Muskoka Memories

Sketches from Real Life

HATHAWAY'S BAY.

MUSKOKA MEMORIES

Sketches from Real Life

By ANN HATHAWAY

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED

Father and Mother

WHO WERE AMONGST THE EARLIEST SETTLERS

OF THIS DISTRICT

THE FRUIT OF WHOSE LABORS THEIR

CHILDREN NOW ENJOY

PREFACE.

ONE word, dear reader, before you commence this book. You will be disappointed if you expect to find in it stories of thrilling adventures, wonderful exploits, or hair-breadth escapes; it contains merely the record of the every-day life of a hard-working family. But, as the human race is largely made up of workers, I hope these pages may interest some of them. If any of you, like myself, know and love Muskoka, I hope my little book will afford you pleasure. If it does this, and also interests some who have never visited our lakes, it will have served the end for which it was written.

A. H.

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MUSKOKA MEMORIES.

CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECTION.

"The Present pales before the Past;
Who comes with angel wings?
As in a dream, I stand amidst
Strange yet familiar things.
Enough, so let us go, mine eyes
Are blinded by their tears,
A voice speaks to my soul to-day
Of long forgotten years."

—*A. A. Procter.*

JANUARY 11th, 1903.

FIFTY-FIVE years ago to-day since my dear old father and mother were married; fifty-five years —more than half a century—since the stalwart young tradesman, Ephraim Hathaway, was married in the old parish church of St. Mary's, Warwickshire, England, to the buxom, rosy-cheeked, black-haired damsel, Susan Crosbie; and here am I, their eldest-born,

their first Christmas-box—for I was born the Christmas after their marriage—here am I, far away from the land of my birth, in the wilds of Muskoka, sitting all alone, pen in hand, gazing sadly at the falling snow-flakes which are slowly but surely loading the spreading branches of the pine-trees, till they bend sorrowfully [illegible] ward, and I see beyond them, far as the eye can reach, the lake, which in summer sparkles and ripples in the sunlight, now a vast field of ice, thickly covered with the same fast-falling snow.

The good father and mother, where are they? Alas! their bodies are both quietly resting under the same snowy covering. For long years the talk had been of their "golden wedding-day" the glad family gathering we were to have on that great day—parents, children, grandchildren—but only one short year before that day dawned the dear mother laid aside all her earthly toils and cares, and slipped away from the fond embraces of her loved ones to a fairer land, with Christ, which is far better. A few more months and our father joined her there, and we knew for the first time what orphan meant; and though it was late in life to learn the lesson, it came to us none the easier for that. Keen was the pang, bitter the knowledge that henceforth we must walk this world alone—no more wise fatherly counsel, no tender motherly comfort for us in this life—and though time's healing hand has gently touched our aching hearts, the void is still there, and in our hours of trouble and

sadness our spirits yearn for the father and mother who for a little while have left us behind. Thank God, only for a little while. But, reader, methinks I hear you say this is a sad beginning for a book. Ah! but don't you remember how often tears and laughter meet in this old world of ours; so have patience, my friend, and I will venture to predict that, if you have the courage to follow me through the pages of my story, you shall have smiles as well as tears, jest as well as earnest, and many a hearty laugh, I hope, we shall enjoy before we part.

And now, why am I going to write this book? First and foremost of all reasons, to tell you of Muskoka. Muskoka! the land my parents loved, and I love, too. Muskoka! which I have chosen for my home, the place I mean to live in till I die. Muskoka! concerning which I have come to the conclusion (after having travelled in my lifetime north, south, east and west) that it is the dearest spot on all God's earth.

No wonder people come from afar to see Muskoka! No wonder, having once seen it, that they come again year after year, and never tire of its infinite variety of beauties. The very air you breathe is as the breath of life to the weary soul; it seems fairly to intoxicate like new wine, and you draw it in (pure, fresh laden with the breath of the pines) in deep, deep draughts, for the pure delight of breathing.

Muskoka! the very name seems a charm. I remem-

ber, some years ago when on a visit to London, England, dining at the house of a friend, I chanced to say in the course of conversation the word Muskoka. "Oh!" called out a lady from the other side of the table, "what a pretty name; say it again." "Muskoka," I repeated, and I heard her after the dinner was over softly murmuring to herself, "Muskoka."

How much sweeter, then, the name to those who know and love the place! Ah! there is music in the very sound. But there lies a great gap between the time when I commence this story and the present year of our Lord 1903, and as I want to trace the history of that young couple who plighted their troth in the old church at Warwick, I must as briefly as may be acquaint my readers with the most important facts which filled in the intervening years.

My father was the second son of James Hathaway and Ann, his wife, who had resided, and their ancestors before them, for many a long year at the little town of Stratford-on-Avon, the home of Shakespeare. My grandfather was a timber merchant, and his eldest son joined him in that business, but my father had been apprenticed to the dry-goods, or drapery, as they call it there, and after his marriage set up a draper's shop in the High Street, Stratford. Here I was born, as I told you before, the Christmas following their marriage, and was named Ann, after my dear old grandmother. Here were also born in the order named, my sisters Bet and Susan, followed by the

first boy, my brother Joe. When I was about six years old my father was taken very ill, and the doctors who were called in did not appear to be able to do him much good. For one thing, they could not agree as to what ailed him, but they all agreed (and thereby showed their wisdom) that what he needed was an out-door life, fresh air and exercise. They declared that shop-keeping did not suit his constitution, and that if he wished to live out half his days he had better give it up. Ah, dear me! what thousands of people there are in this world who would take a fresh lease of life by following the simple prescription of these doctors.

Well, of course, there followed upon this verdict a lot of family consultation, and after a great deal of talk it was at last decided that my father should be made into a farmer. But first he had to learn how to farm, and it was thought best that he should, in the first place, take a very small farm and experiment on that, then afterwards he might go into it more boldly. Thus it came about that, soon after I had passed my sixth birthday, we removed from Stratford into North Wales with all our belongings. The farm my father had decided upon was near Carnarvon and close to the seashore; the house on a hill faced inland, environed with distant mountains, Snowden with its white peak plainly visible above the rest. Here we lived for the next four years, and my father not only gained a knowledge of farming, but, what was more

important by far, health and strength for the future. Here my youngest sister, our pretty little blue-eyed Winnie, was born, and here, too, I think, was born in my own heart the intense love I have for Nature in all her forms. The sea, the mountains, the woods, the fields, everything around me I revelled in and enjoyed.

Ah! the truth of the trite old saying, "God made the country, but man makes the town." At the end of the four years for which he had leased the Welsh farm, my father returned with his family into Warwickshire and rented a much larger farm, about ten miles from Stratford, and here we spent the next ten or eleven years of our lives, bringing me to the mature age of twenty-one. Here was born my youngest brother, our little Benjamin, who rejoiced in the euphonious nick-name of the "Bab" till he was more than twelve years of age. I must tell you an anecdote just here. Not many years ago a gentleman called to see me in Toronto, a complete stranger, as I thought, but he introduced himself as the youngest son of a neighbor of ours in Warwickshire, who had been a great friend of my father's at the time we lived there. After some conversation and mutual enquiries concerning the several members of our respective families, he burst out with, "and how's the 'Bab?'"

The old familiar name, which had not been spoken by any of us for long, long years, brought back a flood

of recollections. "Oh!" I replied, laughing, "the 'Bab' is an old married man with lots of 'Babs' of his own, away in Muskoka." You may hear of some of them, my readers, before this story is concluded.

But to return to the original "Bab," our little "Ben," he was a beauty, but he was also a sadly spoilt little boy. Father, mother, children, servants, were all his obedient subjects. He was "king of the castle" in very truth. A visitor who was staying with us when the "Bab" was about four years old, and who was a bit of a wag in his way, astonished my parents by suddenly asking them at the dinner table one day why they had not called him Moloch instead of Benjamin? "And why should we have done that?" said mother, looking surprised. "Because all the children were sacrificed to him," aptly replied the guest, much to our amusement, though mother herself did not appear to see much fun in the joke.

My sister Bet was devoted to the "Bab," and always constituted herself his special champion and protectress; and so, dear old girl, she has remained until this present day. Though she may in her inmost heart have occasionally to confess that her beloved Benjamin is not entirely free from every human frailty, yet let any one dare to hint such a thing in her presence, lo! the unhappy individual is squashed flat as a pancake in a moment; before you could say "Jack Robinson," as mother used to say.

Perhaps now would be as good a time as any to give you a few of the leading characteristics of our family band; afterwards you will get better acquainted with both them and their peculiarities.

To begin with, I have always thought it the greatest pity in the world that I was born before my sister Bet, just sixteen months before, to be strictly accurate. You see, Bet was "born to rule," and rule she did, by hook or by crook, every man-jack of us. Now, if she had been born the eldest I should meekly have submitted to my fate, and have become, in all probability, a most obedient subject to this queenly "Elizabeth"; and, though meekness is not by any means a strong trait of the Hathaways, my proud spirit would have submitted to the yoke without that burning sense of injustice which the continual brooding over those sixteen months of seniority caused in my soul. Anyway, I can only repeat, and all the junior members of the family will bear witness to the fact—BET RULED.

Of course it was for our good, as she will tell you to this day if the subject is mentioned, and as I grew older and wiser I quietly gave up the struggle, and philosophically, or for the sake of peace and quietness, submitted my will to hers. A remark which our minister made in his sermon one Sunday morning greatly helped me to this wise conclusion. He was speaking of children and of their management. He said, "If you will take notice, in every family there is

a 'Bismarck.' It may be the eldest or youngest, a boy or a girl, but you will, find, if you observe carefully, there is generally one ruler and the others have to fall into line sooner or later." Now Bet happened to be seated next to me in the family pew when this pointed home-truth was uttered. I gave her a kick on the near shin with my heel which made her jump, and she assured me solemnly, as we were walking home, that she would bear the mark of that kick till her dying day. There is something else will stick to her till her dying day, and that is the name "Bismarck," affectionately shortened by her subjects to "Bizzy" when very good-humored. This is enough of Bet for the present.

We will now proceed to Sue and Joe. These were the two who most resembled my mother; they were plump and inherited her beautiful rosy complexion. Sue has never lost her roses, even now. She was the pretty one of the family, but a great tease. She had lovers before she entered her teens, and nearly tormented them to death. Joe was a tease, too, full of fun. He was of a heavier build—strong and hearty. Joe and I always got on well together as children, and I counted it as a great compliment when he said to me one day very seriously, "Nan, if you were not my sister I would marry you."

Next came our little Winnie—our "Welsh woman," as we called her, being born at Carnarvon; as pretty

and sweet a maid as you would meet in a day's march, but with a sharp little tongue of her own, and ever-ready wit, which finds out the weak points in everyone's armor, and shoots her small darts with a very sure aim. I don't think I need refer to the "Bab" again at present.

I must not forget to tell you what mother said of us, though, that, without exception, we had the strongest wills of any children she had ever met with, and such "gifts o' the gab" as we all possessed she never did see. Poor mother! she had something to endure with us in our young days. As for myself, the eldest of our family group, I think the less said the better. You know the story of the ugly duckling, only the swan has never developed in me, maybe never will.

As we grew older of course my father's expenses began to increase, and the revenue from the farm did not increase in proportion, indeed; though he gained health by taking to farming, he lost money. The rents in England at that time were very high, all the profits appeared to go into the landlord's pocket. About this time, too, commenced a period of depression, bad crops, bad weather, which year after year seemed to get worse. I expect it was this which first caused my father, like many another, to turn his eyes in the direction of the "Golden West, where land could be had for the asking," and where, to judge by the pamphlets issued by the emigration

companies, and sent broadcast through the land, "Everything is lovely, and the goose hangs high." It was now about the beginning of the seventies, and the tide of emigration from England was setting strongly westward. "Going to America" was the common topic of conversation, and so my father caught the fever like the rest, and continued losses on the farm helped to feed its flame, till he made up his mind to cross the ocean and see for himself what this famous land was like. He was a very cautious man, and would not think of moving his family till he had some idea of where he was moving them to; besides my mother was very strongly averse to any thought of change. She and my father were approaching middle age, and it is as hard as uprooting an old tree to move anyone in advanced life. However, he was so strongly bent on at least seeing the new land that at last a compromise was effected between them. He should go first alone, and if after visiting the country he still thought it advisable to move, mother would give in and we would all go.

This programme was carried out, and in the month of August, 1870, father sailed from Liverpool for New York, intending to visit Canada. He spent about six weeks going around this country. He visited Niagara, Toronto, Hamilton, Barrie, and came as far North as the Georgian Bay, but did not settle definitely on any spot.

He kept a very interesting diary while he was

travelling around here, and sent it home to us in England in weekly instalments. Great was the excitement when these arrived. The precious pages, after being read and re-read at home, were sent round to friends in the village, and then made a wider circuit through the post. I have some of them in my possession still, one with his impressions of Toronto, which I, when reading, had little thought would be my home for so many years. He said he liked Toronto, it was the most comfortable English-looking place he had struck yet, but he said it was very flat, "you could see over the whole city if you stood on an office stool in the street"; that no one could lose their way, for the streets were all straight and crossed each other in squares, making the city look like a large patch-work quilt; but it was bright and clean looking, and had some fine buildings. He mentions Osgoode Hall and the University amongst others. Thus was our far-famed city of Toronto described to us for the first time.

When my father returned, in the beginning of October, he had fully decided it would be best for us to emigrate, so he proceeded forthwith to make arrangements for leaving the farm the following spring, and starting life anew in the far-off land of Canada.

CHAPTER II.

FAREWELL TO ENGLAND.

"'But alas! that we should go,'
Sang the farewell voices then,
'From the homesteads warm and low,
By the brook and in the glen;
But woe for that sweet shade
Of the flowering orchard trees,
Where first our children played
Midst the birds and honey-bees;
But oh! the grey church-tower,
And the sound of Sabbath bell,
And the shelter'd garden bower,
We have bid them all farewell –
Home, home, and friends, farewell!'"

—*Mrs. Hemans.*

WE sailed from England in the month of March, 1871, on board the steamship *Peruvian*, of the Allan Line. We had spent the two previous days in Liverpool while father was looking after our household effects and seeing them safely stowed away on board, for though mother had not been allowed to bring with her one-half of the things she wished to, there was a pretty mountainous pile of baggage all the same. Two or three of our friends came with us to Liverpool to see us off, and, so far as

my recollections go, this day or two in Liverpool was not at all unpleasant. We girls were delighted with the shops and could have spent all the time looking in the windows at so many gay and pretty things. We had not much money to spend, it is true, and what we had was expended on such small necessaries as pins, needles, buttons, tapes, cotton, etc., of which we laid in a stock sufficient to last us for the rest of our lives, having an idea that we should never be able to obtain such commodities in Canada. Sue was most anxious about the hairpins, for it was the time chignons were worn, and Sue had just started an enormous one. She had invested all her small capital in hairpins, but still was doubtful whether she had sufficient in case she lived to be very old, so the last evening begged another half-crown from father and rushed out madly to buy more. How many times we have laughed together over the funny ideas we had about this country. We were nearly as bad as the Irishman you have read of who, when he first saw New York from the deck of the vessel on which he had crossed the Atlantic, cried out, to the great amusement of the other passengers, "That New York! Holy Saints preserve us, and sure I thought New York was a howling wilderness." I think there are quite a few folks across the water who are about as ignorant of what awaits them when they come here.

The morning we sailed was dull and wet. Doesn't

it always rain in Liverpool? Poor Bet, just before we got on the tender which was waiting to take us aboard, stamped her foot on the wharf and said with a touch of pathos, "My last step on English ground." Strange to say, she is almost the only one of us who has never returned for a visit to England. I have been several times, and father and mother both went back on a visit, so Bet's speech was quite prophetical.

Our voyage was rough, cold and unpleasant. We were all seasick and miserable the first few days. After that we revived somewhat, with the exception of poor Sue, who is a most miserable sailor. She is one of those unfortunates whom the very sight and smell of the sea seem to act upon as an emetic. She is sick before the vessel starts, and continues so till she reaches land again. Our dear mother bore up well, and was the comfort and support of the whole lot. What should we have done without her?

We landed at Portland, Maine, and went from thence by rail to Toronto, passing through Montreal on our way. It was bitterly cold when we arrived, late in the evening, in Toronto; everything was frozen up hard and fast. Poor mother, tired and worn out with the journey and the care of all the children, declared she would go no farther. "She wasn't going to the backwoods," she said, "to be devoured by wild beasts or savage Indians," for we had very vague ideas then of these northern wilds. We young ones had read some of Cooper's novels, and the very name of

Indians made our blood curdle. Why one night, when the "Bab" in his sleep seized hold of Bet's top-knot, she roused the whole household with her shrieks of murder, thinking the Indians were scalping her. So you can imagine, when our minds were thus filled with terror of the backwoods, how strongly we all supported mother in her desire to stay in Toronto, at least for a while. My father perhaps yielded to our persuasions more readily than he otherwise would have done from the fact that he was feeling anything but well himself; the strain had told upon him, and he had a touch of his old complaint, so I think was not sorry to rest for a while.

To find a place to rest in, though, seemed as if it would prove a considerable difficulty. The first night we had slept at an hotel near the station, but our expenses had already been so heavy, and the family purse was growing so light, that cheaper lodgings must be found, and economy, strict economy, be the order of the day. So, after beakfast the first morning, mother, accompanied by Bet and Sue, leaving me in charge of the younger ones, started off in search of a suitable boarding-house. Oh! what a weary quest it proved. The doors they knocked at, the steps they climbed, the streets they traversed with no success. "Just out from England, six in family"!—slam went the doors in their astonished faces.

Here I must make a slight digression in order to dispel an illusion which we, in common, I think, with

all newly arrived emigrants, fondly hugged to our breasts, namely, that the words "just out from England," act as a magic charm to open every heart, throw wide every door, obtain instant employment and insure highest wages. What a fatal mistake! No words you could utter would so surely destroy all your hopes. How many times have I seen, since living in Toronto, as I have been gazing from my window into the street, the forlorn looking groups walking along, dragging babies and bundles, with "just out from England" stamped upon them as plainly as if it had been done with a branding-iron, so that all who run could read. How my heart went out in sympathy to those homeless wanderers in a strange land. What advice would I like to have given them, every one, if I only had the chance? Just this—"Forget, my dear friends, as soon as you possibly can, the land of your birth, whether it be England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales! Don't 'make haste' to do so, but 'hurry up.' 'Hustle' to rid yourself of your 'Cockney twang,' or your 'country dialect,' whichever it happens to be. Don't, on applying for work, meekly ask in a hang-dog kind of a way, 'Please, can I speak to the guv'ner?' but step up smartly and say, 'Is the boss in?' Commence 'right away' to call your dinner lunch and your tea supper; don't talk of your waist-coat and trousers—say vest and pants; don't say fortnight, it is an unknown duration of time here,

just say 'two weeks.' When your wife visits the stores, not shops, tell her to ask for a 'spool of thread,' not a 'reel of cotton.' When she wants calico tell her to ask for cotton, when she wants print ask for calico. Don't tell your children, when they are crying, to 'give over and stop roaring,' but yell at them to 'shut up and quit that squalling.' Don't try to comfort them by sending for a 'pen'orth of sweeties,' but five cents' worth of candies. Don't speak of 'buckets,' say pails, and if they unfortunately 'run out' say leak. Don't, above all, speak of 'pubs,' or visit them either. Do your level best to give the letter H its proper place in words to which it belongs, don't use it as an advance guard before every vowel.

I might go on with "don'ts" unlimited; but even attention to these few I have mentioned will be of service, as you will find out if you are not too wise in your own conceit to give them a fair trial. If I had attended to them myself when I came a "greenhorn" to this country I might have been saved considerable trouble and not a few mortifications; but, like some others who have come after me, I was full of conceit and aired my ignorance on every possible occasion. Well do I remember, when I took a situation in a store on Yonge Street, the first mistake I made. I was left in charge while the owner was at breakfast. A small boy entered and advancing to the counter asked for a "copper pencil." "What do you mean?" I said, looking at him rather disdainfully,

and when he repeated his request, "'Copper pencils,' I never heard of such a thing! You must mean a lead pencil." "No!" "Colored pencils, red or blue?" I suggested. He shook his small head vigorously. "Well, I give it up," I said, and told him in a rather high and lofty manner he had better go home to his mother and ask her to explain what a "copper pencil" was. The little chap made for the shop door, and I, following him to see which way he went, overheard his remark to another small boy, evidently waiting for him, "The blooming idiot in here don't know what a copper pencil is," at the same time showing the cent in his hand. In a moment it flashed across me what he meant, and, opening the door, I beckoned him back and gave him the slate pencil he wanted in exchange for his copper—feeling pretty small, too, and thankful in my heart there was no one in the store at the time but myself.

But we are leaving mother and Bet too long on those doorsteps, so let us return to them. After two or three days spent in trudging around in the snow and sleet, the March winds howling round the bleak street corners (which it does with a more special vim in Toronto than anywhere else, I think), mother succeeded in coaxing a good-natured Irish woman, named Derrigan—who kept an untidy looking boarding house near Yonge Street—to take us in till my father was better and able to look round and decide what we should do. She could only let us have two

bedrooms, so we were packed like sardines in a box (the eight of us). Still we were thankful to get even this and wisely determined to make the best of it. Fortunately we were all young and vigorous, and the Hathaways are blessed with an inexhaustible supply of humor. You remember George Macdonald calls it "the God-given sense of humor," and I quite agree with him, for what is there helps us so much when things go wrong and everybody seems at loggerheads as to be able to see the funny side of it all and meet our troubles with a laugh instead of a frown. I believe at this time my father and mother would have become quite homesick and despondent had it not been for our lively appreciation of everything going on around us, our unceasing questions, and the fun we took out of even the unpleasant things.

Oh! such discussions as we used to have about what we were each one going to earn towards replenishing the family exchequer. Bet and Sue had a fancy for millinery. They had always been very successful in adorning themselves, why shouldn't they adorn others? Joe, who was now a strong, good-looking lad of sixteen, wanted to go into the country to some farmer and learn more of Canadian ways of farming. I was fondly hoping to get a situation as daily governess, as I had received a fairly good education and a smattering of accomplishments.

Alas for all our talk and plans, nothing but disappointments awaited us.

Bet and Sue, after a hard week's work tramping around the city, returned one afternoon in high glee. They informed us triumphantly that they were both engaged on trial, and to go the next morning to a wholesale millinery place. They came back at dinner time next day not quite so jubilant, in fact we remarked amongst ourselves after they had returned to their work for the afternoon, "they both looked rather depressed." Shortly after six they once more arrived home, this time with very sad countenances, eyes red, noses ditto.

They soon poured the story of their woes into our sympathizing ears. The forewoman of the trimming department had given them, in the morning of their arrival, a dozen cheap straw hats, and one trimmed as a pattern. They had faithfully and laboriously copied this, and in their estimation the copies looked even better than the original; but when the forewoman came around on her tour of inspection at the end of the day, and Bet ventured meekly to ask what remuneration they might expect per dozen for trimming, she savagely took hold of one of the hats, said their work was no good, tore off the trimming, stormed away at them for some time and then ended up by saying, "You'll have to come two or three months and then we'll talk about paying." Poor girls! we did our best to comfort them, and they didn't go back.

More tramping followed, then another engagement;

this time at a factory with sewing-machines run by steam power. Here they might have stayed awhile had not an accident happened to one of the young girls employed there. She had a beautiful head of hair, which she wore hanging over her shoulders, and, by some terrible mischance, it got caught in the machinery, winding up until her scalp was nearly torn off. The effect of this accident was to make the other girls very nervous, and a few days after, some small article dropping between the revolving wheels caused them to make a loud rattling noise. The girls at work, startled by this, and afraid of another accident, all made a wild rush for the narrow stairway. Crazed with fear as they were, their wild stampede would no doubt have ended disastrously for many of them, had it not been for the presence of mind of the foreman, who rushed in front of the opening to the stairway and caught hold of the two foremost girls, one of whom was my sister Sue, telling them to go back to their work, and explaining the reason of the noise. My sister always says this man saved her life, for really she meant to throw herself down the stairs, and the others would have surely followed her. This scare was enough for my tender-hearted mother, so thus ended the factory episode.

Meantime, I had not been idle; I had spent my last cent in advertising for the governess situation, and most of my time in searching the papers and answering any advertisements I thought suitable. No

one seemed to want a daily governess in Toronto. There were lots of servants wanted, though, just as there are now; but don't forget, I was "just out from England" and full of English ideas, or I might easily have got a situation as a nurse, and been better off, and better paid, than as a governess. However, just at this time when money was getting scarce and things looking rather black for us, "Providence opened a door," as dear mother said, and we made a fresh start in another direction.

I told you we were boarding at the house of a Mrs. Derrigan, but there was also a Mr. Derrigan, and that's where the trouble came in. He was fonder of whiskey than either water or tea, and in consequence matrimonial squabbles were not infrequent, and what you might call lively at times.

Mrs. Derrigan, who often confided her troubles to mother, told her one day that at last she had made up her mind to give up housekeeping. She had got sick and tired of these continued outbreaks on Mr. Derrigan's part, and would return to her friends until he returned to his senses. Now, when my mother heard this she conceived the plan, and bravely made up her mind to execute it, namely, to rent the house herself when Mrs. Derrigan vacated it, and start a boarding-house on her own account. She reasoned it out in this way: If father did go to Muskoka, and take up a government grant of land, it would be some time before he had a clearing made

and a house put up on it, and in the meantime what were we to live on? Whereas, if she started a boarding-house in Toronto, we girls could do the housework, and she could keep us at home under her wing, and yet we should be earning a living. She had seen enough during the few weeks we had boarded with Mrs. Derrigan to convince her that, with proper management, money might be made in a boarding-house; and if we were provided for in this way it would leave my father at liberty to take up the land, and start preparing our future home.

