right, but th' cards is unlucky, an' ef I don't make a change, I'm li'hle t' go t' th' divil altogether. Wben a man gits it into his bead thet he's down on his luck an' thet th' cards is stacked agin him, he may jist as well quit. He's like a bouse as is haunted. Nobody 'll live in it. Jist so if a man's luck's gone bad, he's got no confidence. Th' ony thing fer t' do is t' get out, t' jump th' job, t' cut an' run, t' hunt noo diggin's. I thort uv goin' t' Californy an' diggin' gold, hut I don't know nobody thar, an' I'd get lonesome-like, an' p'r'aps blow my brains out. I thort uv Africky, but th' blacks is sitch uncanny critters thet I quit the idee. Yisterday one uv my fren's said: 'What about th' noo dook, — young Colin? ye needn't go no furder 'n him. His nibs 'll give ye a job t' look arter his hosses an' dawgs in Englan'.' I knowed as how I hadn't much experience wit dawgs, fer I ony owned but one, Coaley, in my life, an' Jock, th' drover, said thet as he wuz curly he must be a spaniel. But I knowed better. He wuz a coaley because "Coaley" wuz his name when I got him frum Mrs. Bedor, th' Frenchwoman up th' Snow Road. But I think, Colin, thet I could lick dawgs with any uv yer bloomin' Englishmen, fer my fren' tells me thet tb' job is whipper-in uv th' houn's."

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"I think you could make a better success with the horses, Goarden," said Colin, after a pause. "There is quite a lot of them, and I believe that if you are sincere in your desire to reform, I could arrange to get you into the stables."

"That's zactly my lay!" said the delighted Goarden. "I'll show them infernal furriners in Europe that I kin give 'em cards an' spades in han'lin' hosses, an' beat 'em. Why, Colin," he continued, rising and walking about enthusiastically, while his blazing red necktie flowed down over his shirt bosom, "I driv Bill Pepper's bay team half last winter, an' ye know how skittish th' off mare is, although a better nag niver looked through a hoss collar! One day some sneaky scut stuck some big burrs roun' th' mare's legs an' tail unbeknown t' me, an' I hed th' divil's own time with her. She kicked an' kicked, till she smashed th' whippetree an' broke th' harness, an' snapped th' ribbons, an' nearly killed th' chore boy. Oh, if I ony knowed who done it," said Goarden, with fire flashing from his eyes, "I'd break him in two an' lam both pieces together quicker'n chain lightnin'd chase a squ'r'l roun' a crooked-grained hemlock with th' bark off!"

"Oh, hold on!" said Colin. "You wouldn't do all that!"

"That I would, an' more too," said the blood-thirsty Goarden.

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"Well, then, Goarden," said Colin, "we shall consider that you are engaged to look after the horses at Beaumont."

"Mairsee, marisee, bien buckoo," said Goarden, seizing Colin's hand.

"See here," said Colin, "none of that, Goarden! Don't work off any of your French jargon on me, or the engagement is cancelled at once. You can see how it will take on the natives in Europe, but I should think, after your experience that day when the road work was being done, and you tried to work off your 'tourley, lourley, lipsey ting,' that you would have retired from the French business in this country."

Goarden was quite crestfallen. However, after thanking Colin in English, he went off in fairly good humour, which rapidly increased as congratulations were showered upon him by his friends.

That same evening several old friends dropped in to see Colin. Among the number were Muckle Peter, Jock the drover, and old Nathan Larkins.

The object which Nathan had in view was to confer his blessing upon Colin in "the noo spear," as Nathan put it, to which the young man had been called, and incidentally to request Colin to send him out from the old country one of those latest Bible Concordances about which he had read in one of the religious monthlies. Nathan "allowed as it was mighty handy" for a

GOARDEN APPLIES FOR A NEW JOB

man like himself, who was frequently called upon to officiate at religious and other ceremonies, "to hev one o' them air Concordances by him so that he might cover the ground thorally both in prayer and exhortation."

Colin promised to send him the volume; although, after Nathan departed that evening, Jock, the drover, did his best to persuade Colin to substitute "Jack Sheppard's Murders" or some other exciting volume for the Concordance.

"It's all very well fer you, Colin," Jock said, "because you're goin' to be three er four thousand miles away; but think uv us poor divils who hev hed t' listen t' Nathan's long prayers an' exertations fer fifty odd years! When Nathan gits a Concordance, there'll be no endoorin' uv him. Why, Colin, he'll ring in the Concordance on everythin' in th' good book frum th' Garden uv Eden down to John's Revelation! No, Colin, it'll niver do; either you'll hev to go back on your promise or we'll hev t' kill off Nathan."

But Nathan received his Concordance all the same, and he still survives in the settlement, although Jock, the drover, declares that if the old man is not "removed" (that is the diplomatic expression he employs), an awful lot of souls will be lost, as the length of his prayers and exhortations has been productive of widespread profanity.

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Nathan would have liked exceedingly to "put up a prayer" on behalf of Colin that evening, before he left, but Jock, suspecting his design, would commence the relation of some exciting and racy yarn whenever the old man veered round in that direction. So they tired him out, and he finally took his leave, content with laying his hands upon Colin's head and repeating several passages of Scripture, more or less appropriate.

After he was gone, Colin had a chat with Muckle Peter, while Jock talked to the widow and joked with Katie about her approaching marriage. Poor modest Katie, she blushed like a rose when any one referred to the matter!

"What am I going to do, Peter," said Colin, "when I can't hear you sing the Psalms any more?"

"Thet Ah canna tell," answered Muckle Peter; "although Ah suppose they'll be havin' braw singers in th' auld lan'."

"None, I think, so powerful as yourself, Peter," answered Colin.

"Weel, weel, ye'll no' be sayin' sae?" said the precentor, greatly pleased at Colin's ambiguous compliment.

"I do say it, indeed, Peter. While I was in the old land, I frankly confess I heard no such voice as yours."

Again Peter was so pleased that he said: "Why,

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but you'd be gettin' a church f'r me in th' auld countree, Coalin, lad! Ah'm no' sae attached to th' ain here that Ah wouldna pull up stakes an' gang back tae th' lan' frae whuch Ah cam' whan Ah wis but a chiel. Ah'll no' say but what Ah would accept a temptin' offer, even if Ah hed tae leave ma chairge here; an' forby, Coalin, lad, Ah'm no' sae shure that they a' appreciate me here, an' it wad dae them muckle guid tae be left wi'oot onybody tae raise their tunes. Yoan pasty-faced clown wha keeps th' toll-gate hes a notion 'at he can carry on th' Psalmody, but Ah'll wager ma new buckskin moggasins agin his meersham pipe 'at he canna sing th' first fower bars o' Auld Hunner, an' Ah'll raise th' tune f'r hum an' gie hum a guid stairt!"

"Well, well," said Colin, not wishing to have Muckle Peter continue in a controversial mood, "I'll keep my eye about me, and if I see a good musical opening in one of the great churches, that I am confident you can fill with credit to yourself and with satisfaction to the congregation, I'll be sure to send you word."

Although Colin never sent for Muckle Peter, he frequently wrote him the kindest of letters, sending him music books and asking his opinion upon musical questions. The letters, the questions, and the music books pleased Muckle Peter mightily, and he used to exhibit them among his neighbours, and sound Colin's praises, while to those who did not know Colin person-

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ally Muckle Peter referred to him as "a frien' o' mine wha's awa' up in th' gentry o' Englan'."

Colin loved Muckle Peter for the way he stood by him during his early experiences with Simon, the schoolmaster, and for his early kindness to the Widow McNabb. Never a Christmas passed but Colin contrived to send the stern old Scottish precentor a twenty or twenty-five pound note for some little service he had asked him to perform.