Thus it was settled, and it proved to be a wise move on mother's part; for though we had our ups and downs, on the whole the venture turned out well—as you will hear.

I think from my present standpoint I can appreciate more than I was able to do in the past the fortitude and courage displayed at this time by my dear mother. She perforce of circumstances was compelled to take the helm in her own hands, and it was her perseverance and industry that brought our barque safely thro' those troubled seas of difficulty and danger.

CHAPTER III.

OUR SOJOURN IN TORONTO.

"And though thou art busiest with small things,
Though menial thy labor may be,
Do thy utmost in that, and in all things
Thou still shall be noble and free.
Be to every man just, and to woman
Be gentle, and tender and true;
For thine own do thy best, but for no man
Do less than a brother should do."

—*Jean Ingelow.*

OH! what a cleaning, scrubbing, and general grubbing out of holes and corners we had after the departure of Mrs. Derrigan and all her possessions. Did I say all her possessions? Well, that's not so, for she left enough old rubbish to fill twenty dust-bins; we girls thought we would never finish carrying out the old shoes, old clothes, bushels of old papers, and dozens of empty bottles, she left behind her. Then we started cleaning; father did the painting, mother unpacked her stores and brought out curtains and covers, cushions and tablecloths. We made washstands and dressing tables out of the old packing-cases covered with muslin. We tried to spread out our belongings to their farthest extent, yet, do our utmost, we had to buy some furniture before we could get

boarders, and where was the money to come from, for we had reached the bottom of our purse.

Mother's resources were not exhausted yet, though. She had made the acquaintance, through buying sor e small articles at his store, of a furniture dealer on Queen Street West. He was an Englishman, but had been in Canada many years and got on well. To this man mother resolved to go and, laying the case before him, ask if he would supply the needed furniture and accept payment for it in monthly instalments. There was no Adams Furnishing Company in those days and it was very hard for strangers to obtain credit, but I feel sure mother's honest face made such an impression on the man that he quite willingly acceded to her request, and once more the Hathaway family were on their legs, and started on a fresh race for fortune. We soon got our first boarders. Most of those we did get stayed, and in the fall we had a party of young men students come, five of them, who remained with us all winter, part of them returning the next year.

Amongst one of our first boarders was a fine intelligent looking young Englishman, in whom my father was particularly interested, for he had ju t come from Muskoka. His name was John Roberts. He had come out from England two years previous with some friends of his, a young couple named Barton, who had taken up land on the shores of Lake Joseph and built a decent log house there. Unfortunately

Mr. Barton had the seeds of consumption strongly rooted in his constitution before leaving England, and though he had picked up for awhile in the pure air and pine woods of Muskoka, it was too late to do more than prolong his life, and now he had become so sick that, bringing his young wife and child with him, he had come to Toronto to die. They had engaged rooms and were now living not many doors from us, and, naturally, we all soon became very much interested in them and their sad story.

Mr. Roberts was often with his sick friend, and took my father to see him, and, to make a long story short, in the course of a few weeks an arrangement was made between my father and Mr. Barton by which his house and land on Lake Joseph were rented to my father for three years, the agreement being that so many more acres—I think it was five—should be added to the clearing every year. My father thought by taking up some of the adjacent lots for himself he would be enabled to make a small clearing and build a shanty on his own land before the expiration of the three years.

My father did not intend going to Muskoka till the following spring, so we had the winter altogether in our new home with the exception of my brother Joe, who had gone to a farmer's in the country.

Shortly before Christmas I was fortunate enough to obtain a good situation in a store on Yonge street, and here I remained for many years, and was able to

be of some little help to my dear father and mother in several ways. I was always at home on Sundays, and very happy times we had. The memory of those Sunday evenings in the old boarding-house will never pass away. As for mother's boarders, we can truly say we were brought into close contact with "all sorts and conditions of men," bad, good and indifferent. It is rather hard on our own sex to say that after a little experience mother preferred gentlemen to ladies as boarders. I believe, too, from what I have heard since, that this preference is very widespread ; so, ladies, you must look out for your laurels ; it will never do to let men get ahead of us in that style.

We found out something else, too, by experience, and that was the fact that far worse than people "just out from England" are those who are always "expecting money from England." I can only warn the unwary, if there are any of this class round town nowadays, "of such beware, they are fooling thee."

My sisters being young, lively, and good-looking, it naturally followed that they soon had their admirers amongst the young men, and there was lots of fun. Sue, who was always reckoned the beauty of the family, was also the greatest flirt, and the way she pulled the strings to make those manly puppets dance was a caution. She made good use of them, too. She had her wits about her. Their fetching and carrying powers were made to lighten her share

of the domestic work in more ways than one. I was considerably amused at the way they ran around for her—up and down stairs, with coal-scuttles, pails of water, armfuls of wood, tending their own stoves, riddling their own cinders ; I believe in one or two badly-gone cases it even went as far as making their own beds, all this in the hope of winning one smile or word of thanks from the fair Sue. They brought her flowers in the summer time, too; they took her skating and sleigh-riding in the winter ; they fairly fought amongst themselves for her favours, like the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown, but so far the motto of the lovely Sue had been, "A fair field for all and favors to none."

It was otherwise with Bet, and from the appearance of things her heart was in great danger of passing out of her own possession into that of a young Englishman who had boarded with us all winter. He was alone in Canada, and I think it is when in distant countries we meet one of our own land the tie of nationality seems the strongest, and our hearts go out in good-fellowship towards our fellow exiles.

It struck us as very remarkable, when we first arrived here, how the different societies were formed by the different countrymen—"Sons of England," "Orangemen," "St. George's Society," no end of them. This is all very well, but I think where the newly-arrived in this country make their mistake is in so continually bragging up their own land and disparag-

ing Canada. Have they not come here (generally speaking) because they could not succeed at home, and were in hopes by coming they would better their condition, which they nearly always do? Why, then, should they so disgust the "Canucks" with their continual growling and grunting about this "blawsted country" and all it contains.

I think it is greatly owing to this grumbling spirit on their part that the feeling I was speaking of previously against new arrivals has arisen.

"They do blow so," I have heard Canadians say, "and are so dead struck on themselves and their own way of doing things that we can make nothing of them."

Well, I don't want you to suppose that Bet's young man was of this stamp. He seemed made up of nothing but good temper and jollity. No cloud ever seemed to overshadow his sun. He was always bright and happy. He was earning a good livelihood, and the affair between him and Bet looked as if it might end seriously. As for my dear mother (I must say a few words of my mother again here), nothing, I suppose, pleased her so much as to see her daughters appreciated. We were all swans to her, dear soul, though to others we may only have appeared the commonest of ducklings. How true the saying that a mother lives her own life over again in that of her daughters, and takes more pleasure in seeing their happiness than ever she did in her own.

But spring was coming. My father was in better health and spirits with the budding of the leaves. His longing to be up and doing returned in full force. We had come through the first winter in Canada and conquered many of the hardships which are inseparable from the lot of the stranger of straitened means on first arriving in this land. But now father was looking forward, with renewed health and spirits, to the time when he should possess a home and farm of his own. Little Ben, now twelve years old, was wild to go with him, and mother at last consented. So preparations were made and in the month of May they started for the north. Muskoka, at last, say my readers; yes, after this long preamble and explanation, Muskoka at last.

CHAPTER IV.

MUSKOKA THIRTY YEARS AGO.

"We will give the names of our fearless race
To each bright river whose course we trace;
And will leave our mem'ry with mounts and floods,
And the path of our daring in boundless woods;
And our works unto many a lake's green shore,
Where the Indians' graves lay alone before."

—*Mrs. Hemans.*

IT is hardly possible to believe that only thirty-five years ago this part of Muskoka was almost an unknown country. I have just been reading a little pamphlet published a few months ago by Mr. A. P. Cockburn, who may rightly be called the father of the Muskoka Navigation Company. In it he says that in 1865 none of this region had even been surveyed by the Government.

The first work of any importance done here was the construction of the locks at Port Carling, which connected Muskoka Lake with Rosseau. This was followed by the canal being cut and bridged at Port Sandfield, connecting Lake Joseph with Rosseau, thus completing the direct route from Gravenhurst to Port Cockburn. The first boat on Lake Muskoka was the *Wenonah*, launched at Gravenhurst in June of

1866. The old *Nipissing* followed in 1871—this is the boat which was burnt in 1885.

At the time my father started for Muskoka, May 1873, the Northern Railway ran no farther than Washago. Thence our travellers had to go by stage to Gravenhurst, a long drive and over very rough roads, so that they were thankful to see Lake Muskoka and the welcome steamboat awaiting them. They came on this as far as Port Carling, on the Indian River, and from here they had to trust to their own devices for further progress. Mr. Roberts had, however, given them some pointers before leaving Toronto, and as there were a few English settlers already in this neighbourhood, they were fortunate enough to obtain accommodation for the night, and a rowboat in the morning with which to proceed to their destination; they also received numberless instructions as to the route. "Dale End" was the name of Mr. Barton's place; it might have been the "world's end" from the distance it seemed to the occupants of the boat before they reached it. They had been directed to go up the Joseph River into Lake Joseph, the distance being considerably shorter, but as they rounded point after point, passed island after island, the course became almost bewildering, and they were nearly giving themselves up for lost. It was a lovely day, Nature just bursting forth in all her spring beauty—the water sparkling in the sunshine, the woods with the vivid tints of the fresh

young leaves contrasting with the sombre hues of the hemlocks and pines. The Joseph River struck them as being particularly beautiful; indeed, I think many of my readers who are familiar with these lakes will bear me out in saying that on a calm summer evening the reflections on this river are quite equal to those on the far-famed Shadow River at Rosseau.

My father was delighted with the scenery, and then and there fell "head over heels," as you may say, in love with Muskoka. This love never changed through all the labor, care and troubles of the succeeding years, it only grew stronger as long as his life lasted. They found near the passage from the river into Lake Joseph a very narrow channel; only by pushing on the rocks with their hands could they get the boat through at all. These rocks have since been blasted out and the passage made more navigable.

It was late in the afternoon when our travellers arrived at their destination. The first glimpse of "Dale End" pleased them, for it was a better house than some they had seen at Port Carling; indeed at that time it had the reputation of being quite a fine house. It possessed a bedroom, divided from the living room, and also a big loft overhead, to which you climbed by a ladder. Then there was a shed—one could hardly dignify it by the name of barn—a good-sized clearing, and an attempt at a garden.

On entering the house they found that it contained

a rusty cooking-stove, a rough table or two, and some chairs; in the other room, a home-made bedstead and mattress. These, with a few kitchen utensils, completed the furniture.

The house stood not many yards from the lake, so they soon hauled up their little stock of provisions, bedding, and sundries from the boat and proceeded to make themselves at home. They lit a fire and made some tea, after which refreshment they went outside again to view their surroundings. So far as my father could judge, the place fully realized his expectations, so, after exploring in various directions until night came on, they returned to the house, made up their bed, and retired to rest in quite a happy frame of mind.

Next morning they were up bright and early, and ready to start work, for father was anxious to get some seeds in the ground as soon as possible. Things did not go so badly with them at first; it was toward the end of the month, and after there had been a few hot days, their troubles began, for the mosquitoes arrived in force. Oh! the mosquitoes in those days! We think them bad at certain times of the year now, but if we listen to the stories of some of the old settlers we shall soon discover they were a hundred times worse then. Of course, my father and poor little Ben were new arrivals, too, and in that fact lies the road to the special favor and attentions of these bloodthirsty hordes.

They dote on fresh blood. They attack every stranger with a most lively zest, and "forsaking all others, cling only unto him" with a most exasperating tenacity. In vain did father and Ben make use of every known remedy. They nearly blinded themselves with "smudges." They anointed themselves all over with pork fat and carbolic, till between the smoke and the grease they looked like nothing else so much as a couple of "Yarmouth bloaters." They tried sleeping in the loft, then out on the lake in the boat, then under the boat on the shore, all to no purpose. The pesky things continued to draw their life blood at a most alarming rate; even when eating their meals the smudge pot had to be smoking under the table, or the enemy would have been so aggressive they would never have been able to eat.

One morning, early, my father had to row to Port Carling, which was the nearest post office. He had written his letters the evening before, and as soon as breakfast was over he made a start. An hour or two later, Benny, who was at work in the field, saw father madly rushing across the clearing to the house, a cloud of mosquitoes in his wake. Ben, quite alarmed, ran to see what had happened. He found poor Dad, quite exhausted, wiping the perspiration from his face, which was covered with inflamed knobs as big as marbles, and gave him a somewhat comical appearance. "My eyes, sir!" he broke out (this is an old English expression, and a favorite expletive of

my father's when at all excited), "I've had a fearful fight! The mosquitoes wouldn't let me go to the post. I did my best, and got as far as the river, but there they met me in swarms, and, though I made a dead stand at first, laid down my oars and fairly fought them, it was no good; the minute I took hold of the oars again they made another set on me, and at last I had to give in and come back as soon as I could. Never saw anything like it. They followed me all the way home!" I think this adventure was the climax. Perhaps this victory satisfied them for awhile; anyway, to the great relief of father and Ben, a strong breeze sprang up, the weather got cooler, and the mosquitoes took a rest.

Now a word or two about the fare which these pioneers enjoyed. There was certainly not much variety about it. They had some salt pork, and father baked bread; then they had all the fish they could catch, and soon became quite expert fishermen. This was the evening amusement for them both. And you all know the taste of Muskoka bass; "it can't be beat." The only difficulty was the bait. It was much easier in those days to catch the fish than to catch the worm. Every worm meant a fish, so they were valuable and, like other valuables, extremely scarce; but there were minnows to be had, and these served their purpose, or sometimes they tried a strip of fat pork. Then, several times during the summer, we sent up a box from Toronto stuffed full of gro-

ceries and provisions of various kinds. We found we had to be careful what we put in the box, though, for there was no "Muskoka Express" in those days to bring you fruit gathered in Toronto in the morning and other dainties in time for your six o'clock tea. No! the box was often a week on its way, and I have a letter by me now from my father, written about this time, in which he says, "The box arrived on Monday, but it had been so long on the way that the meat had gone bad, and all the other things spoilt in consequence. Ben almost cried over the big plum cake, it smelled so bad. He is baking it anew in the sun to see if it will sweeten it. We have spread out the tea, too, and hope we may be able to use it."

We felt as sorry as they did when we got this letter, for we knew what a disappointment it would be to them, poor things, living on such hard fare, but it made us more careful for the future.

My father worked hard during this summer. At times he hired one of the settlers for a few days to help him, and before he came down to Toronto in the fall he made arrangements to have the five acres chopped, ready for clearing up in the spring. He had also decided on certain lots, not far distant, which he meant to apply for to the government grant agency, when he returned to Toronto. He was very anxious mother should pay him a visit and see the spot he had chosen, but this pleasure had to be deferred until the following spring. He returned to

Toronto about the end of September with Ben, who had grown so tall and looked so well mother could do nothing the first evening but feast her eyes on his dear face. My father, too, was looking first-rate. We all were delighted to have them back, and I think the tongues of the Hathaways never wagged faster than they did that night. How interested we all were in everything that had befallen them. We could not ask enough questions about this lovely Muskoka, and all looked forward with longing eyes to the day when we should see it for ourselves.

We had also many things of interest to tell father. One very important piece of information was whispered blushingly into his ear that first night—"Bet was engaged." Her sweetheart (the young Englishman I told you of) was very anxious, too, that the wedding should be soon. He wanted to have it at Christmas. We girls, of course, were very much interested, as this would be the first marriage in the family. We all felt it was the right thing that Bet's should be first; "wasn't she always first in everything?" And so, with my father's and mother's consent, Christmas Eve was fixed upon as the happy day, and preparations began in earnest.

We made all the modest trousseau ourselves except the wedding dress; we were rather scared of tackling that, so entrusted it to a dressmaker. We all had a hand, I think, in concocting the wedding cake. I know I did the decorative part, and very handsome

we all thought it looked when finished. Sue and Winnie were the bridesmaids. I think we fixed upon Christmas Eve for the wedding because all the students who were boarding with us would be gone, and also Mr. Baylis would have some holidays and be able to take Bet away for a few days. The wedding was quiet, but pretty, and took place in the parlor, which at that time seemed very strange to our English ideas. The only *contretemps* occurred towards the end of the ceremony.

Winnie, it appears, had been teasing the bridegroom for some days beforehand by boasting of her determination to secure the first kiss from the bride. He was equally as determined that prize should be his own, so they were both watching for the first chance, and, being a little too eager, when the clergyman made a slight pause in the service, thinking he had concluded, they fell simultaneously upon the bride's neck. We never knew which was first, both positively claiming the victory, but the minister put an end to the dispute by saying with a very grave face, "Pardon me, my friends, but if you will kindly allow me to complete the ceremony first you can then perform the kissing."

We were slightly abashed, and Winnie was afterwards called out of the room by mother and told that her "conduct was simply disgraceful"; but scoldings had no more effect on Miss Winnie than water on a duck's back. After the wedding breakfast

—or rather supper—the happy pair took their departure, first to Hamilton and then Niagara, but they were to return before January 11th, as that would be our mother's and father's silver wedding day and we were to have a party.

The students were back again, and the bride appeared in her wedding-dress. We demolished the rest of the wedding cake and drank to the health of the "two bridal couples," as we persisted in calling them, everybody assuring dear mother she looked nearly as young as her daughter. We finished off with "Sir Roger de Coverly" in grand style. And so ended our wedding festivities, and we returned to the prose of everyday life. Bet's new home was not far away, and we went often to see her, and she came to our assistance when there was any extra work on hand.

I forget whether I told you Ben started to go to school again in the fall, and was working hard to make an extra good showing in the spring, so that there might be no excuse to prevent him returning to Muskoka with father. However, as soon as navigation opened father went alone, and Ben was comforted by the promise of being mother's escort a month later, when she was to pay her first visit to her future home. Bet offered to come and stay with us while mother was away, and we were by no means dull, I can assure you.

We did one daring deed during her absence, Miss

Winnie being the prime instigator. Mother had an occasional boarder, an actor, who had given her a lot of trouble, for she could never get any money from him and he would return time after time, whenever he was acting in Toronto, and, with the greatest assurance in the world, bamboozle my good-natured mother in a kind of free and easy style into once more taking him in. He always contrived to get the best of everything going and was a natural dead-beat.

Well, it happened one day during mother's absence the boarders had finished dinner, and we girls were just sitting down to finish what they had left, when in stalked this Mr. Orlando Hawkins, with two fellow actors, and, proceeding straight upstairs to the room which he generally occupied, sent word down by one of the other boarders ordering "dinner at once for himself and two friends," Now this seemed carrying things in rather too high-handed a way, and raised our ire, for he already owed us over fifty dollars, which we felt sure we should never get; so we held a hurried consultation and came to the decision that now was the time to do the deed—we had the reins of government in our own hands, and we would give this gentleman his walking ticket. We sent Bet upstairs as spokeswoman, she being the most valiant, and she scored a victory after a short but severe combat.

Winnie and I, peeping from the lower windows, saw to our delight the trio departing, bag and baggage, in

high dudgeon, shaking the very dust from their feet with indignation.

"Bless you, Bet! forever bless you!" cried Winnie, throwing her arms around Bet's neck, as she came downstairs, "You have done a brave deed this day, have routed the enemy from his stronghold, and it shall be recorded in future history to your worthy praise." Well, here's the record, anyway, so her words have come true.

Before I close this chapter I must tell you that mother returned from her visit to Muskoka more than delighted with all she had seen. She preferred the position of father's land to that of Dale End; it lay surrounding a beautiful bay, gently sloping to the edge of the lake. She never tired of describing it to us, our home of the future, "Hathaway's Bay."

CHAPTER V.

BET'S BABY.

Oh! what is happiness when fear
  Starts like a pale unbidden ghost,
That steals across the banquet hall
  And spills the draught we long for most?

For when I look at her it comes—
  The fear that she may leave us soon;
So perfect in the morning light,
  How can the blossom last till noon?

The soft and shining baby hair
  Seems but a nimbus round the brow;
The sweet amazement of the eye
  Asks 'what they do in heaven now.'

I marvel what they do there, too,
  Without her in that far still land;
I tremble lest I turn and see
  Great angels in the sunbeam stand.

Great angels, whose departing wings
  Shall spread a shadow in the air,
Since having earth so bright, I fear
  Heaven be not heaven without her there.

I THINK the arrival of the first grandchild is one of the most important and exciting events in the everyday life of the world, especially when (as in our case) the young mother is one of a large family

BET'S BABY.

of brothers and sisters, and the grandparents themselves still only in ripe middle age.

See what a host of new relationships are formed by the advent of that tiny morsel of humanity: "Father," "mother," dearest of all earthly names, "grandpa," "grandma"; strange do these titles sound when uttered for the first time. Then the tribe of young uncles and aunts. Fancy our little Ben an uncle! When he realized his new dignity the fond name of "the Bab" dropped from him forever more, like the mantle of Elijah the prophet. There was a "new baby" now. She arrived early one Sunday morning, and you know the old rhyme:

> "The child that's born on the Sabbath day
> Is lucky, and bonny, and wise, and gay."

Late on the Saturday night, just as mother and I were going to bed, tired out after a hard day's work, Bet's husband violently rang the door-bell, and in a state of great excitement demanded our immediate presence at his home. His impatience would not let him stay while we hurriedly made ready, but he departed in hot haste, leaving us to follow. We found when we reached there the house all astir, doctor and nurse already in attendance.

We none of us slept that night, and, as I told you, in the early morning we heard the first faint wail of our little "Blossom." She was a very fragile blossom, though, and only the greatest care and most

loving watchfulness in those first days availed to keep her with us. But love can work wonders, and our little maid has grown to tall and lovely womanhood, the joy of all our hearts.

She was named after me, for this had been a compact between Bet and I since our childish days; her first daughter was to be Nancy, and mine was to be Bet. Well, she fulfilled her half of the bargain, anyway, and my small namesake, at the mature age of three weeks, took her first outing in my arms. Bet and her husband were to come to our house to tea, bringing the baby, so I went over early to fetch them —really, that I might have the supreme pleasure of carrying my small niece. Bet wrapped her up, before delivering her to me, in so many garments—cloaks, veils, shawls, etc.—that I was in mortal dread that she would suffocate before we reached our destination; and every few steps I had to stop and, resting my knee against a telegraph pole, open the bundle sufficiently to assure myself that the small creature who formed the kernel was still living and breathing. However, she arrived all right at her journey's end, and was safely transferred to her grandmother's arms.

Bet told us the night after the nurse departed, when she and her husband were left in sole charge of the baby, they had a terribly anxious time; not that there was anything wrong with the child, but they both, being young and ignorant of the ways and manners of babies, sat up all night watching her and worked

themselves up into such a state of nervous anxiety that they both shed tears together. In the first place, they had no idea that the respiration of an infant was so much quicker than their own, and they arrived at the conclusion that it was a symptom of high fever. Then, every time the child screwed up her little mouth, or smiled, they imagined convulsions coming on. You know there is a romantic old legend that says, "When a babe smiles in its sleep it is an angel whispering sweet things in its ear." But all the old nurses scorn this story and say, "It's the wind, just wind." But of this Bet had no knowledge, and in her case "ignorance was not bliss." How mother laughed at them! I can fancy I hear the echo of that merry laugh now. But we did have a real scare the next day, and that I will tell you about.

I heard when I went home at noon to dinner that the baby was not very well, and so, as soon as I could get away from the store in the evening, I hurried over to Bet's. When I opened her bedroom door I saw mother in a low rocking-chair at the foot of the bed, with the baby in her arms, and Bet kneeling before her, lamp in hand, anxiously scanning the tiny features. On catching sight of me mother burst forth in a loud voice, "Now, you've done it between you; you've killed the child!" I stood aghast and horror-stricken for a moment; then, gazing at Bet's scared face, I knew what she meant. The day before at the tea we had the first cucumber of the season, nicely

sliced, with pepper and vinegar, eked out with onions, and sending forth a most inviting smell. Mother strictly ordered Bet not to think of tasting this dainty under the most severe penalties. But Bet took the opportunity, while mother went out to replenish the teapot, of abstracting a portion of the forbidden dainty, and hastily swallowing it, at the same time slyly winking at me to keep mum. When the baby was taken sick next day, Bet, alarmed, confessed her crime to mother, and, oh my! what a dressing down she got—both of us, in fact; Bet as principal transgressor, I as accessory to the fact. But I am thankful to say we were spared further punishment and remorse, for after we had suffered two or three hours of anxiety, and after the administration of several minute doses of catnip, the baby recovered and we breathed freely once more.

When Baby Nan was two months old she was still so delicate that the doctor advised my brother-in-law to send mother and child to Muskoka for the rest of the summer. So Bet went off to father at Dale End, carrying her treasure with her. Winnie went with her, too, for she was hardly able to take the journey alone with the baby, and though Winnie could only remain a week or two, she was very anxious to take her first peep at this lovely Muskoka. They had by no means a pleasant journey, for when they reached Severn Bridge, and had mounted the stage, they found a long bridge on the way, which they had to cross, had

been burnt by bush fires, so all the passengers had to alight and walk two miles while the stage went some round-about way through the bush and rejoined them farther on. Bet said they never could have carried the baby over the burnt bridge, they were so nervous, had not some kind man, a fellow-passenger, taken her from them, and, going ahead, with encouraging words and kindly aid, landed them all safely on the other side. The roads of those days must have been terribly rough, for Winnie told us a most laughable story which happened on her return journey, a week or two later.