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CHAPTER LVIII

TWO WEDDINGS

WELL, they were married — Colin and Katie — in the old kirk and by the old minister. It was a beautiful day in June. The birds sang cheerily as they flitted over the green fields; the meadow-lark never seemed to be in such high good humour; even the bees appeared to hum more cheerily. The entire population turned out to witness the ceremony, for no more popular boy and girl had ever lived in the Scotch Settlement than Colin and Katie. Colin, with Mrs. McNabb on his arm, entered the old stone church first. Placing the widow in a front seat, he stood, tall, straight, dignified, and handsome, in front of the pulpit, awaiting his bride.

She entered upon my arm, and I led her forward to Colin, who received her with a happy, satisfied smile. The service was brief, and the responses were clearly given. The hymn which was sung was led with great gusto by Muckle Peter, whose face became so red in his effort to sustain and prolong the notes, that there was danger of apoplexy. But the crisis passed safely and Peter survived.

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The ceremony over, the friends crowded around to shake hands with the young couple and to extend congratulations. Many were the "God bless you's" which were pronounced that day.

The last to make her way through the crowd to shake hands was Auld Peggy, and a warm greeting both Colin and Katie gave her. "Goad bless ye boath," were the only words the poor old body could say, so full was her heart. Till the day of her death the poor old woman never tired of expanding upon that spectacle in the auld kirk, and of sounding the praises of the central figures.

As the couple left the church, guns were discharged in the air, according to the custom of the settlement, and old shoes and "moggasins" were thrown in abundance after the bride and groom.

Colin had resolved that the event should be pleasantly remembered by the settlers, and, with the permission of the widow, he had caused a luncheon to be spread in the orchard, all the people for miles about being invited. The temporary tables were piled with all the substantial and lighter viands that the town and country could afford. A more cheerful company was never witnessed in the settlement.

With his bride on one side and the widow on the other, while I was assigned a seat of honour with Wallace and Lizzie, Colin sat at the head of the table and

TWO WEDDINGS

gave the signal for all to "fall to," as Goarden put it in a subsequent glowing description.

I shall not stop to describe the scenes and incidents of the picnic. It was one of those remarkable events in the settlement which, like "the burnin'" or "the hangin'," furnished a new date on which to base calendars.

That evening Colin and Katie drove off in one vehicle, while Mrs. McNabb, Lizzie, Wallace, and I followed in a second. We were on our way to New York to attend another nuptial event of almost as much interest to us all as Colin's and Katie's. We reached New York the third day after we set out, and as might be expected, we received the warmest kind of welcome. The Rolphes would hear of no arrangement other than that we should all remain with them during our brief stay.

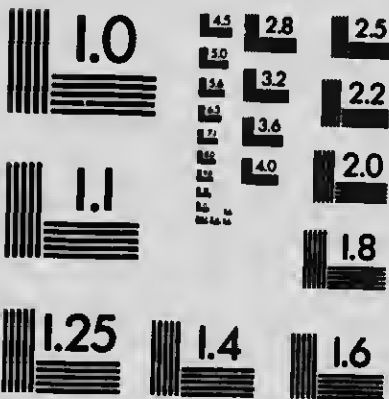
Naturally the experience of visiting such a great city was entirely novel to most of the party, but they all enjoyed the change, and I think the widow experienced as much genuine pleasure as any other member of the party. Mrs. Rolphe took to her from the first, and so did Helen. Indeed, it always seemed to me that there must be something wrong about the person who did not instinctively like Mrs. McNabb. She possessed such naturainess and repose under all conditions, that it was impossible not to become attached to her if you were thrown in her way.

It was a delightful picture to see Willie with his



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COLIN OF THE NINTH CONCESSION

mother. He was so genuinely proud of her, and he had talked so much to Helen about her, that when the two were together his face beamed with happiness as he witnessed evidences of mutual admiration between them. If Mrs. Rolphe did not go out driving with Mrs. McNabb, Helen did; both seemed to covet the pleasure of the good widow's company. Wallace and the girls were delighted with the great city. Under the guidance of Colin, and sometimes of Willie, when he wasn't too busy, they visited all the places of interest.