A man boarded the stage at Gravenhurst carrying, very carefully, a large stone jar, holding two or three gallons, the top tied over with paper. He landed it with some difficulty on to the floor of the stage, and then sat down, thinking he could hold it in an upright position with his feet. Vain hope. As soon as the horses started and the rude vehicle began to rock wildly in every direction, a steady stream of dark crimson syrup stole from the jar and spread itself insidiously around. The owner of the jar began to look rather uncomfortable, and the lady sitting next him, feeling something sticky round her feet, raised her skirts, and was amazed to find them dyed a rich claret color. At the same moment a terrific lurch sent the jar wildly careering to the other side of the stage, the soaked paper cover gave way, and a fat baby calmly asleep on its mother's knee was suddenly baptized

with two or three quarts of luscious huckleberry jam, full in its face. The commotion that followed, the gasping, half-strangled cries of the child, the indignation of the mother, and the stifled but almost uncontrollable mirth of the other passengers, drew the attention of the driver, who dismounted and came to the back of the vehicle to find out the cause of the confusion.

Winnie said, though every passenger, more or less was what you might call "jammy," and she herself was laughing till the tears rolled down her cheeks, she could not help feeling sorry for the poor unfortunate owner of the jar. The driver, when he saw the condition of things, commanded the man to hand over his precious jam to be emptied out on the roadside. In vain did the poor fellow try to avert this sacrifice by telling how he had toiled in the hot sun gathering the berries, the difficulties he had overcome in order to obtain the necessary sugar, the distance he had carried the jar that morning through the bush, the disappointment awaiting the children in Toronto, whose little mouths were even now watering in anticipation of the expected treat—his eloquence was all wasted on the hard-hearted driver. The fate of the jar was sealed, it was carried forth to destruction. What a libation! Every neck was stretched forth to see the sacrifice; even the much aggrieved baby stopped his screaming, and opened his eyes to take a peep, while his little tongue, stretched to its farthest

extent, was licking in the sweetness still adherent to mouth and nose.

"It took us some time before we all settled down in peace and quietness again," said Winnie, "and even then there were occasional outbursts of merriment from the more juvenile passengers." The poor "huckleberry man," though, wore an air of the deepest dejection, even until Toronto was reached. But this is "episodin'," as Samantha Allen would say, so we will return to Bet and her baby.

They stayed at Dale End till September, and by this time little Miss Nancy had got so plump, and had gained such a healthy color with being out of doors all day in the fresh air of Muskoka, that when I went to the station to meet them, the night of their return to Toronto, I could not believe it was the same baby. Honestly, I suspected Bet of playing a trick on me by exchanging babies for awhile with some other passenger on the train. Our little delicate Blossom developed into that pudgy creature, with a face as broad as it was long, and hardly able to see out of her eyes for fatness. I was fairly amazed. "What is there Muskoka cannot do!" I said, and often since have I found occasion to repeat the exclamation.

Well, the baby continued to grow and flourish all through the following winter and spring; by the time she was a year old she was one of the sweetest children you ever looked upon—her large violet eyes, golden curls, and gentle expression, made her quite a

picture, and people would turn round in the street and gaze at her with admiring looks.

She was very quiet—almost too good, for you know there is an old nurse's superstition about very good babies, "too good to live." The old doctor who attended Bet when she was born was profoundly astonished that she survived at all, he never thought she would; he said it was nothing short of a miracle, and when he met any of us on the street would ask, "How is that miraculous baby?"

Her troubles were to come, though; the second summer of her life proved to be a very trying one. The weather was hot and sultry, the city fairly stifling; the child seemed to wilt like a faded flower, and again her mother was ordered to take her off to Muskoka. This time, indeed, it was touch and go with our darling. I don't know whether she had been kept too long in the hot city, or whether, as people say here, the second summer is the most trying one of a child's life, it is certain that she became very ill after her arrival at Dale End, and for a few days her life hung by a thread.

Winnie again accompanied Bet, and I know that we in Toronto were terribly anxious, and it was so hard to get news. However, one morning—it was Saturday, I never forget the day—I received a letter from father saying the child was dying and Bet's husband had better go up at once. You can imagine how we felt; and the worst of it was that he could not start on his

journey till Monday morning; there was only one through train then, and Sunday intervened. What might not have happened before he could get there? I remember how I walked frantically about the house, for I fairly worshipped the child, and the hardest part of it was that I could do nothing! nothing!

To me, now looking back on the past years of my life, the most agonizing moments, the worst extremities, have been when it has been forced upon my inward consciousness, "there was nothing more could be done." Oh, how the echo of these words seems to pierce the very soul! One can bear up and put on a brave face while there is hope, and *something* to be done; but when brought face to face with that awful *nothing* then is the time when we need comfort which it is beyond the power of man to give.

I remember, as I was pacing up and down the room after reading father's letter, for it seemed impossible for me to keep still, my eyes happened to fall on a tiny white sock of the baby's, carelessly thrown on the top of my work-basket. I snatched it up and pressed it to my lips, and then the tears burst forth, and I fell on my knees beside a chair and prayed as I had never done before that God would spare the life of the child.

Did He not hear me? Yea, verily, I say He did.

Oh! what a long Saturday that was, and Sunday too. All I could do was to collect everything I could think of that would be useful to Bet and the child, if

she should be still living when her father reached her. I went to the station with him on Monday morning, and he promised to send us news as speedily as possible. We had not to wait so long, though; our dreadful suspense was nearly over. The next morning we received another letter from father saying the child was better. He knew what our anxiety would be and hastened to send us the good news.

It appears, from what I learned afterwards, that the day father wrote the letter to me Bet had passed a dreadful night with the little one. She was in a burning fever, and in the early morning as she lay on her mother's lap with half-closed eyes, her little mouth opening with a faint gasp at every breath, my father thought nothing less than that her hours, nay even her very minutes, were numbered. He could not bear the sight, and, knowing what Bet's despair would be if the worst came to pass, he made up his mind to fetch Mrs. Spencer, a kind-hearted neighbor, to stay with her, and go on himself to Port Carling in order to write to us and send the bad news. It was in this way we received the letter from him which threw us into such a state of despair.

Knowing father so well, we were fully aware that he would not have written us like that unless he had given up all hope—and so he had, for he actually believed her dying when he went for Mrs. Spencer. She, good-hearted soul, started off at once to Bet's assistance, but to her intense relief found on her arrival

at the house that the baby had taken a turn for the better.

Winnie said that after father left the child's head and face were so burning hot that Bet took a sponge and, dipping it in cool water, held it on the little brow. A few drops trickled down from the sponge and the baby eagerly sucked them in. This made Winnie, who was kneeling in front of Bet and watching the child, suggest putting her in a warm bath, which they proceeded to do. This must have been the turning point, for almost directly after she broke out into a profuse perspiration, her breathing became more natural, she fell into a sweet sleep, and, "thanks be to God," her life was spared.

Poor father, though away at Port Carling, knew nothing of this happy change, and as he rowed home, full of the most gloomy forebodings, he dreaded to approach the house. As he landed he stood still and listened. What was that he heard? A moan, no, it was Winnie's merry laugh. The relief brought by this sound, and the reaction from his sad forebodings, seemed to take all his strength away. He managed to get up to the door, but when the girls saw his ghastly face they thought something dreadful must have happened, and they called out, "Oh! what is the matter?" They thought perhaps Benny was drowned, but he reassured them and was soon all right again.

The baby, by the time her father arrived late on

the Monday evening, was very much better and able to smile at her own "dada" and enjoy the things he had brought her. We in Toronto were overjoyed when we heard the glad news and could not be thankful enough.

Have you not noticed when some heavy blow seems about to fall upon us how every smaller trouble and worry sinks away into nothingness; we wonder to ourselves how such trifles could ever have caused us to complain. Yet, I am afraid, no sooner shall God have turned our sorrow into joy than we shall still go on and worry once more over all the petty annoyances we have to encounter in this mortal life.

My sister Bet never had any more children, so little Nancy grew up as the very apple of her eye. When she was just entering her teens she lost her good father, and Bet the most loving of husbands. This was a most terrible blow, the first break in our happy family band, and we felt it very keenly both for poor Bet's sake and our own. My brother-in-law had always been of such a bright, happy disposition. He made many friends, but never an enemy. He was a thorough John Bull, both in looks and ways, jovial and good-hearted. The gap he made in our family circle has never been filled up. Cut off in the prime of his life, leaving his devoted wife a widow and his dearly loved child an orphan, it was hard to say "Thy will be done."

But God gives strength in the hour of need.

Nancy did her childish best to comfort and cheer her mother's loneliness. They seemed to live for each other. She has grown now into lovely womanhood, and as good as she is lovely. Bet returned to us to be the stay and comfort of my father's and mother's declining years. She never left them again. She was daughter, mother, sister, all in one, and I have no words with which to praise her. I can only quote what father said in a letter written to us, to be read after his death, "As for Bet, the Lord will reward her."

CHAPTER VI.

MY FIRST VISIT TO MUSKOKA, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

"God gives us with our rugged soil
The power to make it Eden-fair,
And richer fruits to crown our toil
Than summer-wedded islands bear.

Who murmurs at his lot to-day?
Who scorns his native fruit and bloom?
Or sighs for dainties far away
Beside the bounteous board of home.

Thank Heaven instead that Freedom's arm
Can change a rocky soil to gold,
That brave and generous lives can warm
A clime with northern ices cold."

—*Whittier.*

I WILL pass lightly over the next two or three years. There were no great changes in our family circle. My father had left Dale End and had removed to his own clearing in Hathaway's Bay, where he had built a rude log shanty for present use, intending to put up a better house after a time. Ben had left school—was indeed growing quite a man—and now spent his time entirely with father in Muskoka. My brother Joe was married to a Scotch-Canadian girl, a farmer's daughter, and had one little

daughter, also named after me. This "baby Nancy," though, was a complete contrast to her cousin; she was a dark-haired little gipsy. I used to call them my blonde and brunette beauties. My sister Sue was on the high road to matrimony, and even our little Winnie was beginning to follow in her footsteps,—but more of this later.

We had been now six years living in Toronto. Five of these I had been employed in the same store, and I had never yet had an opportunity of visiting Muskoka. In all these years I had been given no holidays, with the exception of the days set apart as public holidays. This was before the time of early closing—the stores were open from eight in the morning till nine or ten at night, even later on Saturdays. Think of that, you lucky employees of Eaton's and Simpson's, and I hear even you indulge in an occasional grumble. Thank your stars you are now in the twentieth century. On the public holidays, of course, we had taken all the pleasure we could; we had been to Niagara Falls two or three times, to Grimsby camp grounds once, and many times for quiet family picnics up the Humber River. This was all I had seen of Canada so far, but this summer I was to see Muskoka.

I had leave of absence for two weeks. Fourteen days to revel in country freedom. Think of it, and try to imagine my feelings. Winnie was

already up there staying with father at his shanty on the farm, and now my turn had come at last.

Now, you must not think because I had not yet seen this country with my mortal eyes that I was in a state of ignorance as regards it. No! Muskoka had been talked of, described, explained, by every member of our family who had seen it, till I had the whole thing in my mind as plainly as if it were drawn on a map; indeed, "after-dinner maps," as you might call them, were continually being drawn on our tablecloths illustrating the Muskoka lakes and the position of the Hathaway domicile. We used to take the cruet for a starting place, the sugar bowl for the terminus, the salt cellars for islands, a meandering stream of bread crumbs for the boat's course, and in this manner I became so familiarized with the geography of the lakes that I believe I almost could have steered the vessel myself from Gravenhurst onwards. So don't think for a moment that I came as a stranger to Muskoka, for I was most intimately acquainted in one sense.

The Muskoka Navigation Company had by this time advanced so far as to send one of their boats—I think it was the old *Nipissing*—twice a week to the head of Lake Joseph. This boat passed through the cut between the two lakes at Port Sandfield, and this was now the nearest point to my father's land, some miles nearer than Port Carling; so thither I was to go. We had written father the week previous, telling

him which day I was coming, and Ben was to meet me with the rowboat. Notwithstanding this, I was given minute directions by both mother and Bet in case there should be any misunderstanding and I found nobody awaiting me; all of which extra precautions came in most usefully, as you will hear.

It was a lovely morning near the end of July when I set forth, Bet and Sue walking with me to the little station behind the Market, from which the Northern trains used to start. We were all three laden like pack-horses, with baskets and bundles of every size and shape. I had an axe-handle and rake for father, a fishing-rod and trawl for Ben, a big cake and plum pudding from mother, some pots of jam and half a ham from Bet, besides sundry other articles in the edible line contributed by myself. These, with my clothes and some belongings of Winnie's, made quite a formidable pile. Still we could not resist the temptation, as we passed the Market, of adding two or three other little dainties to our store.

"Such a treat to them, poor things," we murmured in excuse, "they don't get much up there." The girls came in the car with me, and after all my properties were disposed of, between and under the seats, bade me a fond farewell, wishing over and over again that they were going with me, and sending countless messages to those already there.

I found plenty to interest me after the train started in looking out of the windows, for the

country was all new to me. I could not help, too, contrasting the convenience of the cars here with the old third-class carriages in England; but they have improved upon them since those days. As we approached Barrie I became more interested, as mother had often described the beautiful bay there, and the way in which Allandale and Barrie were situated opposite to each other. I was also interested because I had been told that here I could procure a cup of tea, so I opened my lunch basket, for I had been too excited in the morning to eat much breakfast.

Hearing the conductor, as we slowed up, call out, "Twenty minutes for refreshments!" I dismounted, and went into the little station. It was rather a poor, dismal-looking place in those days. The "refreshment room" had one bare counter, and a few plates of eatables, very uninviting looking, were scattered about on its surface.

A pert-looking girl behind it (who was busily engaged in flirting with one of the train hands) responded to my modest request for a cup of tea by thumping down in front of me a very thick cup, about half filled with a dark-colored, strongly-smelling fluid supposed to be tea. I added some milk and swallowed the decoction, meanwhile handing her a quarter in payment, meekly waiting, when I had finished, for my change; but the maid, taking no further notice of me, still continued her flirtation.

I ventured after awhile to interrupt her by saying, "There is fifteen cents coming to me, I believe."

"No! there ain't anything coming to you," she replied, "the tea is a quarter."

"Oh! but," I said, "look at the card on the wall behind you," where in large letters was printed on the list, "Cup of tea, 10c."

"Well," she said, "that means it's 10c. when you buy your lunch here, and 25c. when you don't."

For a moment I was struck dumb with amazement, then my indignation arose and I once more demanded my change, instantly, for the train was going. All to no purpose, for with an insolent smirk she still refused to hand out the money. I hated to go after being so gulled and leave her triumphant, yet I knew I must; but my glance happened to fall on a dirty-looking pumpkin pie, and snatching it up, I said, "Well! I'll have this instead of change, anyway," and made a rush for the cars, already starting to move, regained my seat and had the immense satisfaction of smashing up the pie and throwing it out of the window as we left the station. I hope no poor dog was poisoned with the remnants.

To this day I never pass Allandale station but I laugh at the recollection of this adventure, though at the time I was in anything but a laughing mood.

Mr. Roberts told me a more laughable story still, of this same station. He was going down to Toronto from Muskoka with two friends, and they were very

hungry when they arrived at Allandale. One of the friends entered the waiting-room first and approached the afore-mentioned counter to find out what he could get. Seeing three or four sausage rolls under a glass cover, he lifted it and took one, bit a piece off, spat it out in his hand and made for the door. Mr. Roberts, meanwhile, knowing nothing of this, entered and was also tempted to take a sausage roll. He acted exactly as his friend had done, whom he met at the door returning after disposing of his too savory morsel.

The third friend at this moment approached, and the two winked at each other and waited to see the fun. Number three innocently approached the counter, spied the sausage rolls, smacked his lips, lifted the lid and took one. After biting it, however, he did not act as the others had done; he quickly popped it back again under the cover and walked off in an unconcerned way, pretending to whistle till he could find an opportunity of ejecting the piece in his mouth.

At this moment the attendant (a man this time, perhaps the proprietor) returned with the tea which number one had ordered on entering. He immediately spotted the mutilated roll under the glass, and demanded, in thundering tones, "Who bit that roll?"

The other two denied the charge, but satisfied him by paying for the three rolls, and returned to the train as hungry as ever, but wisely agreeing, after

having a hearty laugh over it, to wait till they reached Toronto before attempting another feed. (N.B.—The rolls must have been under the cover a month.) But I must return to my story.

After passing Orillia and Lake Couchiching, it did not seem long before we arrived at Muskoka Wharf and saw the *Nipissing* awaiting us. Here I had, for the first time, though by no means the last, the pleasant experience of travelling back and forth, five or six times, between the cars and the boat, with my numerous belongings, before I got them all safely aboard. This was due, I dare say my readers will say, to my condition of single blessedness; but I fancy, nay, am even sure, I have seen ladies who are the proud possessors of husbands occasionally doing the same thing.

The Navigation Company's boats, at this time, used to travel first up the river to Bracebridge and back, then go on up Lake Muskoka to Port Carling; so this afforded me an opportunity of seeing the windings of that pretty river which I had so often heard mother enthusiastically describe. I enjoyed this part of the journey very much. About half way up the river we passed the Muntz homestead, and in this I was interested, for they were an old Warwickshire family; Once, when I was a child, I went on a visit to an uncle in Birmingham, who was a warm personal friend of their family. It was the time of the elections, and Mr. Muntz was the Liberal candidate. I rode in

the carriage with my uncle to the polling place. I remember there was a tremendous crowd around, and while I was waiting outside I heard them cheering. I said to uncle, when he came out, "What were they cheering for?" and he replied, "Oh! that was when I said 'Plump for Muntz.'" A very mysterious saying to me, but he afterwards kindly explained its meaning. Now the next time I come across the name is far away in the wilds of Muskoka. The world is not so wide after all, as I often remark.

After we had passed through the locks at Port Carling and were out on Lake Rosseau, I began to look out for the "Sandy Portage," as we used to call it in those days; and when we sighted the high black bridge (now a vanished landmark of the past) my heart beat high at the thought that now I should see a familiar loved face, either father's or Benny's, perhaps both. But, alas for the vanity of earthly hopes! when I had been dumped unceremoniously out into the sand-bank on the side of the cut, with all my baggage surrounding me, I saw no boat, no friendly face—in fact, no face at all was there, except my own disconsolate visage, which lengthened considerably as I gazed after the rapidly disappearing steamer.

What was to be done? I sat down on my biggest bundle to think. After thinking—which brought small comfort—I got up and began to look around. I walked up to the Rosseau end of the cut, and there, moored out in the middle of the bay, I saw a

small fishing yacht. It was apparently deserted, but as I looked at it my spirits rose and courage returned. If there were fishing yachts in the neighborhood there must be fishermen, and I was not, as I had imagined for a few minutes past, in quite as bad a plight as Robinson Crusoe, singing, "Oh solitude, where are thy charms?" I pursued my investigations. I walked to the other end of the canal—Lake Joseph—and here, to my delight, I saw a rowboat pulled up on the sandy shore, and a little farther away a party of young fellows fishing.

Now, to go back to those parting instructions which I told you had been given me before leaving Toronto, if it should happen that I found no one to meet me on arriving at Port Sandfield, I was to try and get someone with a boat to row me across the bay on the Lake Joseph side, to a farm house, which was plainly visible from the bridge, wherein dwelt a man known to my father, who would row me up to Hathaway's Bay. I at once acted on these directions, and boldly approached the fishing party. "Excuse me," I began, "but I was expecting my brother to meet me here with a boat, as I have to go quite a distance up Lake Joseph. I am afraid my friends cannot have received my letter, as there is no one here; but if I could only get across to that house (pointing to it with my finger) there is a man lives there who would take me up the lake. I see you have a boat; will one of you be good enough to row

me across?" They looked at one another and there was a hurried consultation, then one of the party stepped forward and offered his services. I thanked him and said I had a whole lot of packages lying under the bridge, so he proceeded to empty the boat of their own belongings before filling it with mine. I noticed they were well stocked with provisions, for he took out big lumps of plum cake, wedges of cheese, boxes of soda biscuits and various bottles, besides a big tea-kettle.

After the exchange had been effected, and we had pushed off, I had, as I was seated in the stern and facing him, for the first time a full view of my companion's face. I said, "Pardon me, but is your name Barrington?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Have you a sister named Nellie Barrington?" and again he said, "Yes," looking at me with surprise (he was a good-looking young fellow, tall and fair). "Well," I said to him, "I know your sister very well; we attend the same church, and I have once or twice seen you; perhaps you have heard her speak of Ann Hathaway." Yes he had, so in this way we soon became friendly and were chatting away quite pleasantly before we had crossed the bay. He left me in the boat on our arrival at the shore and went up to the house to make enquiries. Another disappointment—the man was away with his boat and would not be home till late at night.

Fortunately, however, I had one more string to my

bow. I said to Mr. Barrington, "Will you mind taking me about a quarter of a mile farther on. There is an old fisherman named Noble, who knows father well, and who has boats, too, and I think he would take me up." So we started a second time; but when we reached the old fisherman's wharf we were foiled again. Mr. Barrington went up to his little shanty, but the door was fastened and no soul around the place. This was a worse dilemma than ever.

I told Mr. Barrington he had better land me and my bundles on the little wharf and leave me there, for I did not feel like imposing any more on his kindness. I assured him the old fisherman would most likely be home soon, and that I should be all right. But he would not consent to this arrangement at all. He asked me how much farther it was to my father's place, and I told him as nearly as I could. He then good-naturedly said he would take me all the way. I protested, but with no effect, so I had to give in, and again we made a start.

The only thing which bothered him was that his companions could not get back to their yacht, he having the boat away. But he settled the matter by saying, "I am not going to desert a lady in distress, and I shall be back again before dark." I had the inward satisfaction of knowing that his comrades would not starve, anyway, with all the eatables on hand which I had seen removed from the boat, so said no more.

I soon discovered my companion to be a fine oarsman. Our boat fairly danced over the water. Many times have I gone over the same course since, but I think he did it that evening in about half the time we have ever accomplished the same distance in. As we got farther up the lake he was inclined to argue with me about the route—even as good as told me I knew nothing about it. But I stuck to my guns like a Trojan, and when we rounded the last point and came in full view of the beautiful bay, I cried, "There it is! what a picture!" Just as mother had described it—the cleared land lying all round the shore, planted with oats, which were so high and green they had completely hidden the disfiguring old stumps, so that it looked like one large field of waving green.

My companion, though, still remained incredulous, and was even rather unwilling to turn the boat down the bay. But just at this moment I espied another boat in the distance, two figures in it, one rowing, the other trawling. I had a strong suspicion who they were, and asked Mr. Barrington to shout to them. Then I lowered the parasol I was carrying completely over my figure, so as to surprise them when they drew closer. My companion called out, "Is this Mr. Hathaway's place?" They looked round and started to approach us. Sure enough, it was Winnie and Ben. I did not let them see me till the boats touched; then what joyful exclamations,

followed by explanations. They had never received my letter. Port Carling, then the nearest post-office, was a long way off, and they had all been busy with the hay. We could see my father hurrying down to the landing-place to see who his visitors were. But after he had put me ashore nothing would induce Mr. Barrington to stay and have tea with us before starting on his return journey; he hurried off as if to escape from our thanks.

And now, for fear any of my young lady readers should grow rather suspicious and imagine this to be the opening chapter of a romance, I may as well, here and now, dispel such illusions by asserting the fact, undeniably true, from that day to this I have never again set eyes on that kind young man. I hope he is still alive; he may perchance see this story and recognise himself as its hero. If so, he will at least know that his kindness to a stranger has not been forgotten.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SHANTY AT THE FARM.

> And what is home, and where? but with the loving;
> Happy thou art, who can'st so gaze on thine."
>
> —*Mrs. Hemans.*

OVER and over again, when father came down to Toronto, had I asked him to describe to me the shanty on the farm. I longed to get a picture of it in my mind. Once he said, laughingly, in reply to my persistent questioning, "Go out into the back shed, then look around, fancy it a little rougher and a little smaller and there you have it."

Many times after he said this I stood in that shed and gazed round it, doubting, incredulous. Surely he must be joking; they could not be living in a place like that. But I discovered now there was not much exaggeration in his remark. The shanty (I fancy I see it now as we walked up the hill from the lake) was built on the side of a little bluff facing the mouth of the bay, and commanding a lovely view. It was a square low hut built of rough logs, chinked with moss and mud, the floor of uneven rough boards. A few boards on poles at the back formed a shelter for the cooking-stove.

There was one small window. I don't think it had any glass, but a piece of netting tacked over to keep out the mosquitoes. The entrance was a low square doorway in front, which it was impossible for any one above medium height to pass through without either ducking down or bumping his head; so that most of the visitors had rather a rueful expression of countenance as they gazed round its interior for the first time. However, as there are two sides to every question, there were certainly two sides to that doorway, and the strangers forgot their bumps and stopped rubbing their bruised craniums to exclaim with delight when they turned round and saw the picture which that doorway framed. Never shall I forget how I feasted my eyes on its beauty that first evening. How I longed to be a great painter, that I might transfer that lovely scene to canvas so that all the world might have an opportunity of admiring.

It was near sunset, the sky one mass of glowing tints, a lovely little wooded island lying in front of the bay bathed in the glorious light, the water like a sea of glass, reflecting every tint of the sky. But what are words? How could I describe it? I just feasted my soul, gazing silently on its loveliness till my eyes filled with tears and I had to turn away. Oh, Muskoka! rough thou may'st be, uncultivated, rude and wild, but yet for thy magic charm of nature in all her beauty thou stand'st alone, without a peer.