The wedding of Willie and Helen was fixed for the twentieth of June, just two weeks after that of Colin and Katie. The event was of a more pretentious character than the other, for the Rolphes possessed a large circle of friends and acquaintances, and many of them had to be bidden. In addition, Willie himself had many friends and admirers in the great city. Many of these were invited to witness the ceremony, so that the number of guests at the wedding was large. According to arrangement, Colin and Katie assisted at the altar.

Helen was a vision of modest loveliness, as, led by her father up the aisle of the crowded church, she took her place by Willie's side. I never could describe events of this kind, and to attempt any particulars as to costumes or presents, would speedily take me beyond my depth; so that all these must be left to the imagination of the gentle reader.

TWO WEDDINGS

The newspapers made a great deal of the occasion, recalling the incident of Helen's rescue by her lover from the burning building some years previously, and basing the most romantic stories upon it. The ingenuity displayed by the reporters in dressing up the incident for their respective journals was a source of great amusement to Willie and Helen, and to the members of each family.

"What do you think of her, mother dear?" was a question which the proud Willie frequently propounded to his mother, the few days that she was in New York. As the fond mother's answer was always the same, and entirely to the liking of the enthusiastic young lover, he invariably hugged her. The good woman smiled her appreciation.

It had been agreed between Colin and Willie that they should spend their honeymoon on the Mediterranean and in visiting southern Europe. The good-byes were soon said and the happy quartette set off.

* * * * *

It had been arranged that Mrs. McNabb, from whom a promise to that effect had been extracted, with Lizzie, and Mr. and Mrs. Rolphe, should proceed to England in time to welcome back from their tour the brides and their husbands. This programme was carried out. I accompanied the party and exerted myself to assist in their entertainment, after our arrival at Beaumont.

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Needless to say, a happier company never brightened the old place, and merrier laughter never resounded through the old ancestral halls of Beaumont than that which followed the advent of the young earl and his bride, with Willie and Helen. Several weeks sped by with a swiftness that astonished all, for scarcely a day was allowed to pass that they did not participate in an excursion to some interesting and historic spot.

Those excursions were especially enjoyed by Mrs. McNabb. She used to linger over the points of historic interest in Scotland, and often asked to be taken to localities made famous by Sir Walter Scott, Burns, and other Scottish writers. Once she expressed the desire to make the tour rendered famous by "Old Mortality," who, with chisel and hammer, went about renewing the inscriptions on tombstones erected to mark the resting-places of heroes who had died for Scotland.

How happy Helen and Willie were, as they wandered about the Beaumont grounds and lingered in the evening on the old bridges spanning the streamlets that wound their tortuous ways through the meadows and woods! How happy was Mrs. McNabb, the dear widow, whose cares had been so fortunately ended after her long and heroic struggle with the world!

How happy were Colin and Katie! I think, as Doo-ley, the blacksmith, would say, that "the main stay" of their happiness was their downright admiration for each

TWO WEDDINGS

other. Katie was very proud of Colin and regarded him as a hero, while on the other hand Colin believed that there was not such a lovable woman as Katie in the broad British dominions. I shall never forget the look of genuine pride that came into his face the first evening after their return from their continental wedding tour, when, after leading her to the chair at the dining-table, which had been filled by so many generations of fair and noble women, she presided with a grace, dignity, and simplicity never excelled by any predecessor.

CHAPTER LIX

MOTHER

I SHALL raise the curtain upon one more scene in the little drama that has been presented in these pages, and then my task is done. The reader has seen how Mrs. McNabb lived and he is now invited to a lowly bedside at the old Canadian homestead on the Ninth Concession, where he is permitted to see how she died.

The widow had taught her family and had herself practised the matchless and eternal truth that the sum of life and its greatness does not consist in the wealth, power, or position acquired, or in the space occupied on the pages of the world's history, but in the character attained, and in the performance from day to day of the simple duties that lie in our pathway. That, and that only, she counted real success.

The scene at the death of this great woman is described by Helen, who with Willie, her husband, was at the widow's bedside when the last moment came. Katie allowed me to copy the letter, and I give it here just as it is written : —

* * * * *

MOTHER

THE SCOTCH SETTLEMENT, May 26, 18—.