Now to return to the inside of the shanty. There

was a table made from a packing-case, two or three benches to match, two mattresses on one side of the room with rough home-made frames instead of bedsteads, a sheet hung between them to act as screen. On a big shelf, overhanging the beds, was stowed all the heavy old lumber, barrels, shingles, tools, nails, odds and ends of all kinds collected by my father for years, enough to fill a second-hand store. This shelf with its miscellaneous contents proved to be quite a bugbear to me during my stay. Perhaps it would be more correct to say nightmare, as I often lay awake at night in mortal dread that the shelf would give way and its whole ton or so of contents precipitate themselves upon the luckless heads of poor Winnie and myself, bringing death and destruction in their train. Father and Ben did not seem at all alarmed, though sleeping under the same incubus, and their peaceful snoring in sweet harmony (alto and bass) had a calming and reassuring effect on my nerves and would soothe me off to sleep again.

One night we had a terrific thunderstorm. We were all in bed. The lightning flashes shone through every crack in the logs and illuminated the room; the thunder was dreadful, too, and the rain came down in torrents. There is no doubt Muskoka is capable of getting up a good thunderstorm.

The days of my holiday passed all too quickly. So did the provisions. The butter melted away within a week—the cakes, jam, pudding, likewise. The half

ham we still held in reserve, and had hung it up high on the log wall out of the reach of our big dog Rover. It proved, on being taken down, to have attracted unto itself enough of the lower forms of animal life, in the shape of grubs, beetles, ants, etc., to have delighted the soul of an entomologist. Father said they came out of the logs, and showed their wisdom in the choice of the fittest dwelling-place, preferring good ham to decaying wood. Winnie and I were in no humor for a joke as we saw our last standby reduced by one half before it was fit for the pot. Nevertheless we had to grin and bear it.

Our bill of fare after this did not comprise much variety. We eked out the ham as long as we could, and then we came down to bread and cucumbers.

Luckily father had a prolific cucumber bed, and the Hathaway family, young and old, dote on cucumbers. So we indulged in them *ad libitum*—not quite, though, for father thought best to limit us to one each for breakfast, dinner and tea, for fear the supply should give out. We had no vinegar, so we just peeled them down, dipped them in salt, and ate them like you do bananas. Occasionally we added to our bill of fare a feast of huckleberries gathered off the rocks, and we had porridge, but minus sugar or milk; tea ditto.

After I got back to the city I was very fond of propounding to my friends the following conundrum (all my own invention, mind you): "Which would

you rather be, in Muskoka with a tremendous appetite and very little to satisfy it, or here in the city this broiling hot weather with every luxury at command and no appetite to enjoy?" This was a poser, and often caused considerable discussion. I think, though, the first alternative nearly always gained the day.

Winnie and I spent, I think, about one-third of our time in the water. There was a fine sandy shore, shallow for a long way out. We used to take the old boat and, holding one on each side, rock back and forth and float around by the hour, both of us attired in the scantiest of costumes, for Winnie held stoutly to the theory, "the smaller the bathing dress the more enjoyable the bathing," a little strip of old lace curtain being her favorite get-up. She was also determined that old Rover should share our daily ablutions, and if he objected at any time, preferring a quiet snooze in the sun, she would tie her towel round his neck and bring him down to the water by main force. I can see her now, in her airy costume, flying down the rocks, the dog yelping and barking. If I had only been an artist! But alas! as the poet says, "The loveliest rose is born to blush unseen." So Winnie had only poor me for an admirer.

One day father had to row to Port Carling, for we were out of flour. I was eager to go, too, for I had learned to row a little; so he took me with him instead of Ben. The wind was in our favor as we went down Lake Joseph, and I remember that father

cut the top off a bushy young tree and fixed it up in the boat to act as a sail. We went rushing through the water at a fine rate. We passed Port Sandfield, the scene of my troubles, and arrived in the Indian River before noon. Here we called at a friend's house, an English settler whose daughter had boarded with mother in Toronto. We had dinner here, and father left me with them and went on to the Port for the flour. On his return, about three o'clock, we started for home. But when we got out into the open lake we found the wind very strong and dead against us. At last it became so rough, the water washing into the boat, that I had to give up my oars and sit in the stern, leaving poor old dad to battle with it alone. It seemed for the next hour as if we made no progress whatever. It took all father's strength to keep the boat in position. We were between "Ferndale" and the "Eagle's Nest," and for about two hours we were trying to pass a small house which we could see away on the mainland. We took it as a landmark, and twenty times, at short intervals, father kept asking, "Have we passed it yet?" Indeed it appeared as if we never should pass it; but at last I was able joyfully to announce, "I think it is getting behind us." I never felt more like saying "Get thee behind me, Satan," than I did to that poor unconscious cot. However, we reached, at last, a more sheltered part, behind an island, and took a rest for a few minutes, for poor father was quite played out.

By good fortune we had a big can of milk on the

boat, which our friends had given us to take home, knowing that we had no cow. This was a godsend, indeed, just then, for dad drank freely of it—finished it, in fact, before we reached home, and had to take to drinking water for the last mile. After we reached Lake Joseph the wind dropped, the moon rose, the stars shone out, we forgot our troubles, and the rest of our journey was calm and peaceful. It was late when we got home, hungry and tired it is true, but in a contented frame of mind, and quite ready to do justice to the supper which Winnie had ready for us.

N.B.—We never mentioned the milk. Dad thought their disappointment would be too great, and, as he said, "What the eye didn't see the heart wouldn't grieve for."

I forgot to tell you that we found letters awaiting us at Port Carling. A long epistle from Bet, full of injunctions and cautions, bemoaned her own fate that she could not be with us. Then I had one from my employer, graciously giving me leave to stay until the following Monday, instead of returning on Saturday; two more days of bliss for me. Then Winnie had a letter from Mr. Roberts, who was staying in Bracebridge, saying he would arrive next day to stay over Sunday. I suppose I must let you into the secret here, that Mr. Roberts and our little Winnie were lovers fond and true, so there was joy all round, and we went to bed and slept soundly in spite of the overhanging incubus.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE IN THE WOODS.

" Money's worth is house and land,
  Velvet coat and vest.
Work's worth is bread in hand,
  Aye ! and sweet rest.
Wilt thou learn what Love is worth ?
  Ah ! she sits above
Sighing, Weigh me not with earth,
  Love's worth is *Love.*"

HAVE my readers ever seen what is called a "mind autograph album"? They used to be quite the rage twenty or thirty years ago, but are rarely seen now. There is a fashion even in such things as these. Each page of these albums contained a number of questions with spaces left for replies, which the owner of the book asked his friends and acquaintances to fill in. When all the questions were answered it was supposed to contain a kind of mental photograph of the writer—I am afraid not a very truthful one, for the answers depended so much upon the mood in which the person happened to be, merry or sad, contented or the reverse.

I was looking over an old one of my own, which I came across to-day, filled in by my relatives and

friends about twenty-five years ago. I cannot help remarking two or three things. One is, the false estimate we often put upon ourselves, as the most indolent of my friends have written *industry* as the good quality they most admired; those with whom number one was ever first have written *unselfishness;* those inclined to be hypocrites have put down *truth;* those of rather a niggardly disposition, *generosity.* And so, I suppose, if we are to judge these characters correctly from the book we must go by the rule of contrary.

The other thing which struck me was that to the question, "What is the sublimest passion of which human nature is capable?" the answers of everyone throughout the book was invariably the same—Love. Old and young, saint and sinner, men and maidens, all have as if with one consent written the word Love.

My dear old grandfather, who filled in the first page, has indeed written "pure and holy Love"; and one friend has put "self-denying Love." But is not all love that is worthy of being called love, pure, holy and self-denying. It is all that and infinitely more. It is not only the "greatest thing in the world" but the greatest thing out of the world as well, for "God is Love." Those three words, which I repeated parrot-like as a child, with a very faint, if any, conception of their true meaning, have become to me in later years the very sheet-anchor of my faith and my greatest comfort; for if God is Love what can we poor sinners

expect from Him but love. Can we possibly look forward with fear, after death, to an eternity of Divine Love? Does not Christ Himself try to encourage us by likening His own great Love to us to the most tender of earthly relationships, "Like as a father pitieth his children"; "If an earthly father giveth good gifts, how much more?" etc. But I am afraid you will think this is too much like sermonizing, so will proceed to tell you something of Winnie and her lover, who are proving the truth of the old song, "Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love that makes the world go round."

My sister Winnie was one of those few and happy individuals who marry their first and only love. A child in years when she first met Mr. Roberts, five years before, her love had grown with her growth; starting as the opening bud of girlish romance, it had blossomed with time into the full-blown rose of woman's love. John Roberts, her betrothed, was just the man to win a young girl's fancy. In the first place, he was considerably older than she was, and as every one knows, juvenile maidens detest *boys* as lovers; then he had a distinguished-looking air, a bright, intelligent face, was well educated, and unusually well informed, for he had travelled considerably in his time. He was of a very hopeful disposition, which inclined him, as Winnie said, to be very fond of "counting his chickens before they were hatched"; but he was the possessor of the most varied stock of

information I think any human brain could contain. He had always been a great reader, and is to this day the universal referee for the whole district. No matter what subject one wishes to be informed upon, "ask Mr. Roberts," he can always tell you.

Of course he is an Englishman; strange to say, my sisters have all married Englishmen. His engagement to Winnie was now of some months' standing, though any hint of marriage had so far been strictly tabooed by mother. She dreaded to part with her little ewe lamb. However, as from time immemorial mothers have had to resign themselves to such partings, Miss Winnie's marriage, in the not too distant future, was a foregone conclusion. When father was taking up the government grant land for the farm, Mr. Roberts had secured a piece adjoining it of about fifty acres, and on this he intended to build a nice little house of which Winnie would be mistress. His arrrival next day, as promised, was a pleasure to us all. It was by no means his first visit to the farm, and as on all former occasions he had made himself exceedingly useful, father gave a grunt of satisfaction when he saw him, and remarked, "Ah, sir! glad to see you; just in time to help us with the oats. We'll start in as soon as you've had a bit of something to eat." Poor Mr. Roberts! But father was not quite so bad as his word; he gave them a little grace by taking forty winks after dinner, and while I washed the dishes the lovers escaped for a ramble

through the woods; and all the oats cut by Mr. Roberts that afternoon, as Benny jokingly remarked at the tea table, "could be put in your eye."

As night drew on a serious difficulty presented itself to my mind. "Where was our visitor going to sleep?" It was impossible for him to come under the "incubus." We had no other place except the little shed over the cook-stove at the back. I called Winnie aside and consulted her on the matter. "Oh," she said, "he won't mind sleeping outside; the weather is warm." "Outside!" I cried; "what! on the bare ground? "No," she said, "on a board. He has often done it; he would as soon sleep outside as inside." And so it proved, for soon after ten o'clock that night he politely wished us good-night and retired to the open. Next morning, on looking out, I saw a long plank with one end resting on a stump. "What is that?" I asked. "Oh," said Winnie, laughing, "that is Mr. Roberts' bed. Doesn't it look comfortable?" However, as he stoutly declared, on being questioned, that he had slept well and been extremely comfortable, I forbore further comment.

My happy holiday was now drawing rapidly to a close. When Sunday came, father said he would take me, after dinner, through the bush some three or four miles to see Mr. and Mrs. Spencer, who had been his nearest neighbors when he was at Dale End. So far I had not done much walking through the bush. Winnie and I had contented ourselves with

short excursions into the woods bordering our clearing. Father warned me before starting not to put on anything which would tear, and to wear my thickest boots, but little did I dream what I was going to encounter. We crossed the clearing in the burning sun and then entered the woods, glad of the welcome shade. We had not gone far before we came plump upon our lovers, seated upon an old log, Winnie looking as pretty as a picture in her blue print dress, for all the world like a bunch of forget-me-nots against the dark green moss; Mr. Roberts, hat thrown aside, gazing at her with admiring eyes. Father's significant "Humph!" and my sly laugh brought the color into both their faces, but ours was only a momentary intrusion; we left them to their bliss and soon disappeared from sight.

Father went ahead of me, partly to clear the way, and I did my best to struggle on in the rear. But, oh! preserve us! what a route! Now clambering over huge fallen logs, now sinking knee deep in soft moss and rotten wood, ducking under branches, jumping swampy places, breathlessly calling out to father to stop a minute and let me catch up to him, hot, exhausted, mosquito-bitten, I thought the journey would never end. Father seemed to find his way by chips taken out of the trees, which he called blazes, but I began to fear we were surely lost. "You said three or four miles," I ventured to remark, making a rush to catch up to him; "but surely we have

walked six or seven already; the trees don't seem quite so thick just here, though."

"Thick here!" he exclaimed, "why you are on the government road, and have been for the last twenty minutes."

Mercy on us! I hung my head abashed; such ignorance after two weeks in Muskoka, not to recognize a government road when I was actually walking on it. I wisely refrained from further speech, and before long we arrived in sight of a snake fence, the boundary of the Spencer clearing.

Mr. Spencer was an Englishman of good family who had come out soon after his marriage, and had been in Muskoka seven or eight years. He had already a family of five or six sturdy boys and girls growing up round him, and some of these were quick to spy us as we climbed the rail fence and rushed towards us, making a vigorous onslaught on my father, for he was one of their prime favorites. They seized on him bodily and marched him towards the house, but before we reached it Mr. Spencer, in his shirt-sleeves and big straw hat, came out to meet us. He gave us both a most cordial welcome, and took me in to introduce me to his wife.

She was thoroughly English-looking, fair and rosy, with a bright, happy face which did not look as if she had suffered much by "roughing it in the bush." She could tell some tales of hardship, though, I have not

the slightest doubt. It is wonderful what people did go through in those days.

I was talking to a lady last summer, and she was telling me of her first experience in Muskoka, nearly forty years ago, out Bracebridge way. She said they could obtain nothing any nearer than Orillia, and then were obliged to take just what they could get. She arrived in June, her husband having come a month or two ahead to get the house built. She said they managed all right through the summer, but when winter came they had no stove, so her husband started for Orillia to buy one. He was only able to get a little parlor cook-stove, and paid a big price for that. Then when he had succeeded in getting it home they did not know how to put it up. They cut a hole through the logs just the height of the stove, then put on an elbow and a length of pipe and thrust it through the hole.

Of course, as the weather grew colder they had to keep more fire, and the pipes would get red-hot and set fire to the wood and moss around them. This necessitated one of them sitting with a pail of water and dipper to pour over the pipes to cool them off. One day, as her husband was doing this, an old Indian came in, and after observing him for some time, asked why they did not get more pipes and cut the hole up much higher? which solution of the difficulty, strange to say, had never entered either of their heads. They took his advice, and he assisted

them to make the change, which not only added to the warmth of the room, but saved them the necessity of constantly watching the fire. We may "live and learn," you see, even in a new country.

To return to the Spencer's, their children beat anything I have ever seen for size and vigor—such limbs, such lungs, such untiring strength; even the baby, eight months old, stood up in his solid wooden cradle, and actually rocked himself with such an amount of force that my heart was in my mouth as I watched him. Nothing seemed to disturb Mrs. Spencer, though. I suppose she was too well accustomed to the racket. She maintained her tranquillity through it all, and went around preparing the tea without taking the slightest notice.

The furniture was plain and strong. I observed the chairs and some other articles were hung up on nails against the walls. I asked father, in a low voice, the meaning of this. "Why, to keep the children from smashing them all, to be sure." I was more awe-struck than ever. By this time the tea was nearly ready, and I discovered I was most ravenously hungry, and began to look with keen interest at what was being placed on the table. There was a big jug of milk and a pot of tea, two large loaves, a pat of butter, a big dish of lettuce, and last, but not least, an immense custard pudding. The sight of this made my mouth water after our late rather meagre fare at the farm, and I impatiently awaited the summons to

the table. At last everything was ready, the chairs handed down, the children seated round, and the meal began.

I was in that condition I could have eaten anything with a relish, but I confess I had a special eye on that big custard, so it came with quite a shock when our hostess, apologizing, informed us she had been without sugar for some time, so there was none for the tea nor none in the custard. Oh, dear! what a come down; it took away my appetite. After tea was over we prepared to start for home, and Mr. Spencer, taking pity on me, kindly proposed rowing us part of the way in his boat, and then showing us a shorter and better track through the bush. In this way the return journey was made in a much easier fashion, but I shall never forget my first walk through the "Muskoka bush." I may say just here that the Spencer family now number a round dozen, and that the *pater* and *mater familias* still live and flourish.

I don't know how it is that large families seem to be the rule in Muskoka; perhaps it is owing to the bracing climate, fresh air, and absence of luxuries. Twins also abound. In one case I know of three pairs in one family. I could at this moment count up over a dozen families on our lakes ranging in number from ten to fifteen. Well, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them," and there's room enough here and work enough, goodness knows, so let them come. A Muskoka photographer

tells the tale that one day a settler's wife came to him with her eleven children to have their pictures taken. He told her what he would charge a dozen.

"Oh," she said, "can't you take less than a dozen?"

"Well, not usually," he replied, with an eye to business.

"Come along, children," said the woman, mournfully, "I've only got eleven yet; we shall have to come again when there's twelve," and they sadly went their way.

When father and I got back to the farm that night I had to prepare for my departure the next morning. I had to leave them all, and I felt dreadfully low-spirited at going; in fact, though I rarely shed tears, and am considered by my softer-hearted friends rather hard in consequence, I must confess I have never been able to leave Muskoka without a few briny drops falling into the lake over the edge of the boat which was bearing me away. But as I do not wish to part from you in too melancholy a mood, I will finish this chapter by telling you a funny incident which occurred on Saturday afternoon.

Winnie and I were busy cleaning up the shanty when Mr. Roberts came in and said, "Rover seems very hungry; I don't believe you give him half enough to eat. Why don't you do as I always did with my big dog—boil some potatoes and oatmeal, with all the scraps, in the big iron pot and make the poor beast a good satisfying meal? Here, give me

the pot; if you're busy I'll do it myself. Can I take these pieces, and these?"

Collecting all the odds and ends around, he put the pot on the stove for awhile and then carried it out to the dog. A short time after Winnie said to me, "Nan, where have you put the soap? It was here a few minutes ago." I had not seen it, and while we were making a vain search for it in every direction, Mr. Roberts again popped his head in at the door and said, "I don't know what ails the dog, he won't eat it now I've taken the trouble to make it. Just look at him." We went to the door and looked across at Rover. There he stood, gazing at the pot with a most rueful and hungry look, licking his lips, sniffing, but not taking a bite. All at once an idea seemed to strike Winnie. She ran across to the pot, knelt down and smelled it, then burst into a peal of laughing, and rolling on the grass fairly held her sides with uncontrollable mirth—*she had found the soap, so had the dog!*

CHAPTER IX.

THE BIG BOARDING-HOUSE.

" Where brief sojourners in the cool, soft air
Forget their inland heats, hard toil and year-long care."
—*Whittier.*

I WILL again pass over two or three years of our family history, just touching lightly the main incidents which have since befallen us. In Muskoka my father had cleared up considerably more of his land and built a barn, but there were no available funds for building a better house, so he still occupied the shanty. In Toronto my mother still lived in the same house, though Winnie and Sue were both married.

Winnie's wedding was the first one and she had the two little " Nancys," the blonde and brunette, as her bridesmaids. A sweetly pretty group they were, too, and as it was in June there were heaps of roses and flowers, and the little maids had immense bouquets, nearly as large as themselves. The newly-married pair went to their woodland home in Muskoka after the marriage.

The following year Sue made up her mind, too, and amongst her numerous followers decided on one, and

took him for better or worse. The little bridesmaid's services were again in requisition, so now I had three brothers-in-law. The last one, James Marsden, we always reckon as the "smart man of the family." Bet boasted that her husband was the best tempered; Winnie's husband was the oldest; Sue's was the smartest, so they each had something to be proud of. Sue's new home was to be in Toronto, and is so still. It is, and has been for years, the headquarters for all the Muskoka relations when they visit the city, and good-natured Sue acts as our general business agent, for scarcely a week passes but she has some commission for somebody, poor girl. She is what you might call a "general convenience" to the Muskoka tribe.

At the time of which I am writing people were just beginning to discover the advantages of the Muskoka Lakes as a place of summer resort, and visitors were becoming more numerous year by year. The accommodation for these strangers was, however, very limited. There was one hotel at the head of Lake Rosseau, one at Port Cockburn (the head of Lake Joseph), another at Port Carling, and I think this was all. The homes of the settlers were, as a rule, small and roughly finished, and furnished with little except children; of the latter the supply was unlimited. Summer cottages were almost unknown, so it was becoming a serious question where to put the visitors when they did come.

My mother, I think, was the first one to conceive

the idea of building a large boarding-house for tourists. She used to talk to Mr. Roberts when he was down on a visit to the city. He was, even then, a firm believer in the future of the Muskoka Lakes, and though these talks might have led to nothing, an event happened at this time which caused them to take a definite shape. This was the death of my grandfather at the old homestead in England, in consequence of which my father came into possession of a sum of money which would go a good way towards carrying out the plans in mother's mind.

My father, too, saw the wisdom of the idea, and foresaw that in the near future there would be more money made in Muskoka by boarding the summer visitors than by farming. Of course the season was short—just the months of July and August—and though the rush all at once would make the work more arduous for the time being, there remained the long winter and spring months when they would be entirely at liberty, could shut up their house and leave it to take care of itself while they came down and visited those of their children who lived in the city. It was decided then to start building the big boarding-house in the spring. It was big to us at that time, and when complete would accommodate about fifty guests. Father did not hope to get it entirely finished and furnished, too, the first summer, but he thought he would have it so far advanced as to enable him to take a few tourists to start with about the middle of July.

Accordingly, as soon as navigation opened and the frost was out of the ground, the foundation was dug and the work began. The building was a plain and barn-like structure of two and a-half stories, very different to the ornate and varied buildings of the present day. There seemed to be but one model for Muskoka houses in those days, and that was the plain and homely barn with an added verandah. But in the eyes of the Hathaway family it was a palace indeed. I did not see it until nearly completed, but in the beginning of July I was granted, by my kind employer, a whole month's holiday in order that I might go up and help with the cleaning, fixing and general preparation for opening the new house. My mother had decided not to move from her Toronto home until the following spring, so of course she could not be with us. So Bet and I, therefore, were entrusted with full charge of the opening ceremonies.

This was the occasion of my second visit to Hathaway's Bay, and very glad was I to see it once more. I found the new house looking in anything but a habitable state, neither doors nor windows in, and hammering and sawing going on briskly in every direction.

"I do not see what we can do for the present in the cleaning line," I said to father that night, as I sat talking to him in the shanty.

"Oh, well," he replied, "we are not quite ready for that; but a few days more work and things will look

very different. Even if we are not ready till the first of August, we may get some late-comers and make a few dollars, perhaps ; but we shall see."

You may be sure Bet and I took advantage of this respite for the next few days from the broom and scrubbingb-rush exercise which we had been looking forward to, and we made up our minds to have a good old time while we could. We had Winnie now to go and see, and more than Winnie, too, for there was a lovely little blue-eyed baby there, and we set off next morning to visit her. She lived in a little cottage in the midst of the woods, about a mile from my father's place, and even in the short time she had lived there had converted her surroundings into a bower of flowers. She had a small verandah shaded with Virginia creepers, and here, sitting on the floor, we found the baby. Winnie came running out when she heard our voices, delighted to see us once more and hear all the Toronto news.

After admiring the boy, who was a little more than a year old and named John Hamlet (we had to have a Shakespearian name, of course), though it was familiarly shortened to "Letto"—as Winnie laughingly said one John or Jack either was enough for her—we went indoors to view the interior of her domain, leaving the baby on the verandah. Winnie said she generally left him there the whole morning while she was about her housework. He was just beginning to creep

Winnie used to tether him with a piece of string tied round his waist and fastened to a nail in the floor, so that he could not crawl off the verandah. About four or five feet was the limit of his peregrinations, and it was laughable to see him when first set down and secured. He would start off on hands and knees at a racing speed, and then suddenly would be brought up short to his intense astonishment; then, with renewed energy, he would start again in another direction, to be brought once more to the same sudden stop. Winnie said he was always putting any small things he could lay his hands on through the knot-holes in the verandah floor, and in that way she kept losing her thimbles, spools, buttons, etc. While she was telling us this a piercing shriek from the baby made us all rush out to see what had happened. Winnie fell down on her knees beside him, and he clung to her, screaming evidently nearly scared out of his wits. We gazed round, but nothing was to be seen that could have frightened him.

"What is it, my darling?" said Winnie, trying to soothe him, but he started back from her embrace and fixed his eyes with a most terrified expression on one of the largest knot-holes in the flooring.

Naturally we all looked in the same direction, and at that moment a cat's paw come up through the hole, shook itself, and disappeared again. The baby gave another fearful yell of terror and buried his face in his mother's gown. Up came the paw again and

shook itself in the most playful manner. We shook, too, with laughing, as we helped Winnie to untie him and carry him indoors. The pussy cat had been under the verandah, and, attracted by the light through the hole and the little fingers poking at it, evidently wanted to have a game at play.

The baby never forgot his fright, though, and always avoided the spot. As soon as he could talk he spoke of it with bated breath as "the great eye-scratcher's hole."

Before we left we arranged with Winnie that she should come over to father's early the next morning and we would all go together to pay a visit to the Spencers, which we accordingly did. We carried the baby by turns, and I found the road had been somewhat improved since I paid my former memorable visit.

We found Mrs. Spencer looking as young and happy as ever, nursing the latest arrival; there had been two or three added to the family since I was there before. She was delighted to see us all, and cordially invited us to stay awhile, which we were not sorry to do, for we were tired with our long walk. The younger children were indoors, and Mrs. Spencer had been fortunate enough to secure the services of a young girl, not long out from Ireland, who, though ignorant of the ways of this country as yet, was still willing and good tempered, and a great help with the little ones.

We told her we were going to do without servants this season; for the short time we should have the house open we thought we could manage. While we were chatting the aforesaid Irish maid came rushing into the room, greatly excited, but, seeing visitors, was making off again, when Mrs. Spencer, thinking something was amiss, called her back. "And plaze, ma'am," she burst forth, "and what do you think those child'her are afther doin' now? Shure if they hav'nt shtole the new ball of shtring masther was afther gitting for the swate pays, and a whole paper full of nails, and have tied nearly iv'ry blissid hen on the nists, and shure the young rascals say they're going to kape them there till they consint to lay, no mather, they says, if they all shtarves to dith fust."

Mrs. Spencer hastily arose and, giving the baby to the girl, started off to investigate matters, and we, being curious, quickly followed her. Sure enough, when we got to the hen-house pandemonium reigned. There were about half a dozen hens securely tied on the nests, and the squawking, racket and dust were awful. They had strings to their legs, their necks, their wings and tails. The work had been most thoroughly done, and the strings were all secured at different angles by means of the nails.

The older children were proudly surveying their handiwork, and the younger ones capering around in great glee, shouting, "Now we shall have eggs, mother, lots of eggs!" "It was Ben Hathaway told

us, yesterday," broke in another one. "He said, 'If your hens don't lay, tie them on the nests till they do.' So we have, mother, and they're trying hard, but they'll never get loose." "Never get loose! Never get loose!" shouted the little ones in chorus, jumping up and down to emphasize the words. The scene was indescribably comic, and we laughed till our sides ached, but Mrs. Spencer scolded them roundly. "You bad children, run at once and get me a knife," and she proceeded summarily to cut the strings, much to the disappointment of the children. "If Ben Hathaway told you such a thing he was just fooling," she told them. "I'm sure I don't know what you'll do next. I never saw such children. Go along with you, every one," and she led the way back to the house.

When, on our return home, we told Ben the joke, he fairly exploded. He had made the remark to the children as he was passing, just in fun, never thinking of them acting on it so literally.

When Sunday came (the men working on the building having gone home from Saturday night till Monday morning) we were looking forward to a pleasant day altogether, for Winnie and her husband were coming to dinner. Bet had concocted a very savory meat pie out of our last scraps of fresh meat, and, though it was not large, the smell was delicious, and we all gathered round the table with very good appetites, prepared to enjoy it. Just as father had put his knife in the pie, we heard a noise in the

distance, bang! banging! like a heavy weight being dragged along. Bet ran to the little window and across the clearing she saw coming the whole Spencer family; Mrs. Spencer enthroned on an old stone-boat with her babies, drawn by the old horse, with Mr. Spencer at his head, the other juvenile members of the family careering wildly around.

When she heard who was coming, Winnie gave one despairing look at the meat pie, and shouted: "Down on your knees, every one of you, and pray that they've had their dinner!"

But it was all to no purpose; and though some of us were selfish enough to wish that we had dined just half an hour sooner, we had at least the satisfaction of seeing our precious pie eaten with great gusto and warmly praised by our friends, though Winnie said she never realized so sadly before the truth of the old proverb, "There's many a slip twixt the *pie* and the lip."

This was the last of our holidays, for next morning father said we could commence scrubbing out some of the rooms in the new house. So, after breakfast, Bet and I went over there with our pails and brushes prepared for a good day's work. The floors, we found, were in a terrible state with mortar and lime. Dear reader, has it ever been your lot, your miserable lot, I may say, to scrub out a new house which the plasterers have just left? If so, I am sure of your sympathy We carried pails of water innumerable;

we scratched and we scraped, we soaked and we scrubbed, and still we couldn't get them clean. They did not look so bad when just finished, but when they were dry they seemed to suffer a relapse and an eruption of mortar again appeared on the surface, causing us sadly to conclude we would have to go over it once more.

However, all things come to an end, and we got through the ground floor at last and were commencing on the bedrooms, when, to our dismay, a party of four young men arrived by the evening boat and said they had heard we were ready for boarders and had come to stay. We hardly knew what to do. We did not like to send them away, and there was no means of getting them away till the next day. The worst feature of the case was that we had no mattresses, bedsteads, or bedding. These things had been ordered in Toronto, but had not yet arrived.

We explained this to our visitors, but they made light of the difficulty and seemed to have thoroughly made up their minds to stay where they were. So, after we had given them some supper and they had gone for a row on the lake, we held a rapid council of war as to ways and means of sleeping accommodation, which was our most serious trouble. At last we came to the conclusion that our best plan would be to give up the shanty to the young men and migrate ourselves to the new house, with all the old

clothes, coats and rugs we could muster, to make up a shake-down on the floor. Fortunately, we had an old lounge, and with this we could make a fairly comfortable bed for father, so we at once proceeded to carry it over. Our new boarders no sooner saw us with our burden than they came to our assistance, so we explained to them the arrangement we had made and they expressed themselves as quite satisfied.

After making up the beds for them in the shanty and fixing it up as comfortably as we could, we returned to the new house. Father and his lounge we arranged for in the large parlor, which we had scrubbed, but Bet and I had to retire to one of the upstairs rooms with its thickly mortared floor—I believe there was nearly as much mortar on the floor as on the walls, only not quite so evenly distributed. Well, on this lumpy, gritty floor poor Bet and I had to rest our weary bones, and try to seek a night's repose. We spread out the various articles of clothing we had secured, patted them into shape, divested ourselves of our garments, covered ourselves with an old table cover and—"sought our pillows," I was going to say, and upon mature consideration I think that is the exact term to use—sought our pillows, but no pillows did we find. Bet rolled up a piece of carpet into a miserable substitute, but the wretched make-believe hastened to escape from us on the first opportunity, and after I did get to sleep I awoke with a fearful nightmare. One of the new arrivals

had suddenly gone mad and was cutting off my right ear with a carving-knife. I awoke in a great sweat to find the side of my head resting on a hard knot of mortar, and my ear had a sharp attack of cramp in consequence. However, morning dawned at last, and we felt not the slightest inclination to be lie-a-beds.

How fervently we kept wishing all the next day that the mattresses, etc., would come by the evening boat, but we were doomed to disappointment. People in Muskoka, I find, are used to disappointments of this kind on the boat's part, they get hardened to it.

However, the boat brought us something we did not expect, and that was our dear old Sue. We could hardly believe our eyes when we saw her bonny rosy face smiling down at us from the deck of the steamer. How we hugged and kissed her when she stepped ashore and told us she had come to our assistance for a couple of weeks. We seized her parcels and bag, and, as we walked beside her to the house, plied her with questions about mother and everybody else in Toronto. Father was as delighted as we were when he saw her, and, of course, as soon as tea was over, we took her to inspect the new house. How large and imposing it looked to our fond eyes as we gazed upon it! Never was such a house before nor since!

There was one small drawback to our happiness that evening, that is, to mine and Bet's. Our hearts

sank when we thought of introducing Sue to our sleeping apartment; but as bedtime drew near there was no alternative, and we were forced to reveal to poor Sue the dreadful condition of things, so far as bed and bedding were concerned. Bet had tried her best to make the shake-down a little wider, so that it would accommodate three. She had hunted up another bundle of old clothes and added them to the conglomeration. I was condemned to sleep in the middle. I beg your pardon, did I say *sleep?* That was wrong, for it was mighty little sleeping I did that night. I think I dozed off once towards morning, for I remember when I opened my eyes in the faint light of the early dawn I saw poor Sue sitting up embracing her knees and trying to cover her poor cold feet with her nightgown. I believe she even shed a few tears and murmured, "I left my happy home for this." But we gathered up the unfortunate bed, which had dispersed in every direction, and tucked her up and comforted her the best we could. Still we were all glad when it was time to arise. This was our last night of misery, though, for the next day the mattresses arrived, and our troubles on this score were, happily, a thing of the past.

The cleaning now proceeded at a rapid rate, for, including Sue, there were three of us to work. The visitors began to arrive at a rapid rate, too. As soon as a bedroom was cleaned and made ready it was occupied by some new arrival, and every day we

dragged our mattresses into another mortary room, till the whole of them, thank goodness, were finished at last. I believe we slept by turns in every room in the house, and as it was before they had undergone the cleansing process you can imagine we had enough of mortar and lime to last us the rest of our lives.

Now, you will want to know something of our first boarders, but I think I will leave this till the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

OUR SUMMER BOARDERS.

" Loose-haired, bare-footed, hand-in-hand,
Young girls went tripping down the sand ;
And youths and maidens sitting in the moon
Dreamed o'er the old fond dream, from which we wake
too soon."

—*Whittier.*

THE four young men I mentioned in my last chapter as being our first boarders had turned out to be very pleasant, and gave us very little trouble. The next visitors to arrive were an elderly gentleman, his young wife, and the wife's sister. The young wife was a pretty nonentity, but the sister was of a different stamp ; she was tall, dark, and rather masculine looking, with a suspicion of a moustache ; considerably older than her married sister. I soon found out she had an unpleasant habit of setting everybody down whenever she got the chance, which made me suspicious that she must be a school-ma'am. I felt sure she was ; there is something about a school-ma'am everybody recognizes. I think they are so used to looking for faults in their scholars, and correcting them, that they are a little too apt to treat the people they meet in society in the same summary

fashion. They all seem "to the manner born," as it were. This sister was the real "boss" of the party, though, of course, the old gent imagined himself to be; but he was a mere puppet in the hands of his wife, who was ditto in the hands of the strong-minded sister. The old gentleman's name was Furness, the sister's Miss Nora Pole. I remember laughing at the signature at the end of the letter which she wrote announcing their arrival, "Yours truly, N. Pole." I told Bet she ought to have put "yours frigidly"; it would have been more appropriate for the "North Pole"—and ever after, between ourselves, we called her by that name.

Next to arrive were two maiden ladies, the Misses Stitchins, with their pet dog Fido, whom they would have liked to bring to the table with them at every meal, but this being objected to by the other guests, one sister always remained with the darling creature till the other one had finished her meal, as he really could not be left alone; "he would break his heart."

Bet did the cooking and took charge of the kitchen. She was a fine cook, I can tell you; as in everything else she was on the top of the tree. I did the upstairs work and waited on table. The guests breakfasted between eight and nine in the morning, and for about an hour I was kept on the run, as they came down one after another. Mr. Furness gave more trouble at the table than any of the others. He had a peculiarity which was very irritating to me—he wanted every-

thing he saw. We had not advanced so far as to have bills of fare at present, so I used to repeat the menu in an undertone to each guest as I took their order—beefsteak, cold ham, fried ham, eggs, fish, or whatever we might have. The old gent sat at the head of the table, and was always first at his post. At the sound of the bell he made a bee-line in double-quick time to his place. After he had made his choice and been served I would go to some of the others, but no sooner did he hear the next order given than he would call out, "I will take some of that, too," and so on, all round.

Perhaps one of the Misses Stitchins would say, "I will take a hard-boiled egg"; the other sister, "I will try a poached egg on toast." A loud voice from the end of the table would call out, "I will take a hard-boiled egg and a poached egg on toast."

Or perhaps one of the boarders would say, "Have you any marmalade? I don't think I will take any meat this morning." Like an echo came from Mr. Furness the request for the same. Finally, he would be literally surrounded with small dishes and plates. I confess my patience would give out towards the last, and some of the plates would be put down in front of him with rather a sounding whack! Nothing seemed to disturb him, though, and he helped himself to the choice tid-bits off every dish, his wife and the "North Pole," who flanked him on either side, evidently tickled

to think he was getting the full value of his board money. The Misses Stitchins, though, regarded him with eyes of horror and disgust. The young men joked *sotto voce* amongst themselves ; it was great fun for them.

I remember once just such another gourmand as Mr. Furness. It was on board ship. They say "a person's true nature is shown when travelling." He sat opposite to me at table and acted in much the same way as our boarder. He seemed to be on the constant watch to see that no one got ahead of him.

One day I was late at lunch and the baked apples were all gone. My steward on discovering this brought me a nice orange on a plate, saying as he set it in front of me, "The apples are all gone, so I asked the head steward for an orange." I thanked him ; but looking across the table saw the eyes of the gentleman opposite fixed with a hungry glare on my poor orange. "Waiter," he called to his own steward, "bring me an orange." The steward started, and glancing across at us, met, I suppose, the eye of his fellow-waiter behind my chair, for I distinctly saw the wink. He went out into the passage (I'm sure he went no farther), and returned in about a minute, saying, "The fruit is all locked up, sir, and the head steward can't be found with the keys, but there'll be oranges on the table at dinner, sir." So "His Greediness" got fooled ; and as everybody's attention seemed to be drawn to my orange I picked

it up and retired to the privacy of my own cabin to eat it. Don't you think this gentleman and Mr. Furness must have been kindred spirits? What would have happened, think you, if they had been caged up together with a limited supply of food? It is hard to say. I think it would have been a case of "the survival of the fittest."

But to return to our boarders. Mr. Furness hired a boat, and they spent a great part of the time on the water. The Misses Stitchins spent most of their time on the verandah busily engaged with squares of coarse linen, needles and bunches of washing silks, with which they were patiently producing hideous monstrosities in the way of flowers, birds and butterflies, holding them up for each other's admiration when there was, unfortunately, no one else near enough to admire. Notwithstanding, they were dear old souls, and gave us less trouble than any of the rest. They took their dip in the lake every morning regularly at eleven, wearing oil-skin caps to avoid wetting their hair; wet towels inside the caps to avoid sunstroke; long-sleeved bathing dresses to avoid sunburn; canvas bathing shoes to avoid mud-turtles; and very pretty they looked, I assure you, as they disported themselves with modest mien in the cooling waters of the lake. Dear me! what a shock it would be to them if they saw the young folks bathing now-a-days—girls with bare arms and legs taking headers from the wharf, turning a somersault in the air before

they touched the water; young men in still scantier attire gazing admiringly at them, and then all splashing and dashing together in the water like a shoal of porpoises. I verily believe that if the Misses Stitchins could have seen such a sight, the oil-skin caps, wet towels included, would have risen from their heads in horror; they would hardly have survived such a scene.

The next boarder to arrive at Hathaway's Bay was a tall ascetic-looking High Church clergyman, with shaven face, high collar, very straight vest and clerical coat. He entered his name as the Rev. Theophilus Monk, M.A., D.D.—mad with a double D, as Winnie said, looking over my shoulder at the entry. He spoke with the "lovely drawl" so much admired by the "ritualistic school of oratory." You know what it sounds like, "He that hath yaws to yaw let him yaw"—that kind of style, which to me is so unnatural. We overheard him telling father, while sitting on the verandah on the evening of his arrival, he was suffering from insomnia and dyspepsia brought on by overstudy and too rigid lenten abstinence, and though very sorry to leave his flock, whom he was guiding gently back to the "faith of their fathers," he had been informed by his medical advisers that he must really go into retreat for a few months and endeavor to "recuperate his physique." This last phrase tickled our fancy very much, has in fact remained with us as a family saying to this day,

and no one of us can ever look pale, sick or weary, without being immediately told by another member of the family to "Go and recuperate your physique."

Miss Pole had been doing a little deft angling on her own account with our four nice young boarders, but so far without securing a single bite, and to-morrow they were leaving us; but her face brightened when she saw the Rev. Monk. Here was another fish she could possibly hook. She commenced her angling next morning at breakfast—it happened to be Friday. "What! no fish?" she began, "and this Friday," glancing round and speaking loud enough to let the reverend gentleman hear. "I suppose then I am reduced to eggs for breakfast. But I do hope, Miss Hathaway, that there will be fish for dinner, o. I don't know what I shall do. You know I never eat meat on Fridays." I knew nothing of the sort, but I discreetly held my peace and went for the eggs. Before two days were over, however, I saw "my lady" being paddled around the bay in Mr. Monk's canoe, which he had hired to assist in the "recuperation." Ah! I thought to myself, you are doing well, Miss Pole, provided you don't strike the rock of "clerical celibacy"; that would be a disastrous ending to your "fishing excursion."

This morning our pleasant quartette of young men bade us "good-bye," much to our regret. They left us with many good wishes for our success and promises to visit us again. We felt quite low spirited as we

saw them depart waving their handkerchiefs to us till the boat carried them out of our sight.

My time, too, had nearly come to an end—as all things do in this world—and though I was loath to depart, "necessity knew no choice." Bet had secured the services of a nice young girl, a settler's daughter, to take my place for the few remaining weeks of the season. I will only be able to tell you, therefore, of one more arrival and then close this chapter.

Two days before my departure the weather turned very wet and stormy—there was a regular "Muskoka soaker," for when it does rain here it comes down with a will; it is a case of "water, water, everywhere;" the verandahs are streaming, the summer kitchen leaking, the guests grumbling, the children tumbling (excuse the rhyme, it was not intentional). Altogether such days as this of continued downpour in the summer season are one of the hardest things the boarding-house-keeper has to contend with. All the guests look like fish out of water, as they literally are for the nonce—that is if they have sense enough to keep indoors; but they don't appear to know what to do with themselves. They hang around, yawning and looking first at the sky and then at the weather glass, and are generally miserable. Thank goodness, such days are the exception in Muskoka.

Well, that evening it was coming down like cats and dogs when the boat came in. No one went down to the wharf except father, but Bet, who was

watching from the staircase window, called out to me, "Nan, here's a whole family coming, all dripping wet, babies and children, too." So it proved. In they trooped, escorted by father, with all their belongings, the water dripping from their clothes in little streams, and the most comical part was that they had brought a tent with them, intending to put it up and sleep under it that night. Evidently they had not bargained with the weather prophet, and father informed them, unless they were anxious to be drowned, they had better stick to the house till the weather broke. Their name was Merryweather and they had come all the way from Chicago.

As we got talking we discovered that he was an American, a lawyer, and she an English girl, a governess who had come out to Chicago with an English family and met her fate there in the shape of plump little Mr. Merryweather. They had been married five years and there were now three little Merryweathers. She told us they had lived these five years in a Chicago flat and had never until now been away from the city for a holiday. Her children had never even seen the country, and, therefore, they wanted to get as far away from civilization as possible and just live out of doors. "I mean to take off the children's shoes and stockings," she said, "and let them run about barefoot, and paddle in the water, if it is safe," looking anxiously at us. We assured her on that point, and the faces of the two eldest children, who

were eagerly listening as they clung to their mother's skirt, instantly assumed a look of rapture as they thought of the bliss awaiting them on the morrow. The eldest little fellow even wanted to go to bed without his supper, thinking the morning would come sooner. When the morning did dawn it was sunny and bright, and in Muskoka, no matter how much rain may fall, when it ceases everything dries up like magic and all is bright again.

This was my last day here, and when all nature was looking so beautiful and fresh the thought of leaving seemed worse than ever. I believe I had a very woe-begone face as I went about my work, and Bet bore me company in my depression.

The little Merryweathers were racing round soon after daybreak. I don't think their father and mother got much rest after about four o'clock. Everything was a novelty to the children, and they were like little crazy things. When Ben went out to milk the cows, the eldest boy followed. He stood in the doorway and watched the first cow milked, with a most astonished face, and then returned to the house to interview his mother. "Is that where the milk comes from? Well, don't put any on my porridge never, never, no more."

There was worse to follow, though, for the little man, after breakfast, was pursuing his investigations around the back premises when he came upon the old sow, stretched in the sun, with her youth-

ful progeny actively imbibing their morning meal. He stood gazing at them horrified for a moment, then turned and fled to the house, bursting in upon his mother with the tears streaming down his face,—"Oh mommer! mommer!" clutching her frantically by the skirts, "its awful dreadful! Mr. Hathaway's little pigs are starving, just starving," then, in a horror-stricken tone, almost a whisper, "Why, they're actually eating their mother!!!"

Poor child! So much for being brought up in a Chicago flat.

Bet told me in her letters, after I got home, that the Merryweathers gave up the idea of living in the tent and stayed on with them for more than a month. They were altogether so charmed with Muskoka that they made up their minds, as soon as they could afford it, to put up a summer cottage for themselves, and come every year.

I might as well tell you, also, that the "North Pole" did succeed in landing the Monk, and that two or three years later they paid another visit to Hathaway's Bay, plus a nursemaid and a sturdy young Monk.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PICNIC TO CLIFF ROCK.

"Hence we may learn
That though it be a grand and comely thing
To be unhappy (and we think it is,
Because so many grand and clever folk
Have found out reasons for unhappiness)
. . . Yet since we are not grand—
O, not at all, and as for cleverness
That may or may not be—it is well
For us to be as happy as we can!"

—*Jean Ingelow.*

THE following spring mother removed from Toronto to her home in Muskoka, and by this time things were in better shape at the new boarding-house, and in consequence they did a much larger business during the season. In fact, for a short time the house was fairly packed with visitors. Camp-beds, sofas, and even the parlor floor, were used for sleeping accommodation. Those were the days when people visiting Muskoka were thankful for small mercies and did not look to find all the comforts and conveniences of the large city hotels in this new country. At the close of this successful season mother conceived the idea of inviting a party of her

Toronto friends to spend a few days and see the beauties of the Muskoka lakes. It was the beginning of September, and I always think September is the ideal month for Muskoka; it is not too hot, there are no mosquitoes to bother one as in the spring, and the foliage is just beginning to assume its lovely fall tints.

These little September parties were repeated, year after year, so long as my dear, hospitable mother lived. I believe they were the most enjoyable times of her life. What delight she took in showing the new comers around her domains, in calling upon them to admire all the changing beauties of lake and sky and shore. Of course, she liked to have all her children there, if possible, and as time rolled on, many small grandchildren were added to these annual gatherings.

Then the dear grandmother had something more to expatiate upon, as well as the beauties of the landscape, namely the bright eyes and rosy cheeks of her children's children; and no one could wax more eloquent than she on this exhaustless theme. What better can we wish for these dear children than that the good wishes and earnest prayers of their dear grandmother on their behalf may in the future be fulfilled?

Perhaps the first of these September parties is impressed most distinctly on my mind, because I was, in a way, the chaperon of the band. I think there were about fifteen invited, and we met that Monday

morning at the little station behind the Market. It was then I discovered that, strange to say, not one of the crowd, except myself, had ever seen Muskoka; so fancy my delight in acting as guide into such a fairy-land. Our minister and his wife and daughter were amongst the party. We were all in a very happy mood, bent on enjoyment, and in full expectation of a good time. By the time we got to Allandale we were beginning to feel hungry, so reached out the lunch baskets and, with sandwiches, cake and fruit, had a nice little picnic on the cars. We could not induce the minister, however, to take anything, for I had informed them all of the nice dinner we would get on the boat as soon as we arrived at Muskoka Wharf, and he said, while pacing up and down the length of the car, "I am not going to spoil my appetite for that fine dinner Miss Hathaway has been telling us of by eating now, don't you think it"; and he said it so emphatically that he made a convert of another gentleman of the party, who also refused to touch or taste. We remarked, though, that they both began to look very hungry and anxious before we reached Gravenhurst, and here the joke came in. When we reached the wharf we found only a small steamer awaiting us instead of the *Nipissing* that we expected; and, on enquiry, we found the *Nipissing* had been burned a few days before—a great misfortune, especially to us just then, for there was no dinner, no dining-room, and we would have to

transfer to another boat at Port Carling, making it very late before we would reach our destination. Our smiles and laughter were changed to looks of dismay as we received this unpleasant information. Even we, who had helped to empty the lunch-baskets, were feeling hungry again ; what then must have been the feelings of the two who had so rigidly abstained ? When we got on board and knew the worst, namely, that there were no provisions to be got, we bewailed our fate to each other for awhile, then tightened our belts, sat down, and tried to forget we were hungry. But, as the poet remarks, "a change had come o'er the spirit of the dream," and we felt we had hardly energy enough to admire the beautiful scenery through which we were passing. After a time an idea crossed my mind, but I kept it to myself for fear of further disappointment.

Surely the men who worked the boat must eat, likewise they must drink. Then there might possibly be tea on board. I was just longing for a cup of tea, and the day was warm. I slipped away to see what I could do. I climbed down a narrow stair leading to the engine-room, and then peeped through a square hole in the partition. Goodness ! what did I behold ? There sat the minister and his friend, side by side, on a little shelf, a board in front of them serving as a table. They each had a big bone in their hands and were gnawing away for all they were worth, the perspiration streaming off their faces with the heat of

the little place they were in. It appears my "happy thought" had struck them also, but somewhat earlier, and they had stolen to this spot quietly and secretly, where they found a big pot, with the remains of a stewed shin of beef, which they had appropriated and proceeded to enjoy. When one of the boat hands appeared on the scene, they used bribery and corruption to obtain, in addition to the beef bones, a supply of bread and a kettle of tea. Their consternation was great when they saw my face gazing in at them, for they thought the whole party were at my heels. I revenged myself for their duplicity by bearing off the kettle of tea. There were only two cups on board, though, so we drank it out of all the odd tins and pans the men could hunt up for us. The scene was so comical, when the crowd were all swallowing the hot tea out of such odd drinking vessels (I think even the frying-pan was pressed into the service), that we forgot, amidst the laughter and fun, the loss of our dinner, and good-humor and contentment were happily restored.