MY DEAR KATIE: Willie has asked me to write to you and Colin, and let you know that your dear mother is gone from us. She passed away last night, surrounded by all the members of her family with the exception of you and Colin, and she left her blessing and a message for you both. As you know, she has not been in good health for six months or more; her heart bothered her a great deal, and the doctor warned us that the end might be expected soon. Last Saturday, a telegram informed us in New York that she was sinking, and that if we desired to see her in life we must come at once. Willie and I reached here the day before her death.

When we had all gathered about her bedside, she said, in that dear voice now grown so weak (and oh, Katie, how worn and spent she looked!): —

“My children, I have called you to me, because the hour of my departure is at hand, and I wish to give you my blessing before I go.

“Here, Wallace,” she said, handing her first-born her well-worn Bible, “I am going to give you this book as my last gift. Won’t you read to me the Twenty-third Psalm?”

Wallace opened the book and read: —

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul.”

“Pause a moment, Wallace,” said the widow, “while I tell you all what a Shepherd the Lord has been to me, how He has led me by the still waters, and how He has so oft restored my soul.” And the good mother, in beautiful, touching, and tender words briefly sketched her experience since widowhood,

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and bore such eloquent testimony to the love, favour, and tenderness of the Good Shepherd that we all felt as if we were in the presence of one of Heaven's saints, as indeed we were.

"Won't you please finish the Psalm now, Wallace, my boy?" she finally said. Wallace continued to read:—

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

When Wallace ceased reading, there was a profound silence in the room for a few minutes, which no one dared to break. The beloved but wasted form lay before us. The face was lit up with a smile as if an invisible angel had whispered in her ear. Presently the lips moved, and although the eyes were still closed, she said, "How beautiful, how very beautiful! 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul. My cup runneth over; I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'"

Then she opened her eyes wide, and looking at us all in the sweetest manner, she said she felt better, and asked Lizzie to raise her head and shoulders, and place the pillows beneath them. After this was done she spoke to each one of us separately, and gave each a text from the good book, which she must have selected beforehand in anticipation of the separation that was now at hand. I shall send you later the Bible, with the passages she had marked with her own hand for you and Colin.

MOTHER

When she had finished talking to us, she turned her head wearily to one side, and lay very still. When she opened her eyes again she motioned to Willie, and spoke with failing voice, but loud enough for us all to catch the words:—

“Here, my boy, take down the New Testament and read to me from the fourteenth chapter of John. You will find the book opened at that chapter. I want you all to know that that chapter has been a constant wellspring of life to me; and now, when my last moments are come, I want its sacred music and its promises echoing in my ears, as I enter the mansion my Father has prepared for me.”

We all felt that the end was near, for her breathing became faster and more laboured; but her face continued to shine and reflect the glory of the perpetual sunshine into which the soul was entering. Willie read:—

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.”

When Willie had reached that point, his mother raised her hand for him to stop.

“Yes,” she said faintly, “‘that where I am there ye may be also.’ Just think of it, I shall be with Him,—with Him in so brief a time! I can almost feel myself going into His presence now!”

The widow spoke the last words eagerly, while her face indicated the seraphic nature of her experiences. The music was very real to her.

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Presently she lapsed into semi-consciousness, but it was only for a moment. When we noticed her eyes opening again, Willie continued to read:—

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

"He has kept His word," came the feeble whisper from the widow. "He has never left me comfortless, and now— He— has— come— for— me." And again the eyes closed.

Willie continued reading in a low, subdued, faltering voice:—

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. . . .
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. . . .
If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the
Father."*

For the last time the widow's wasted hand was raised. We all held our breath, and waited for her to speak.

"I go," she murmured so low that we had to bend down to catch the words, "unto— the— Father."

She turned her head sidewise on the pillow, as if she was very tired.

We all stood silently and reverently about the bedside. We knew she was gone, but no one seemed desirous of breaking the sacred silence.

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