It was nearing sunset as we came round the bend of the river in view of Port Carling. We were all crowded in front of the little steamer, awaiting the first glimpse of the place, and as we drew nearer we saw my dear mother and sisters, who had come thus far to meet us, standing together on the wharf. Our minister was the first to see them, and, taking off his hat and waving it in the air, shouted, "There's the

mother," and then, as if to give vent to his feelings, started singing,

"We've reached the land of corn and wine,"

in which one after another joined, until we arrived at the wharf, amidst a full chorus of—

"Oh, Beulah land,
Sweet Beulah land,
As on thy highest mount I stand."

Ah me! when we look back on those happy scenes of by-gone days, no wonder that our hearts are full of tender memories, and that, still quoting from the same verse,

"I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me,
And view the shining glory shore,
My heav'n, my home for evermore."

After we had all received a loving greeting and hearty welcome from my mother, we hastened to crowd into the little boat which was to carry us up Lake Joseph. The evening was a lovely one, the sunset something indescribable, and our friends were charmed with each fresh view as our little boat puffed along its winding course. By the time we reached Hathaway's Bay it was nearly dark. Here my father received us, and one of the party called out to him, "Here are your unprofitable boarders, Mr. Hathaway."

I can safely say a more hungry crowd never set foot in his house. How we cleared those tables! Everything seemed so good, it was hard indeed to stop eating. "Oh! this home-baked bread," "Oh! this fresh butter," and such-like exclamations from all the party, as they indulged in another and yet another slice, until we lay back in our chairs exhausted.

Of course, after such a supper we went to bed and slept like tops. Where does anyone sleep like they do in Muskoka? There might be a narcotic in the air, from the effect it has upon a stranger. For the first two or three days you feel like nodding all the time, except when you are eating; as soon as you sit down, or lie down, you are soothed off into slumberland before you know it. Of course this effect soon passes away or it would be serious for the dwellers in the land. Work would remain at a standstill if this drowsiness became chronic.

The days of our holiday, however, passed so quickly that we did our best to keep wide awake and enjoy everything we could. One day my father and mother got a small steamer and took some of the party to Bala for a day's fishing. There were still a few of the summer boarders in the house, amongst them a Dr. Carrington from New York, with his wife. She was a gigantic woman, not only immensely stout, but tall in proportion. When I first saw her I was thunderstruck, and said to mother, "Is that Barnum's fat woman out for a holiday? She must have

been sent here to 'recuperate her physique.'" Her hair, which was gray, she wore frizzed and combed out, till it made her head appear enormous, and she was profusely ornamented with chains, rings and bracelets, the two latter kinds of adornments being nearly buried in rolls of fat. When she entered the dining-room, gorgeously apparelled, sailing along, her husband invisible in the rear, every eye would follow her as she moved slowly and majestically to her seat. We had two stout ladies in our party, but they sank into utter insignificance and looked like infants beside Mrs. Carrington. With all her magnificence she proved to be very agreeable, and we all soon got very friendly with her.

Now, my mother was very anxious to show her friends around Lake Joseph before their return, so we planned a picnic to Cliff Rock, making a tour of the lake in the first place and landing there for dinner. Everyone in the house was to go, so, of course, we had to invite Mrs. Carrington, but how to get her there was the question. Mr. Roberts, my brother-in-law, said it would not be safe to put her in the little steamer, as, if she moved to one side or leaned over, she would upset it; besides the boat was too small to carry the whole of our party. So he arranged to get a barge, and the small steamboat would tow us. In the very centre of the barge he planted Mrs. Carrington's chair. I forgot to tell you she brought her own chair, ours were not comfortable

for her, and so *frail.* In this chair was seated Mrs. Carrington; then two large rocking-chairs, one in front of her and one behind, accommodated the other two stout ladies. They were thus planted in a row down the centre of the barge, and, with such good ballast to steady us, we ordinary-sized mortals were allowed to disperse ourselves around as we pleased.

We arranged to proceed slowly, calling at two or three places where fish were reported to be plentiful, so that the fishermen of our party might secure enough for our dinner. We had a boat in tow, and in this they went ashore at the different places. They had very good luck in fishing, too, so that we had a fine stock on board by noon, when we arrived at Cliff Rock, where we landed and prepared our dinner. We did not attempt to land Mrs. Carrington, though; her dinner was carried to her on the barge. Bet was cook, the young ones gathered the sticks and lit the fire, the kettle was slung on, and the big frying-pan brought out for the fish. Mother and Sue sliced up the cucumbers, Winnie laid the cloth, and I sat down at a little distance off to make a sketch of the rock; I had brought my paint-box for the purpose. The day was perfect, the water calm and the reflections lovely, so it was a pleasant task. As I was busily working I heard someone calling my name, as if from the sky, and on looking up I saw two of the party, our old friends Mr. and Mrs. Francis, who had gone round through the woods and climbed to the very

top of the rock, and were now gazing down on us. I shouted up to them to keep still and I would put them in the picture. I have the little sketch yet, though many of those who were first and foremost in the fun that day have bidden a last farewell to the fair scenes of this earth.

Has it never struck you with a kind of strange mockery, when accidentally you came across little trifles which were associated with bygone days and those you have loved and lost, how strange it is that these unimportant things, of no value whatever, remain unchanged, while our dearest and best, so infinitely more precious, have vanished from our sight?

But my moralizings are brought to a sudden stop by a most frightful din. Bet is beating a tin tray vigorously with a stick, to announce that dinner is ready, and the wanderers are flocking in from all directions, so I put away my work and join the crowd. I don't believe one ever knows how good fish can taste till they eat it in Muskoka, freshly caught, fried crisp and brown—a veritable feast for the gods!

I won't tell you how many fish we ate that day, you might not believe me; enough to say, we all ate our fill and were satisfied. Soon after three o'clock, Mr. Roberts announced that the wind was changing, and it was likely to be rough on the lake, so we had better prepare for our return.

We had great fun in the embarkation, for all the

LETTO AND TOM.

ladies who had been wandering in the woods returned with such loads of treasures—moss, ferns, birch bark, fungi, and such like—that it was quite a job getting all the stuff stowed away on board to the satisfaction of the fair owners. At last, however, we were ready, the "stout ladies" all in position, and once more we were on the move. Winnie put me in charge of my two little nephews, Letto and Tom, who were very anxious to fish over the edge of the barge. They had pieces of string tied to sticks, with crooked pins for hooks. It was hard work holding on to them both, and I was getting a little tired, when one of the gentlemen of the party, who had been fishing and was sitting next to Letto, signed to me to turn the children's attention in another direction for a moment, and meanwhile he slipped a good-sized fish from his basket on to the crooked pin at the end of Letto's line, then let it quietly drop into the water. As soon as the child turned round he cried out, "Oh, my! Letto! look at the fish on your hook," and helped the delighted youngster to pull it up. What an excitement ensued. The children were wild with delight; they tore across the barge to their mother, then to their father, and everyone else in succession. They hugged that precious fish, and mauled it, they patted and pulled it, they nursed it by turns; pressing it fondly to their hearts, they would not part with it, and even wanted to take it to bed with them, so Winnie said, and they smelled fishy for days after.

Letto has never forgotten that fish and never will, if he lives for a century.

The wind blew very strong, as Mr. Roberts foretold, before we reached home, and the barge bobbed up and down in fine style. Mrs. Francis lost her hat, a sudden gust carrying it far away over the water. Sue's husband, who was, as I told you, the smart man of the family, sprang to the rescue, jumped into the boat and was after it like a flash. We could see him making straight for the little black speck in the distance, and in a few minutes he returned triumphant bearing the hat, a sorry-looking article surely, feathers and lace all dripping; but the good-natured owner took it all in good part, and tying a handkerchief over her head, said it didn't matter much, for she hadn't been so foolish as to come to a picnic in her best hat. We were soon safely back at Hathaway's Bay and the ladies busy landing their treasures from the woods. Thus ended one of the happiest days of our lives.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD MAID'S LODGE.

"Dear hearts are here, dear hearts are there,
Alike below, above;
Our friends are now in either world,
And love is sure of love."

—*Whittier.*

THE principal idea I had in writing these stories of Muskoka was to contrast the Muskoka of twenty-five or thirty years ago with the Muskoka of the present day, and by so doing enable you to judge of its rapid growth and of the great changes which have taken place in that time. I will, therefore, now pass over a period of fifteen or sixteen years and bring you with a jump to the spring of 1902.

It will be necessary, in the first place, to give you a brief summary of the intervening events, especially as regards ourselves, for these years have not passed without many changes, and sad ones, in the Hathaway family. Our beloved father and mother have left us, though the memory of their love and the influence they wield in our midst grows only stronger as time rolls on. As the poet so truthfully says:

"God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
What He hath given;
They live on earth, in word and deed, as truly
As in God's heaven."

Our band of brothers and sisters is still unbroken. My father's last wish was that we should remain united and happy while we lived on earth, that no division should ever enter our loving circle until, reunited by death, we should once more become "one family in heaven," where partings are unknown.

My brothers and sisters are now each one the head of a family; even I, myself, the old maiden auntie, have at last realized the dream of my life and am the happy possessor of a comfortable and cosy home of my own in this country I love.

We are all living in Muskoka now, with the exception of Sue, and we are doing our best to coax her to come to us. I believe we shall succeed before many years pass over our heads. Ben and his wife have a family of five daughters and a son, and Winnie has a family of five sons and a daughter, which evens things up nicely.

My house is near to them, and the young folks of both families are my constant visitors. From my bedroom window, when I go to my bed at night, I can see the lights at Winnie's, twinkling like stars, so I never feel lonely. I will spare you the details of how my little abode was planned and thought over for years—for anticipation has blossomed into reali-

zation—it is really built, and I am really living in it, and if God wills I mean to live in it for the remainder of my mortal life.

I must tell you that I met with some opposition when I decided to make Muskoka my home. Friends in Toronto felt sure I should never like it up here in the winter. They said, "Oh, it's all very well in the summer, but just wait till the cold weather." Well, I waited, and my first winter is a thing of the past, and I can truthfully say I never, in all the winters I have spent in Canada, felt the cold so little. I have worn no extra clothing, indeed I rarely put a hat on my head except when I go church on Sunday; a great saving on the millinery bills you see. I have never felt better, eaten better, slept better, than since I came here. Instead of longing to go back to my friends in Toronto, I am longing for my friends to come to me in Muskoka.

I won't say any more about the winter, for I mean to devote a chapter to that presently. It is only fair you should have Muskoka presented to you fairly, the hot and the cold sides. So to go back to "my home," I have no doubt you will laugh at the name. I owe it, I believe, to my nephew Tom, my sister Winnie's second son, whom the other children call "Tom the Torment," for he delights in teasing. Of this young gentleman also you will hear more later on. I had intended to give it a far more romantic name, but it has been dubbed "Old Maid's Lodge," and the title

seems to stick, so we will leave it at that. The fact is certain that the owner is an "old maid" and likely ever to remain so. I have come to the conclusion that it is best there should be one old maid in every family; for who is there so useful in sickness and trouble as an "old auntie." Has it not been the custom of my sisters and sisters-in-law, for long years past, when anything ails my young nephews and nieces, to say, "Send for Nan, she will come." And I leave my animals, chickens, ducks and the rest, which are all I have, to mother, and go to their assistance.

A wee niece said to me the other day, as she was watching me feed some little chicks, "You are just like a mother to them, Auntie." "Yes," I replied, "I am a regular 'old hen.'" She said, "If I were a little chicken, I'd rather have you for a mother than any of the other old hens." "Thank you, my dear, that is quite a compliment." But a new idea struck the little maid, and the next query was not so easily answered. "Auntie Nan, if you are their mother, I would like to know who is their father?" "Well," I said, "I think you will have to ask Santa Claus, he might know."

My brother Ben married very young. His wife was the daughter of a farmer who settled in Muskoka shortly before my father came here. His daughters look almost more like his sisters, for he still retains his youthful look, and to us always seems a boy. He

is a general favorite and known far and wide for his good-nature and love of fun. Everyone likes to hear his stories and, as he is so well acquainted with everybody and everything in Muskoka, his house is seldom without visitors, summer or winter. He is our nearest neighbor, except Winnie, and a little farther still Bet has her home—so we are growing quite a colony of Hathaways.

I have my visitors from the city, too, and very nice I feel it that I can have them in my own home. Of course, old maids are always welcome here; that is, the nice kind. The days are gone by when the typical old maid was described as a sour, disagreeable mischief-maker. As the old ditty says: "Pleased to ruin others' wooing; never happy in their own." No, I and my friends belong to the good-natured class, "who try to be happy, though single," and so far success has crowned our efforts. My sisters are the only ones who sometimes bemoan the fact that I am an old maid. They say I should have made such a good mother; even going so far as to nick-name me "the doting mother," which is an outrageous name for a spinster, though I think the mother love is strong in my heart, and many an argument have I had with Bet and Winnie as to whether it were not possible for me to love their children as much as they did. They always came off victorious, of course. But one thing sure, they must have some faith in my love for their offspring, for wherever there has been

a possibility of anything happening to either of them, the children were always committed to the care of Auntie Nan; though, I am thankful to say, such a contingency has never occurred, and I hope never will.

My brother Joe's farm is distant three or four miles. He has only two children, my dark-haired namesake and a son, another Joe, a strong and sturdy young fellow with an arm that could fell an ox.

Hathaway's Bay has also undergone quite a few changes in these years. The trees planted by my dear father and mother are towering nearly to the roof. Improvements have been made on every side. Where was once dry, sandy soil is now a verdant lawn. The apple trees they set are loaded every year down to the ground with fruit. Nowhere can we turn without seeing the handiwork of our dear departed ones. I think it is this which makes the place so dear to the hearts of their children. We see them in everything. As Whittier says, in words much more eloquent than any I can use:

"All lovely things by thee beloved
Shall whisper to our hearts of thee,
The sunset light of autumn eves
Reflecting on the deep still floods,
Cloud, crimson sky and trembling leaves
Of rainbow-tinted woods.
These, in our view, shall henceforth take
A tenderer meaning for your sake;
And all you loved, of earth and sky,
Seem sacred to your memory.

CHAPTER XIII.

SETTLERS AND TOURISTS.

"Now if anybody wants to feel above me, I look at it in this light, and philosophize on it this way: 'It probably does them some good, and it don't do me a mite of harm, so I let 'em feel. I have always made a practice of it. Because somebody *feels* as if they was better nor me—that don't make 'em so; if it did I should likely get up more int'rest in the subject, but it don't. It don't make them a mite better, nor me a mite worse, so I let 'em feel, for what harm does it do anyway.'"—*Samantha Allen.*

FOR the past few years the population of Muskoka has been gradually dividing itself into two classes—tourists and settlers, otherwise capital and labor, pleasure and toil, butterflies and bees, whichever you like to call them. The tourists we may liken to the butterflies, because they flock in upon us with the summer sunshine and the flowers. The hard-working settlers are like the bees, because they gather their honey with busy toil in the hot sun and store it away for the cold winter days. Between these two classes there is a great gulf fixed. It seems to come naturally to the pleasure-loving tourist to look down with a kind of pity on the hard-working settler, and it seems just as natural for the hard-working settler to look down on the giddy tourist;

and so, I suppose, it will remain to the end of the chapter. One thing is sure, each class would be very badly off without the other. If the busy little brown bees of settlers had not these lovely "tourist blossoms" from which they gather their honey, where would their winter supply come from? Do they not obtain it from these lovely American orchids and roses, these English violets and pansies, these Canadian lilies and daffodils, who come to us under the bewitching name of "tourist," and whose perfume is so sweet.

The very name of tourist has a charm in Muskoka; even the sunburnt settler children look forward with delight to the time of their arrival and burst out of the little schoolhouse singing:

"The tourists are coming, hurrah! hurrah!"

Every year that passes seems to bring these tourist blossoms and butterflies a little earlier, and they linger later in our midst. This region has so many charms for them that they are loth to depart and anxious to return.

It used to be, in years gone by, tourists were scarce in the early springtime—hardly one to be found before July. Perhaps it was the "deadly mosquito" and "fierce black fly" they feared, but now you may find them as early as May-day, and in June there is quite a goodly showing. The summer cottages are opened up, the snowy curtains once

more flutter from the open windows, the flags are hoisted, the hammocks swung, and everything proclaims that summer is here, and once more the "tourist" has taken possession of the land.

Isn't it wonderful? I appeal now to any of you who are in the habit of coming up here year after year to spend your summers. Isn't it wonderful how rapidly the houses are increasing on these lakes? They appear to be springing up like mushrooms on every island and point.

You can, as you are lying lazily in your boat out on the lake, count at least a dozen of them in sight without raising your head, and if "variety is the spice of life," Muskoka is well flavored in the matter of these summer abodes, for there are scarcely two of them alike. There is an endless variety as regards shape and size, which should suit every taste, and, like the mothers at a baby show, each one thinks their own the prettiest.

Look as you come down the Indian River now, after passing Port Carling. Why, the people will soon be shaking hands with their neighbors across from their verandahs, and don't the cottages look pretty as you are gliding past them in the boat, with their bright-colored flags and awnings, their shady verandahs, their pretty occupants waving their handkerchiefs as you pass? And then the quaint Indian names, in many cases marked out on the rocks so that everyone can read. Or go at night, when the

stars are shining and the houses lit up; every light, both earthly and heavenly, doubled by its reflection in the shining water.

What rapture, then, for you, young man, with your boat drifting slowly along, and the lady you love facing you in the starlight, her dark eyes looking love into your own. How many times in the future when you have returned to the city, and are once more in your office leaning wearily over your desk, will these scenes of enchantment arise before your eyes, and you will heave a sigh at the thought of those past hours of bliss. Yes, Muskoka in summer-time is a perfect elysium for lovers. And what an ideal place for the honeymoon! I think this latter fact is getting to be pretty generally known, and happy bridal couples are no strangers in the land. I have even heard of bridal chambers reserved for their special use at some of the larger hotels.

One bride gave me a very laughable account of her arrival at the Prospect House. She was a bright, lively girl, a friend of mine, who had married a widower with one son—a tall young fellow of seventeen. She was married in Toronto quietly one morning, but of course got the usual shower of rice as she entered the carriage to drive to the station. They went entirely alone to the Muskoka express, as she was very anxious not to be known as a bride. She thought she could pass for an old married woman, and the bridegroom being considerably older

than herself, though a very fine-looking man, she thought would aid the deception. But how is it and why, can you tell me, that the secret can never be kept? Even the porters on the cars, she said, all looked at them with a peculiar smile. Perhaps it was their guilty consciences which made them suspicious. She said on arriving at the hotel and being shown to her room she spread out a newspaper on the floor and, carefully, as she changed her dress, shook every grain of rice from her clothes, for rice is a terrible betrayer. Still, when they descended to the dining-room for supper she noticed there was quite a flutter of excitement and every face seemed turned in their direction, making her feel very much afraid the cat was out of the bag. Nevertheless, she put on a very straight face and by her manner endeavored to put them off the scent. The next morning, after breakfast, as she ran up to her room for her hat, the chamber-maid who was at work there, wishing to be friendly, remarked, "Muskoka is a lovely place for spending the honeymoon, ma'am." "Honeymoon!" said my friend, turning on her with a look of astonishment, "what do you mean?" "Why, aren't you a bride, ma'am?" answered the girl, rather taken aback. "Bride!" she replied in a tone of scorn, "what are you talking about?" and then breaking out into a merry laugh, "Why, we have a son nearly seventeen." At this moment her husband appeared at the door. "Haven't we a son nearly

grown up?" she asked him. "Yes," he said, and the maid, very much abashed, walked off, saying, "Well, I must tell them all different downstairs, for everyone of 'em believes you're only just married."

My friend found out at the next meal that every spark of interest on the part of these fellow-guests had vanished, and they were allowed to enjoy the bliss of becoming objects of perfect indifference to the curious crowd.

But to return to the tourists. If you want to judge in some degree of what the summer exodus from the city to Muskoka has become, plant yourself any morning in July, between the hours of ten and eleven in the waiting-room of the Union Station, Toronto, and watch the rush of passengers through the doors as the stentorian voice of "Bob" Harrison calls out the "Muskoka Express." See the worried, worn-out mothers who have been up since dawn preparing children and baggage for their yearly flight. See them come, dragging along their youthful progeny, one of whom has the family cat in a basket, and another is dangling the canary in its cage. See those gaily-dressed young damsels, giggling and laughing, laden with lunch baskets, fruit and novels. There is a *pater familias* with the tickets for his family, pushing through the crowd, two of his boys with fishing-rods and air-guns pressing on behind. Behold the worm merchant peddling his wares in little tin pails, at seventy-five cents each, warranted to contain a hundred, all alive and wriggling. Mus-

koka has fostered a new industry, you see. There is an invalid, sad-looking and pale, bound for the Sanitarium. May she find health and strength there. Here is a little fellow, with sand pail and shovel, crying because he has loosed from his mother's gown in the crush. Ah! here she is, red and perspiring, returning to look for him, so "dry your eyes, my little man." Here's a party of young dudes carrying valises, which I doubt not are stuffed full of fancy striped coats and white duck pants, with which, when donned, they intend making sad havoc amongst the summer girls on the lakes.

Let us follow the crowd downstairs and see the piles of baggage being loaded on the cars—cases of provisions, blankets and bedding, trunks, valises, boilers, tubs, pails, cradles, perambulators, every mortal thing you could think of—all bound for the "Muskoka Express."

Among these tourists the American element is getting more and more predominant every year; the Stars and Stripes is everywhere to be seen. Through trains from Buffalo and Niagara are now run every day during the season to Muskoka Wharf, from whence the pleasure-seekers diverge on their varied routes. Large numbers of Americans, too, are buying islands and land here and putting up houses for themselves and families, where they can entertain their friends and spend the summer months in true country fashion. These Americans, so far as I can

ascertain, are well liked by our settlers. They give employment to great numbers of them, are liberal with their money, straightforward in their dealings, and pleasant and unaffected in their manners. Many of them come from the Southern States in order to escape the intense heat of July and August, and they declare Muskoka to be a perfect paradise of coolness and refreshment; not that we don't have hot days here, very hot days, but the evenings are invariably cool and pleasant.

I think the Grand Trunk Railway has done a great deal during the last few years to advertise this district in the States, and we are now beginning to reap the benefit of their efforts, and will more so, I think, in years to come.

It is a pretty sight when the "Muskoka Express" runs down to the wharf and disgorges herself of her living freight, to see. once more, the stately *Medora*, dear to the heart of every dweller in Lake Joseph, the *Nipissing*, the *Islander*, the *Kenozha*, all waiting patiently for our advent, besides half a dozen or more private steam yachts (the number of these is fast increasing, and some of them are very handsome and beautifully fitted up); and then the lake, so darkly, deeply blue, the bright sky overhead, the fresh pure air we inhale, all seem to combine to raise our spirits to the highest pitch, and we crowd into the dining-room when we hear the welcome sound of the dinner-bell, and sit down with light hearts and happy faces

to enjoy the bountiful repast. I am afraid you will think I am always talking about eating; nevertheless, I must confess that I always think the dinner on the boat the pleasantest part of the trip. On a fine, warm day, when the windows are thrown open, you can gaze as you eat at the moving panorama of loveliness outside, feasting body and soul at the same time.

Tell me, if you can, what is there to excel it? And I must not forget to mention the pretty, attentive waitresses in their spotless attire, supplying all your wants with such deftness and grace. Where does the Muskoka Navigation Company manage to get all those bright, good-looking damsels? They must have some secret source of their own, for the supply never seems to fail.

When we have finished dawdling over our meal, and are feeling supremely happy and comfortably full, we ascend to the deck and sink into one of those big red rocking-chairs, to look around us and try to count the number of new houses since we were here last. It is not long before we arrive at "Beaumaris," which will soon be a town if it keeps on increasing at its present rate. Then follows Port Carling, where the usual afternoon crowd has gathered to meet the boats. The wharf and the wide steps are crowded with sun-burnt, happy-looking mortals, sitting and standing; laughing and joking boys with hats of many colours, like Joseph's coat, studded with feminine

soubriquets (the latest fad); girls with immense sun-bonnets, or peaked caps, dresses all colours of the rainbow, appearances as varied as the cottages they dwell in. Behold the Muskoka tourist in all his glory!!

Now for my settler friends, who will think I am quite forgetting them, these little brown bees, these busy toilers of the whole year round.

I have just been reading Mrs. Moody's book, "Roughing it in the Bush," with which many of my readers may be familiar. Of course, it deals with a much earlier day than ours, dating, I think, between the years 1830-40, which is more than thirty years previous to our arrival in this country. I cannot but think, though, she must have been very unfortunate in the class of settlers she encountered when she first took up her abode in the backwoods. I can assure you that, fortunately, the Muskoka settlers cannot claim the slightest relationship with them. My experience has been, happily for me, the exact reverse of hers.

The Muskoka settlers are mostly respectable English and Scotch families, who have come out to this country, as my own father did, in order to escape from the high rents and unjust restrictions of the "*old* land," and to endeavor to make homes for themselves and earn a decent living in the *new*. I am only too well aware that many of the older ones, nay, nearly all of them, have suffered severe hardships, toiled without

ceasing, borne the heat and burden of the day without complaint. But what matters that if, blest with contentment and good health, their homes and land are their own; every hour they spend in labor, every dollar they lay out, goes towards the improvement of their own homes, and not into a landlord's pocket.

I know the land in Muskoka is for the most part rocky and rough, but everywhere there are patches fit for cultivation, and at the present time a great and increasing demand exists for everything that can be grown thereon. "The good time coming" is plainly in view for the Muskoka settler. If the summer population increases at the same ratio in which it has in the last few years, I see no reason why every settler in ten years from now should not be a wealthy man. So take courage, my hard-working fellow settlers, the time of prosperity is at hand.

Some years ago, while visiting a well-to-do farmer in the township of Blanshard, five miles from the town of St. Mary's, I was struck with the number of handsome, well-built houses which lay a little back from the road as we drove along. I remarked to my friend, the farmer who was driving me, "The folks must be pretty well off here to build such houses." "Well," he said, "there's a good many years of toil behind most of them. Look there," pointing with his whip, "see that old log shanty there, down in that hollow; that's where Mr. —— used to live, and now look at his house on the hill," pointing to a handsome

brick residence; and for the remainder of our drive he amused himself with showing me, as he passed the various farms which lay along the road, the old house and the new standing in such striking contrast, the old one, in most cases, converted into wood-shed or barn. He also informed me, with a chuckle, that the pity was, the old folks had lived so long in the old shanty that they did not take very kindly to the new mansion, and that they stuck to the kitchen with great tenacity, rarely using the fine front rooms, the back door being invariably used as the entrance. "Well," he concluded, "the young 'uns are growing up, and they, having bin eddicated up to date, will mos' likely set in the front parlor, and walk in at the front door." Most likely they will, my friend; at least, it is to be hoped so.

Well, I believe in the future we settlers in Muskoka will have just such fine houses to live in, and we shall rejoice in the possession of not only comforts but luxuries. We shall have furnaces and hot-water radiators, instead of stoves; the water will be brought into our houses instead of having to be dipped from the lake; we shall have gas in every room, and say farewell to the old coal-oil lamp. In fact, I think everything good for the human race is journeying rapidly Muskoka-ward.

I suppose I may be forgiven by the sterner sex if, before I close this chapter, I just say a word in praise of the Muskoka women. They have shared nobly in

the toils and privations of their husbands and sons. Patiently and uncomplainingly they have set themselves to work to make the best of their surroundings, and have labored hard to improve them; they have kept house on very short commons without murmuring, they have been true helpmeets in every sense of the word. I would like to quote here a few lines from the speech of Lady Aberdeen on "Women in Canada" given before the Colonial Section of the Society of Arts, in London, a short time since. She said:

"There cannot be too much said about the beauties, the attractions, and the rich promise of life in Canada; but its present position, as I have said before, has been won by the unremitting toil of its pioneer settlers, and none have borne a heavier share of that toil than the young mothers, who, well educated themselves and brought up in comfortable homes, have afterwards passed through all the vicissitudes of rearing young families far away on the great lone prairies, or in the depths of the forests and mountains.

"But you will say, but what of the result; what of the women in Canada of to-day? It was only when I began to prepare this paper that I felt how rash I had been to attempt to paint the life and work of Canadian women in one brief hour.

"Perhaps I can best sum up the chief impression made upon me by very close intercourse and friendship with them for several years, official and unofficial, by one word which is much in our mouths to-day—

EFFICIENCY. French-Canadian or Manitoban, Nova Scotian, British Columbian, or the women of Ontario, they are all alike hall-marked by this stamp.

"We read the stories of the hardships and dangers endured by those earliest settlers in Canada as if they were fairy tales; but they are fairy tales which, handed down to generation after generation of children at their mother's knee, make for a high ideal of personal and patriotic duty."

CHAPTER XIV.

TORMENTING TOM.

"Look there! look there! now he's up in the air,
Now he's here, now he's there,
Now he's no one knows where;
See, see!! he's kicked over a table and chair.
There they go, all the strawberries, flowers, and
sweet herbs,
Turned o'er and o'er, down on the floor,
Every caper he cuts, oversets or disturbs."

—"*Ingoldsby Legends.*"

WHEN I was a young girl in the Old Country I was once complaining to an old aunt of my father's of the whims and vagaries of my younger brothers and sisters, of how one was selfish, and another cross, until she, wise woman, stopped me, saying, in a serious tone, "How many are there of you, Nan?" I answered, "Six." "Oh!" she replied, "you are just one of six; now you must not forget that each one of those six children possesses an entirely different individuality; that each one has his or her special faults and failings, also virtues. My advice to you, dear Nannie, is to look for their good qualities instead of their defects. You know what a wise man once said to me, 'Never look too hard, except for

something agreeable; you can find all the disagreeable things in the world between your hat and your boots.'"

Dear old aunt, I thought she was rather severe upon me at the time, but her words were never forgotten, and perhaps it was due to pondering over her remarks that I acquired the habit of noticing the marked differences we constantly observe between brothers and sisters, children of the same parents, associating constantly with the same people, brought up in the same home, yet developing into characters so widely divergent, and in all their tastes so far apart. This habit, which has grown stronger with years, led me on to become intensely interested in another subject, that of heredity, with which it is closely associated. What a marvellous thing it seems that enclosed in the form of that tiny baby are unnumbered traits, not only of feature but of character, inherited from generations of ancestors, all differing from each other, and yet everyone bearing in mind and body the family stamp in a greater or lesser degree.

I think it was in the Toronto street-cars I made most of my studies in this line. I had numberless opportunities riding back and forth to business, and an endless and constantly changing series of faces to observe, so I used to amuse myself with studying those within my range—perhaps it would be father, mother and children, and you would see a little girl a small miniature of the male parent, a small boy labelled "mother" all over, or still another child a

curious mixture of both parents. I have often seen a group of three generations, perhaps the careful grandmother going shopping with her married daughter, accompanied by various young olive branches, where you might chance to find the same face in three different stages of existence—childhood, womanhood, old age.

Another curious fact is, that these striking family resemblances are most observable by complete strangers, or by friends who have been absent from us for a considerable length of time. I will give you an instance of this which occurred to me a few years ago. I was sitting with a friend on the verandah at Hathaway's Bay, watching the departure of the morning boat, when a complete stranger, a lady who was sitting near me, evidently an American, turned at the sound of my voice, and looking me full in the face, said, "Surely you are one of the Hathaways." "Yes," I said, "I am Mr. Hathaway's eldest daughter." "Oh," she continued, still gazing at me, "but you are like your grandfather." "My father, you mean," I replied, for I knew it was impossible she could have known my grandfather, who died in England years ago. "No," she still affirmed, "I mean your grandfather," and then she explained that in the parlor she had seen an oil painting of my grandfather, which had been brought from England to this country after his death.

I said to the friend who was sitting with me,

"Come, let us go and look at the picture," for I had no idea, often as I had seen it, that I resembled it in any way, and I was anxious to see the likeness for myself, and whether it was truly so startling. Strange to say, we could both see it very plainly. I don't believe it was there in my youth, but as I grew older the latent resemblance, unnoticed until now, must have increased, so that since then, whenever I look in the mirror, I can see it plainly—my dear old grandfather's face in my own. But you will be saying, what has all this to do with Tom? Tormenting Tom! Well, I am coming to him now. I have told you of Muskoka tourists, Muskoka settlers, now the next two chapters will be about something far more interesting—to me, at least—namely, Muskoka children.

I have not far to go to find them, for Winnie is just across the road with her six; though Letto, my eldest nephew, would not care for me calling him a child—he is a young man now, tall and fair, with a suspicion of a mustache. Letto is the favorite with all the children, for he is so gentle and good-natured. Tom is Winnie's second son, and of quite a different stamp. Then follows the gentle Ophelia, the only girl—who is, like Letto, tall and fair, and has the pathetic droop in the corners of her mouth which makes her resemble her Shakespearean namesake. But it is of Tom this chapter is to tell, so here goes. Tom arrived in this world a thoroughbred Hathaway, not a trace in him of the gentle Letto, who belonged

OPHELIA AT THE SPRING.

entirely to the Roberts' side of the house; but Tormenting Tom was a rampant, roaring Hathaway. Winnie knew it when she heard the first loud cry from his expanding lungs, and as he grew and developed, we arrived at the conclusion that all the energy, destructiveness and mischievous qualities of many generations of dead and gone Hathaways must be concentrated in that small boy.

Unlike Letto, who had been an angelic baby, Tom was never at rest. He had a large head, which was perfectly bald till he was about a year old, though his mother was always anxiously looking over it to see if there were any signs of sprouting hair. This big head of his was always getting bumped; being the most prominent part of his body, it appeared to be always in the way. When he was about eight months old, Winnie brought them both down with her on a visit to the city. Sue's little boy was then about six months old, and was the happy possessor of a baby carriage and a small nurse-maid. Sue good-naturedly made the offer to put another little seat in the perambulator so that Master Tom could share her baby's daily promenade.

Well do I remember the first start after the carriage had been fixed. We all proceeded out to the sidewalk to place Master Tom in position. The babies were to face one another, and Winnie carefully seated Tom opposite his small cousin. The two

glared at each other for a moment, then Tom, with a howl of rage, threw himself forward, snatched the other baby's hat off, threw it in the street, and then seizing him by the hair with one hand did his best to scratch out his eyes with the other. We hastily separated and endeavored to soothe the youthful pugilists, but to no purpose. Tom's fighting blood was roused, and the double carriage scheme had to be sorrowfully abandoned.

I think it was two years after this, and when Ophelia was a baby, that I next saw Tom. Their mother brought them all once more on a visit to Sue. I will only tell you one little anecdote of Master Tom on this occasion; it will serve as an illustration of his keen sense of humor and love of imitation even at the early age of two and a half years. It was a rainy afternoon, and to amuse the children I had given them a whole pile of those little squares of pine used in the city for kindling. They were happily engaged playing on the floor with these blocks when a loud outcry from Sue's boy told me something was wrong. I found he had run a small splinter into his finger, but with my needle I soon removed the cause of the trouble, the other two gazing open-mouthed while the operation was being performed. After a few minutes I missed Master Tom, and, fearing he was in some mischief, I got up from my work to discover where he was. I found him hidden in a small space between the stove and the

wall, sitting on the floor, but so intent in the performance he was engaged in that he did not perceive me looking down on him. Fancy! the young urchin was carefully fixing a small splinter in his own finger, exactly as it was in the other child's. I said nothing, but quietly returned to my seat to await further developments. In a few moments the rogue emerged from his retreat extending his finger towards me with the splinter sticking up, but holding his hand very carefully, for he had not the courage to push it in far. I do wish you could have seen the expression of his face; it was most ludicrous. He was trying to screw up his small features into a look of agony, at the same time his twinkling eyes were full of the keenest humor. I snatched up the young hypocrite and rolled him on the table and we both laughed till we cried.

The next scene of Tom's youthful days which I shall relate was in Muskoka. I was not an eye-witness, but have heard the story told so often that I know it by heart. Churches were not numerous, nor church services frequent in Muskoka at this time, and as Winnie's home was away in the bush, her third child (the little girl) was about three months old before an opportunity presented itself of getting them baptized. She heard then that a service was to be held in a little English church distant three or four miles from them, on Easter Sunday, and she and Mr. Roberts made up their minds to take the three

children there. My sister Bet and brother Ben and his wife were to act as sponsors to John Hamlet, Thomas and the small Ophelia, in the absence of the other aunties, and Winnie took great pains to impress on the minds of Letto and Tom for some days before the necessity of good behaviour, assuring them they would not be hurt, and explaining in as simple words as she could how they must conduct themselves. She had no fear about the angelic Letto, but her heart failed her when she looked at the sturdy Tom. Direful forebodings of what might happen when the white-gowned minister took hold of him filled her maternal bosom. Bet, however, laughed at her fears, and said, "You just leave him to me and he'll be all right," which Winnie only too gladly agreed to do. The eventful Sunday arrived, and it was fine and warm. The walk through the woods was rather tiring, and they were glad to reach the church and sit down. Mr. Roberts took charge of Letto, Winnie had the baby, and Tom remained under the strict surveillance of Auntie Bet.

The baby was baptized first, and as the cold water roused her from her peaceful slumbers her plaintive wailing so filled the church that Winnie had to retire with her to the porch, and so escaped the concluding scenes of the ceremony. Mr. Roberts next handed over Letto, and of course he behaved well, though he turned very white and shook in every limb. Now came Tom's turn. When he saw the minister advancing towards him he burst into a loud roar and

clung to Bet's skirts like grim death. The clergyman, however, was not daunted, He was a muscular Christian and not unused to such scenes, so with a mighty effort he succeeded in detaching Tom and raising him in his arms. The howling now was redoubled, but the minister did his best to make his voice heard as he proceeded with the service, Tom wildly clawing at his face and hair and kicking for all he was worth. The climax was reached when, with his continued struggling, Tom began to slide downwards. First his legs, then his body, began to emerge from his garments, leaving his clothes in a bunch round his head, and still in the strong grasp of "his reverence."

Bet said she stood it to this point, but when she saw Tom's body emerging from his clothes, his legs striking out in every direction like the sails of a windmill, and the clergyman, the perspiration standing on his brow, but still holding on and saying at the top of his voice, "Fighting manfully under his banner," it was too much even for equanimity, and she stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth and, bowing her head, tried to hide her inward convulsions of mirth. I am always thankful I was not present; goodness knows how I might have conducted myself. Tom, being at last released, flew to his mother in the porch, they all heaved a sigh of relief, and the service was concluded in peace.

Tom was a great boy for his mother—rarely could

he be tempted from her side. Letto from a baby would be good with anybody, but Tom was just the reverse. He was also the most profuse weeper it was ever my lot to meet. He literally shed "floods of tears;" they rained over his face in perfect streams. I used to wonder wherever they came from, the fountain appearing inexhaustible. His mother had fairly to steal away from him when she wished to go anywhere. Once I remember she brought them both with her to my father's, and left them with us while she went over to the island at the mouth of the bay to spend the morning gathering huckleberries. Tom did not miss her for about an hour, and then there was a great outcry; nothing could pacify him, the tears flowed in torrents, and it seemed impossible to staunch the flood.

At last my father, unable to stand it any longer, bethought him of a pair of field-glasses which he had put away in a box. He got them out and adjusted them, then went to the front of the house to find out whether he could see Winnie. Yes! there she was, picking away on the island. He called Master Tom. "Now, then, come here! Will you be good if I show you your mother? Will you stop that roaring if you can see her with your own eyes?" Tom promised, and father held the glasses to his eyes. Ah! how his face changed when he saw the beloved form through the magic glass. Yes! there was mother right enough, but as father took away the glasses she

"TORMENTING TOM," WITH HIS SEVEN ORPHANS.

disappeared, and again the cries burst forth, "She's gone! She's gone!" Once more the magic machine was brought forth, and Tom again satisfied himself of her presence; once more, on withdrawing his eyes, she vanished; and so it went on until at last to our great delight we saw Winnie get into the boat and start for home.

As Tom grew up he developed a strong taste for teasing; he seemed always on the watch for any opportunity of tormenting the younger ones. There was a continual cry in the house, and out of it, too, of "Oh, Tom!" "Stop, Tom!" "For shame, Tom!" I could fill a book with stories of his tricks, but as I have some other children to tell you about I will leave Tom for the present. You will hear of him again, maybe, in the future.

But I am forgetting to explain the picture of Tom with his seven puppies. He was a great lover of animals, and though he delighted to tease them, was never cruel, especially to the weak and helpless. He was always encountering stray dogs and bringing them home, thereby bringing down on his head the wrath of his mother, who declared she would not have her house turned into an asylum for waifs and strays.

Once when Tom was sent on an errand to a neighbor's he was taken to see seven puppies, who were only a few weeks old. Thinking to play a trick on his mother, he begged the owner to lend them to him for a short time, and then proceeded home with

his load. Entering the house he called out, "Don't be cross, mother, but I have adopted seven little orphans."

"Orphans?" said Winnie, coming forward, and then she spied the seven little dogs. Oh, goodness! how she went on, and Tom drawing her out, combatting all objections, till he had her nearly furious, the villain. While the controversy was at its height a young lady visitor, unknown to Master Tom, took a snap-shot of him and then gave it to me. He will be rather astonished when he sees his picture in this book. But serve him right, say I.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "IMMORTAL WILLIAM."

"Make but my name thy love
And love that still,
And then thou lov'st me,
For my name is Will."
—*Shakespeare's Sonnets.*

"HAVE I got to die, Auntie Nannie? Gladys says I must die." Fancy a small earnest face upturned to yours, gazing at you with two serious blue eyes belonging to a little man just four years old. Such a question from a child? For a moment I was puzzled how to reply, and taking him on my knee I said, "Why Willie, I hope you will live for a long, long time, and grow up to be a good man and be very happy and have lots of people to love you."

"But have I got to die?" again earnestly asked the child, and not knowing what had filled his mind with such a subject I called to his little cousin, Ben's youngest girl, with whom he had been playing in the next room, and asked her what she had been saying to Willie. She, hanging her head and looking rather shame-faced, replied hurriedly, "Well, I told him everybody in the world had got to die, and he

would have to die too some day sure, just like my little bunny rabbit, but I didn't 'ezackly know which day ; and he'll be put in a hole in the ground and be covered with leaves like the babes in the wood."

I looked at the two children, such a complete contrast. Gladys, a dark-haired, rosy-cheeked, sturdy little maiden of seven, her eyes sparkling, and whole being bubbling over with life and energy. Willie, frail, delicate, spirituelle, his small white face so transparent that every thought of his intensely active brain seemed mirrored on its surface. I never saw a face in which the action of the mind could be so easily read. "Mind" and "Matter" this small pair of cousins might be aptly named.

I thought my wisest plan was to endeavor to turn their attention to some other subject, and succeeded for a time, but Willie was evidently deeply impressed. The thoughtless words of his playmate had taken a strong hold of his imagination, and when half an hour later a visitor came in, a lady whom he knew well, he ran up to her at once, saying "Have I got to die?" The lady, rather startled, looked to me for explanation, which I gave her after I had sent the children away to play. Winnie told me that his first words on reaching home that evening were "Mother, have I got to die?" Dear little Willie. Death overshadowed him even before his birth, for he was born only a few weeks after we had lost our dear father, and while our hearts were still sore from the shock of

our mother's death. No wonder that he had a hard fight for life, the darling, and that his little body is so frail and his face so white. But God heard his mother's prayers and spared her boy, and the months and years of his short life have served but to enshrine him ever deeper in our hearts. Since "Auntie Nan" arrived here she has enjoyed the distinction of being one of his prime favorites, and "Old Maid's Lodge" is his second home.

Willie was born on the day his brother Ephraim was seven years old, and Winnie always calls them her twins. Bet, who was staying there for the occasion, describes their first meeting: "The children were all away at school when Willie was born, but when they came home to dinner she called Ephraim (who was my father's namesake) and told him to come upstairs; and when he arrived she placed the baby in his arms saying, "There is your birthday present." Poor boy, he turned first red and then white; the surprise was so great he was quite overcome, but it gave him a sense of ownership as regards the baby. Ever after he called Willie "my infant," and would come in from school every day asking "How is my infant?" And the "twins" to this day remain the most loving of comrades.

Before we go any further I must explain to you, for fear there should be any mistake, that the "Immortal William" is not named after William, Prince of Orange. No! to English people, and especially

Warwickshire people, there is only one William and that is the "Immortal Shakespeare." Not but that I have the greatest respect for the "Orange William," though I hardly ever heard his name till I came to this country and lived in Toronto, where the great procession of Orangemen on the twelfth of July was quite a revelation to me. How my heart throbbed with pride as I saw those hundreds of men marching along with the bands of music, the banners and the flowers; above all, the open Bible carried through the streets with the glorious motto waving above it, "Protestant rights we will maintain." How it thrilled through my very being, for I am a "Protestant of the Protestants," and glory in the name. Born of a long line of sturdy "independent" ancestry, our family motto has ever been "for faith and freedom"; and in this new land of our adoption, which is happily free from so many ecclesiastical swaddling-bands and rags of ancient mummery, let us ever uphold the Divine freedom of man and "equal rights to all."

But to return to little Willie. He visits me nearly every day, and generally arrives soon after breakfast, walking, if fine, or if wet or snowy hoisted on the shoulder of one of the older branches of the family. This morning he greeted me with the question, "Auntie, am I a nuisance?" "No; who said such a thing to you, Willie?" "Well, mamma said when I wanted Letto to carry me over here dreck'ly after brexfus', that I must be a nuisance to you. I'm not a

nuisance, am I, auntie?" regarding me with most imploring eyes. "No, my darling; tell her you are my greatest blessing; I couldn't do without you," and immediately his face assumed an expression of supreme content. He is the greatest little questioner, and gives me no peace; one subject succeeds another. Last week it was colors. What color is this? What color is that? "What color is the sky?" "Blue." "What color is my dress?" "Blue, too." "Well," looking from the sky to his dark blue frock with a puzzled look, "they are not alike." "No, your dress is navy blue." A long pause, eyes fixed gravely on the dress, then extending his legs, intently surveying them, "And are my stockings gravy blue, too?"

To-day he arrived greatly worked up about the meaning of the word to-morrow. He burst out indignantly, "When is it s'morrow? They all keep saying 's'morrow and s'morrow,' and when I get up in the morning I say, Now it's s'morrow, and they say, 'No, it's s'morning.' Then after dinner I say, Now, is it s'morrow? and they say, 'No, it's s'afternoon.' When is s'morrow? That's what I want to know." I leave to my philosophical readers the answer to this question.

He is getting pretty well acquainted with the days of the week. His beloved twin stays home Saturday—no school; then he learnt it was the next day to Friday, and Sunday came after the holiday,

and so on. But the months of the year are rather more trouble. The future is always September. "The violets will bloom—in September." "The chickens will hatch—in September." "Santa Claus will come—in September." "I will be a big man—in September," and so on *ad libitum*.

Willie for the most part of the time has to play alone, for Ephraim is at school. He is therefore indebted to his own inventive brains for means of amusement. His father keeps a horse, cow and pig, and these animals are most attentively watched and copied by the Immortal William. Their every action is studied and imitated to perfection. He takes turns in representing the various animals. He is generally accosted on his arrival in the morning with the question, "Well, what are you to-day, Willie?" and the reply is, I am a cow, or horse, or perhaps a colt, as the case may be. Then every action of the chosen animal is faithfully and cleverly represented. Honestly, I, being a greenhorn, have become familiar with all the motions of the animals, not from my own observations of them, but from Willie's antics. Often I fairly laugh aloud as I pass cows and horses on the roadside and see them making exactly the movements which Willie has gone through for our amusement. To see him lick his shoulder, toss his head, kick up his heel, chew his cud, is really too ridiculous.

Of course, if he is horse or cow, after simply

announcing the fact the rest is all dumb show. You might ask him a dozen questions, but the only reply would be a toss of the head, a whinny or a moo as the case might require. If he is a cow he must needs have a bell, also, more important still, a long tail. Anything lying around at all resembling that useful appendage is immediately appropriated for that purpose. His mother had a good laugh the other day. There was a lady staying there, and one morning she, not being very well, did not get up to breakfast. Willie, running past her bedroom door and peeping in, saw a long hair switch lying on the dressing table. He trotted down to his mother in the greatest state of excitement. "Oh, mamma! mamma! there's a lovely cow's tail in Miss Brown's room on the table. Oh, do ask her to lend it me. I won't lose it; I'll be awful careful." "Bless the boy," she said, "that would never do; it is hair; she wears it herself." "Wears it herself!" he replied, gazing at her with eyes wide with astonishment, "what does she want with a tail? She's no cow," (the last with great scorn.) "Do ask her to lend it me, mamma, just for one day." Poor Willie! she had to send him away quite cast down. She would not have had Miss Brown know of Willie's longing desires for anything, because she was rather a touchy person, and for the next day or two Winnie fairly trembled at meal times when she saw the child's eyes, full of admiration, steadfastly fixed on the summit of Miss

Brown's cranium, whereon reposed in all its glossy stateliness the much coveted cow's tail.

Willie, after recovering from his disappointment, turned his thoughts and ambition in another direction, and one day, soon after, came to his mother with two or three pieces of rag rolled up like small sausages, and wanted them sewed down the front of his little dress. After this was done he ran outside, falling on all fours on the grass, calling out as he did so, "Now, I'm the cow; just come and milk me!" This milking proved a serious business: being a novelty, every one was pressed into the service, till the thing got rather monotonous, except to the young cow, who would come sometimes, almost in tears, saying to Winnie, "Ephraim won't milk me"; and when she appealed to the recreant he would toss his head and say, "I can't be milking him all the time," so the poor little cow had sometimes to remain unmilked.

When Willie personated a horse he always wanted work, so he used to draw chips on a tiny sleigh and bring them into the kitchen, always waiting patiently, if I was engaged, till I was at liberty to unload them and put them in the wood-box. This, of course, the horse never did. Occasionally he was a frisky young colt, and then I had to personate the old "mother horse." I used to call the sofa the stable, and generally coaxed the young colt to take his afternoon nap by lying down with him by my side. Willie's candid

remarks to visitors and strangers are often the source of amusement, though sometimes he puts us to confusion by being anything but complimentary. He said to a maiden lady of middle age who was here last week, and was remarking on his fondness for me, "Wouldn't you like to have me for an auntie, too, Willie"? she asked him. "No!" he said, most emphatically, but after looking her over critically for a minute, added, "I would have you for a grandmother; grandmothers die soon, you know." The lady looked anything but flattered, though I tried to smooth it over by saying he had never known his grandmother, had been told she was dead, and so he had got hold of the idea of death in association with the name.

Another spinster, who wore spectacles, he accosted with the remark, "Do you call yourself a *young* lady, Miss Jones?" "Well, yes, Willie," she said, bridling and coloring (for Willie had put the emphasis strongly on the young), "I suppose I am what you might call a young lady." "What!" he said, "with those specs?" with the most innocent look of surprise imaginable. Even at the risk of offending, we could not help but laugh.

Auntie Sue sent him at Christmas a book of animal pictures when he was three years old, and these proved a source of never-ending amusement. The questions he asks about the various animals are innumerable, and he is quick to see the resemblance between them and human beings. The following spring

he was playing in their garden, which adjoins the Government road, when he came running in, calling loudly, "Mamma, mamma! come quick, there's a monkey just gone up the road, a great big monkey! running so fast!" She ran to the window, and just caught a glimpse of—what think you, my readers, you young dudes in short pants and fancy stockings? A man on a bicycle! The first the child had ever seen, and such was his impression.

I think the monkeys in his book were the greatest favorites. There was one big ourang-outang, standing by a stump, which greatly interested him, and came near being the cause of serious offence to an old friend of his father's. This gentleman, who never shaved and was very hairy, and also short-sighted, called at their house one day, and as he had never seen Willie, took special notice of him, taking him on his knee and asking him questions; Willie meanwhile fixing his eyes on him with the expression of a snake looking at its charmer. At last the gentleman said, "You don't know my name, my little man, now do you?" "In course I do," responded Willie, promptly, for he was recovering from his shyness, "you are the monkey man, the big hairy monkey man! I've got your picture in my book, I'll go and fetch it," suiting the action to the word, but his mother caught hold of him and adroitly changed the subject.

Willie's mother is trying to instil into his youthful mind some of the rudiments of theology, but is often

THE "IMMORTAL WILLIAM" IN HIS FIRST PAIR OF OVERALLS.

brought up short by the aptness of his replies and the quaint ideas of his little brain. For instance, God he calls the "Man in the sky," and he is continually asking such questions as, "Will the Man in the sky laugh and be glad when he sees all the wood your little horse has drawn for you, mamma?" "Will the Man in the sky be sorry if I cry when the soap goes in my eyes?" Satan he alludes to with a face of awe as "that bad boy that we mustn't say his name."

While I am writing this he is beside me, and the questions come thick and fast. I will close this chapter with reporting our conversation for the next ten minutes.

I had given him two or three cards to look at to keep him quiet, but they do not seem to have that effect. He has selected one, an Easter card, the usual thing, angel ringing the bells, doves flying round and so on, "Auntie, what house is this?" "That is a church." "What is a church, auntie?" "God's house." "Aren't all the houses God's, auntie?" "Yes, they ought to be." "Are all the people that go to church God's, too?" "Well, we hope so." "What is this woman doing?" pointing to the angel. "That's an angel ringing the bells." "Do angels always go round in their nighties, auntie? Aren't they cold? Do their feathers keep them warm?" "I guess so," I reply. A pause for a moment, followed by another examination of the card. "What is she ringing the bells for, auntie?" "Because it's Easter," I say shortly. "Are

these the Easters, auntie?" pointing to the doves. "Are all these little Easters flying round?" "No, those are doves." "Ducks, auntie! Can they swim?" "Doves! Doves!" I say, rather impatiently, but no one, however crusty, can ever be vexed with Willie; he is so sensitive to a word of blame, and so anxious to please, that we have to be extremely careful not to hurt his feelings. If we speak harshly to any one in his presence, even the dog, the corners of his little mouth go down and the eyes fill with tears. But it is time I ended this chapter, so for the present we will wish Willie good-bye.

CHAPTER XVI.

COWS AND COW-BELLS.

Hear the cattle with their bells—
Tinkling bells,
What a tale of terror oft their jingle jangle tells.
In the middle of the night,
When the moon is shining bright,
How we start up in our beds
Thinking of our cabbage heads ;
Of the open garden gate, left last night by careless Kate.
And the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging and the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows.
Yes, the ear distinctly tells
In the jangling and the wrangling
How the danger ebbs and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling
In the tinkling of the bells—
Of the bells ! belis ! bells !
—With apologies to the shade of Edgar A. Poe.

THE settlers in Muskoka would be badly off without their cows. In the early days, when my father first came here, cows were few and far between ; happy the man who was the lucky possessor of one. Nowadays, though still valuable, they are by no means so scarce. But as " there is no rose

without a thorn," so there is no cow without a fault, and the particular fault of the Muskoka cows (for they are all tarred with the same brush, though some of deeper dye than others) is a dogged determination to break down every fence, enter every enclosure, and devour all vegetation found therein.

Wherever the unlucky settler has spent time and labor in beautifying and enriching some special corner, and has solemnly made up his mind that no cow shall ever enter there—enforcing his prohibition by enclosing his precious piece of property with high fences, barbed wire and strong gates—no sooner does he turn his back than his own cows, or his neighbors' cows, or both together, hold a consultation, find out the weakest spot in his fortifications, then charge, and as the old song says, "Locks, bolts and bars soon fly asunder," and a nice scene of devastation awaits the poor owner on his return. Perhaps the Muskoka cows owe their peculiar agility and dare-devil nature to what we might call their continued hand-to-mouth struggle for a bare existence in the bush, for seven months in the year the Muskoka cow has to hustle for her own living. In May and June, of course, everything is green, tender and luxuriant; but wait till the hot sun of July and August has dried up the scanty herbage along the country roads, and the tender twigs and shoots are no longer to be found in the bush. Is it any wonder that a cow of common-sense (and nowhere are there more sensible cows than

in Muskoka) will cast a longing eye over the fence at those succulent cabbages, that sweet green corn, those ripe tomatoes.

Then comes the tug of war. The owners of those favored spots must be ever on the watch. It behoves them to sleep with one eye open and both ears, for the onslaught most frequently occurs in the night. If you are possessed of a good dog you are lucky, for instead of careering wildly round your garden and clearing yourself, in scanty night attire, you can send the dog to perform that part of the programme in your stead. Of course the cows make a stampede in every direction but the right one. Of course they trample down your most precious treasures in their flight; but you are only too thankful to see them outside once more and to close the gate after them and get back to your warm bed, leaving the light of morn to reveal the extent of their depredations. Winnie could relate some cow stories in this line, how many a time Mr. Roberts has risen in his wrath, and snatching his gun (which generally happens to be unloaded, luckily for the cows) has gone out, breathing threats of vengeance, death and murder in his heart.

Bet has an old roan cow who is the ringleader of all the cows in the neighborhood. I think she plans all their escapades. She is what you might call commander-in-chief, like her mistress. Now Winnie and her family are death on this cow. They were

even so wicked last fall as to propose that she should be killed, quartered, and divided up amongst the lot of us. They consider, with their ringleader gone, the other cows would be more amenable to reason. They have not the duplicity and far-sightedness of Bet's old roan—due, no doubt, to her long years of experience in foraging. Her life, you may say, for some time trembled in the balance. I myself was not greatly in favor of dividing and eating her, as I have arrived at an age when my teeth are none of the best, and I fear she would prove but a tough morsel. But, anyway, her absence from these scenes so familiar would cause no regret on anybody's part. It was not to be, though ; "justice was tempered with mercy" and her life spared for one more year, much to the disgust of the Roberts' family.

Another failing of the Muskoka cow, to which she is very prone, is to absent herself at the milking hour. The cows seem to be always playing truant. If their bells cannot be heard it is a matter of mere conjecture whether to start north, south, east or west in pursuit of them. Of course, it goes without saying the route chosen is always the wrong one, and many a mile has the unlucky wight in charge of them often to travel before he hears the welcome "tinkle tinkle of their bells."

When I took possession of "Old Maid's Lodge" I soon made up my mind that a cow of my very own I must have. I thought of the thick cream in my tea,

the butter just fresh from the churn, the foaming new milk; and so my brother-in-law was instructed to be on the lookout and get me one as soon as possible. I wanted her to be young, so that I could train her in the way she should go. So he bought me a pretty little red and white heifer.

A friend of mine, whom I was taking proudly to see my new possession, said, "First of all, give her a name, then keep calling her by it until she knows it and comes to your call; then reward her with some little dainty, and you'll never have any trouble at milking time."

I proceeded to act on his advice. As to the name, we decided on Belle, because I had a baby Belle staying here with her mother at the time, and she was to have the honor of naming the new cow. We coaxed her up in front of the house and then placed the baby on her back. The two made such a pretty picture that Tom ran off for his camera to take a photo of them; but it proved no easy task. Both of the Belles were continually on the move. Though nearly a loaf of bread and a bowl of sugar were consumed in the attempt to obtain a moment's repose, the results were far from satisfactory. In one negative the cow had two heads; in another baby Belle had four hands; in still another the two Belles were so inextricably mixed up that it was impossible to tell which was which. So we had to abandon the idea of the photograph, much to our regret.

Belle soon learned to know her name. She is only too eager to answer my call; indeed, she comes without any call, and the disadvantage is that her nose is always poking in at the back door looking for more bread and sugar. In the fall, when the cold weather came, I had the shed we were using for the poultry converted into a cow-house, and a warmer place put up for my poultry. This led to an amusing scene. At the bottom of the shed door a small square hole had been cut so the hens could pass in and out. The morning after Belle had been put in possession I happened to go out early, and looking in that direction, saw a cow's head and horns apparently mounted on the lower part of the door, in the same way as the head of a stag is mounted on a board. I approached nearer, rubbing my eyes, for I thought surely my sight deceived me. Yes, to my horror, there was Belle's head—fixed, immovable—through the hole in the door. How she got it there will ever remain a miracle; but there it was, sure enough. I found it impossible to open the door; and as the hole fitted closely on each side of her neck, it was just as impossible to move the cow. I ran for the axe to try and chop the hole bigger, but this scared the cow so much that she began to struggle, and I feared she would strangle herself.

I then raced off to Winnie's for Letto and Tom, and what did that rascal Tom do when he arrived on the scene but sit on a log and roar with laughter,

telling Letto not to do anything till he had fetched his camera to make a picture for the *Strand Magazine*. He bet that cow would stand still now. I had to get really angry before he would stop fooling. We found nothing could be done but take the door off its hinges and lift it straight up from the cow's neck. This took some time, for the screws were rusted; but at last we released her, and very thankful I was to find she was not much hurt.

And now, if I ask some of my readers who live in the city, What is the proper feed for a cow? they will no doubt reply, "Grass in summer, hay in winter, or, perhaps, roots, mangels or turnips." "Oh, that's what you think, is it? Well, you don't know the peculiar tastes of the Muskoka cows nor the powers of their digestive apparatus. You would never suppose *soap* to be reckoned amongst their chief dainties, and yet Winnie declares they helped themselves to six bars, one after another, from the shed she used as laundry, and that if the children take a piece of soap down to the lake when they bathe, and leave it on the shore, they never find it again—but the cow does. Last winter my brother Ben drove to Port Carling one very cold day to get some groceries. On his return, after putting the horse in the stable, he went into the house to get warmed up, leaving the parcels in the sleigh near the verandah. It appears his man had let out the cows to water them, and Bet's old roan at once proceeded to investigate into the contents of the sleigh. About

half an hour after, when my brother went out, he saw the parcels had disappeared, but concluded the children had taken them indoors. But no such luck. On enquiry the culprits were discovered. Everything in the sleigh had vanished, except a few dirty scraps of paper. I expect they found the tea rather dry eating, but they moistened it with three pounds of butter, and then smacked their lips over ten pounds of sugar, finishing off with a pound of starch and a packet of blue. Their owner had to drive to the store again next day, and this time he did not leave the parcels in the sleigh.

People when they first come to Muskoka often complain that the sound of the cow-bells in the night keeps them awake. I remember a clergyman who was staying in Port Carling several years ago telling me, when I remarked on his tired look, he had been kept awake two or three nights in succession by a regular "cow convention" in front of the house where he slept. He often, in sheer desperation, got up and drove them off, but they soon returned again.

Well, after all, this is not so bad as country folks experience when they visit the city and are kept awake all night by the noise of the street-cars, etc. Once an old Presbyterian lady from the country was visiting my employer on Yonge Street. As it happened, the first night she was there the students of the University made one of their midnight "vocal marches" up the street. When the old lady arrived down

stairs to breakfast, it was fun to hear her describe the experiences of that night. Not one wink had she slept, and she looked worn out. She said, too, that just as she was dozing off in the morning she heard the boys yelling in the streets, "Awful world! awful world!" and she thought, "You are right, my boys, and the sooner I get back to my peaceful home in the country the better." What she had heard was the newsboys shouting "Morning *World!*" "Morning *World!*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON CATS! ESPECIALLY MUSKOKA CATS.

"Confound the cats! All cats—alway—
Cats of all colors, black, white, grey,
By night a nuisance, and by day,
Confound the cats!

"Confound their saucy-looking whiskers!
Confound them, whether old, or friskers!
Confound their midnight squally discourse!
Confound the cats!"

—*Dobbin.*

NO stories of life in Muskoka would be complete without at least a few words about the members of the feline race, who not only abound here, but are particularly strong and active, and attain an enormous size. Why they should be much larger than Toronto cats I cannot conceive, unless it is the fresh air, or maybe it is their plentiful supply of mice; anyway, it is a fact the cats are prodigious! I never look at one of the monstrous old Toms but I think of that verse in Genesis: "There were giants in the land in those days."

Now, I must confess, I am no lover of cats, never have been, though I am an old maid. That ancient saw about cats and old maids is a fallacy. Let me

give you a living proof of this. Here is my sister Sue, a wife and mother, who perfectly dotes on cats; has done so ever since she was a baby.

I remember how she used to hug and kiss our old cat at the farm in England when we were all children. How she nursed it as her baby, preferring it to all her dolls, which she said were only "old dead things," while Pussy was a real "meat baby," alive and kicking. She used to walk up and down the room by the hour carrying it in her arms, wrapped in an old shawl, and singing for a lullaby, as she hushed it to sleep,

> "I love little Pussy, her coat is so warm,
> And if I don't hurt her she'll do me no harm."

It was a pretty sight to see her, I have no doubt, and I believe there was even a suspicion of a tear in our fond mother's eye as she watched the little mimic and her baby; but there was no tear in mother's eye when, one day, she discovered the loss of baby's best embroidered robe and cap, and made the discovery, after much vain searching, that they had been appropriated by little Miss Sue, who had carefully dressed her beloved cat in the dainty garments, and was at that very moment proudly parading the village streets, amidst a cloud of dust, a whole tag-rag and bobtail of envious urchins at her heels. This was the climax, and effected the entire ruination of the "cat and baby" business.

Poor little Sue, her days of childish romance were

suddenly brought to a close, but the love of cats still lay dormant in her breast, and, years after, in the early days of our sojourn in Toronto, when a little black kitten ran into our house and took refuge under her bed, Sue was determined to keep it for her own. She quieted all my mother's objections to the new arrival by saying that a black cat coming into a house brought with it great good luck ; that unknown and fearful misfortunes would befall us if we dared to drive it away—all the boarders might suddenly leave ; the chimney might take fire ; we might be all burnt to death in our beds, and then we would know what it meant to turn out a black cat. The vague idea of such dreadful events following its eviction so scared poor mother that she yielded the point, and the black cat took up its abode with us.

Now, I think it is owing to Sue's persistent conduct on this occasion that the tribe of Muskoka cats owe that strong streak of the "Old Harry" which is so predominant in their make-up to-day ; but to show the reasons which have led me to this conclusion I must continue my story. The black kitten grew and thrived under Sue's loving care and protection, but as it grew older displayed such a mischievous temperament, such a spiteful disposition, such sad thieving propensities, that one of our male boarders christened it "Satan." Sue, of course, strongly objected to the title, but it appeared so appropriate to everyone else in the house that the name stuck, and, sad to relate,

the cat never got rid of it. Well, one fine morning we all received a startling shock. Satan undeniably proved herself to be a lady by depositing no less than five satanic young imps, black as herself, on Sue's bed. Sake's alive, wasn't there an uproar! But tender-hearted Sue would not hear of one of them being drowned; was furious and dissolved herself in tears when such a thing was even hinted at. Still, as days went on, it was plainly to be seen that "old Satan" and five "young Satans" were too much for one house. Even Sue could not be blind to this fact, so she concocted a plan of her own for the disposal of them, which she craftily proceeded to put into execution.

My father was at home just then, but only waiting till the boats began running to return to Muskoka. The morning he went away Bet and I accompanied him to the station, but Sue was nowhere to be found when he wanted to wish her good-bye, which we thought very strange. However, on our arrival at the station the mystery was solved. There sat Sue in the waiting-room keeping watch and ward over an immense bonnet box, very securely tied, and the lid perforated with numberless small holes, like a gigantic pepper box. I need hardly tell you that it contained "Satan" and her progeny. Sue had made up her mind, after many a severe struggle, to send the whole family to Muskoka. Father fumed and raged when he discovered the contents of the box, and swore he

would never take them. Sue was as equally determined that he should. The conflict raged for some time, and ended by Sue mounting on the cars with her box and depositing her precious burden by the side of father's valise. "Now, dad," we heard her say, in a very coaxing tone, "don't you always say the mice are swarming up in Muskoka—that they worry you to death? See what a clearance this cat will make for you, especially when the five kittens are old enough to help her. Why, there won't be a mouse left for miles around." But father was not to be coaxed. He vowed that as soon as he got to Gravenhurst he would send the whole caboose adrift on the lake. Fancy Satan, with her five babies, sailing around on Lake Muskoka in a bonnet-box boat. The thought of it was too ridiculous altogether. But even this awful threat did not deter Miss Sue from her purpose. She talked and persuaded, and waited on the train until it was actually moving. Then she leaped off, leaving the box behind her. Bet and I quite expected to see it come bundling after her. But it was not quite so bad as that, and our next news of the Satanic family was that they had reached Hathaway's Bay in safety, and had taken to their new life in the backwoods amazingly well.

Indeed, Bet told us, when she went up there some weeks later, that father, strange to relate, had developed quite a fondness for Satan. I think family cares must have had a sobering effect upon her, for she

would sit quietly on his knee in the evenings, and he would talk to her as he smoked his pipe. They became, in fact, quite "chummy"; so, as Shakespeare says, "All's well that ends well."

Of course, as I said before, the Satanic blood has infused itself into the whole race of Muskoka cats, and I doubt whether at the present day in the whole district there is a cat living who has not a few drops of it in her veins. "A little leaven has leavened the whole lot."

Now, I will give you a few of my own experiences this past winter in the matter of cats—how I have been goaded to madness and driven nearly to desperation by their antics; how I have vowed a solemn vow that after I have once got rid of the animals I am now tormented with, no cat shall abide under my roof for evermore.

When I came to Muskoka to live I discovered, as the renowned Dick Whittington did on his travels of yore, that in Muskoka there was a general plague; no house seemed to be exempt. It was at its worst in the spring and fall. This plague was mice. There seemed to be mice, mice, everywhere; you could not open a drawer or a cupboard but a mouse popped out; you discovered them at every turn "eating your cake," "smelling the cheese," "drowned in the milk," "smothered in the flour," "scampering over your pillow," "floating in your wash basin." Even your old letters, treasured perhaps for years, and put away

carefully in some small box, you found, when you opened it to gaze on them once more, "nothing but a mouse's nest."

We tried mousetraps, we tried "rough on rats." At last the girl I had helping me, in an unlucky moment, smuggled in a young cat, aided and abetted in her deception by my sister Winnie, who owned the "mother cat" and was very anxious, for certain reasons, to get rid of the "daughter cat." When I discovered their joint deception I was very irate, and insisted at first that the intruder should be restored at once to the bosom of her mother; but Minnie pled so earnestly to keep it, and my sister enlarged to such an extent on its valuable qualities as a "mouse exterminator," that in the end I was over-persuaded. The cat remained, and from that time my troubles began.

Being young, she was also playful (that goes without saying). Her greatest delight was to mount the table, sideboard, or bureau, look around till she discovered something rollable (to coin a new word), then to stand up on her hind legs in a very pretty attitude and with gentle pats, first with one paw and then with the other, succeed at last in tumbling the article to the ground. It might arrive there whole, or it might not, that was just as it happened, and did not concern Miss Pussy in the least. Then commenced a game, which you might aptly call "Cat's Croquet." If there were more than one ball so much more interesting was the game. Her very highest felicity was attained

when the balls would unwind. Oh! what rapture and wild delight she felt then. Oh! the intricacies of the maze with which she would proceed to surround every available leg of table and chair, in and out like a weaver's shuttle, back and forth, round and round, from one room to another, till the ball was exhausted. Not so Miss Puss, however. She knew not the meaning of the word. She was ever on the alert, ready and waiting for the next piece of mischief. When I had enjoyed the possession of this lovely creature for about a month, my brother's wife, Mattie, who had been spending the summer in Muskoka, and was now returning to the city, presented herself at my house one morning with a large handsome cat in her arms, almost the model of mine, only bigger; might have been her maternal aunt, but proved on enquiry to be only an elder sister. She also had been a gift from Winnie, for my sister was an adept at dispensing of her superfluous cats amongst her friends and relations.

"Oh, Nan," commenced my sister-in-law, "I want you to do me a favor. Will you keep this cat for me till I come up again in the spring; we are all so fond of her; Joe would not part with her for anything; we have all made such a pet of her. Will you keep her for me?"

Now, I hated saying no, for this same sister-in-law had done me many a kindness during the past summer. Still more did I hate saying yes, for I had a faint idea (faint, indeed, as it proved) of what I might

have to endure when my present misery was doubled. Still I felt there was no choice left me, so submitted meekly to my fate.

I was not quite so meek, however, when a few weeks later Bet arrived with her old "Tom." She also was going to Toronto, and proceeded to say, while fondling the monster, of whom she was extremely proud, "My dear Nan, you promised to have my dog while I was away; will you have poor old Tom, too!"

"No, I wont!" I burst forth, interrupting her in my wrath. "Take him to Winnie."

"But she doesn't want him," continued Bet, "she's afraid he might scratch the baby."

"Nothing of the kind," I said. "I'll go over and see her myself."

"Well, perhaps, you can persuade her," said Bet, and I started off to try.

"Now, Winnie," I began, as soon as I reached her house, "it's no use you saying you can't have Bet's cat, you've just got to have it. Here I'm bothered to death, as you very well know, with the two I have already. I'm willing to have her dog, but I'll be bothered if I take another cat, so just make up your mind to that."

After considerable badgering Winnie reluctantly gave way, and said she would keep the cat; but I don't know "how the dickens it is," but old Tom absolutely refuses to stay over there; he seems to

have got it into his stupid old head that here he will stay, and nowhere else, till his mistress returns. (Oh, may it be soon !)

Winnie says she does her best to induce him to stay at their place, and blames it all to my two cats being of the feminine gender; but I will own I have my suspicions she does not lay out any special inducements to keep him at home.

To return to my two cats, or rather my cat and Mattie's. They had soon made friends, and my cat grew so rapidly after the other one's advent that before very long I scarcely knew them apart. This made it very awkward, and I am afraid one often got punished for the other by mistake. But how could I tell? If they were both in the dining-room, and one jumped off the table as I entered the room, which of the two had been at the meat? Sometimes, to make sure, I gave them both a whack, but this was obviously unjust. Then, again, unless I fed the two together I felt sure one of them often got two dinners and the other none.

My nephew, Tom the torment, unfortunately heard me mention to a friend this difficulty I had in distinguishing the cats, and the next day, while I was busy in the kitchen, he caught my cat and, taking her off into a quiet corner, proceeded to shave the hair off her tail for the distance of about two inches from the tip, leaving a long sharp spike emerging from a ruff of fur. Then the impudent rascal brought her and

dumped her down in the kitchen, saying, "There, Aunt Nan, I think you'll be able to tell those two cats apart now, even without your specs; this one you can call "Spindly-tail," and the other one "Dubby." "Oh! you rogue!" I began, but he was off like a streak before I could say any more.

Now I will give you a short account of one night and the adventures thereof, with all its cat-astrophes. Remember, this is only one night out of about a hundred and fifty nights which I have put in this winter, and then you can imagine a little of what I have endured. I must explain to you, before I begin my story, that in this house I have no doors on either parlor, dining-room or hall, only curtains hanging over the doorways; therefore, I cannot fasten the cats downstairs. And these same curtains form the most admirable playground for the nightly game of hide-and-seek which commences immediately my head is laid on the pillow.

"But why don't you turn the cats out of doors before you go to bed?" say some of my hard-hearted male relatives.

"Well, it is twenty degrees below zero. How would you like to be turned out for the night yourself?"

I can't shut them up with the hens in the hen-house, nor the ducks in the duck-house, nor the cow in the cow-house. There is only the ice-house left, and that would scarcely do on such a night as this.

"SPINDLY-TAIL" AND "DUBBY."

I glance at them before I go upstairs to bed. There they lie, stretched out close to the stove, apparently in the deepest of slumbers; you would think, to look at them, that an earthquake would scarce disturb them before morning. But appearances are deceptive, as we all know. Surely, I think to myself, gazing at them, they will be quiet to-night; and taking my nice hot brick out of the oven for my feet I steal gently away to my chilly bedroom in the upper storey. Scarcely daring to breathe for fear of awaking them, I quickly undress in the cold and get, shivering, into bed. I am just beginning to get a little bit warm when I hear sounds of stealthy feet coming up the stair-case, pit-pat, pit-pat. Then all at once a loud whop, a bound and a scuffle. They have begun their game. I pop my head from under the bed-clothes at the risk of getting my nose frozen, and call "Scat! scat!" at the top of my voice. There is a dead silence at once; I retreat under the bed-clothes and shut my eyes again. Bang goes something off my dressing table, the bottle of vaseline, like enough. I can hear it rolling. Now they are both there—"Spindly-tail" and "Dubby." They have rolled the bottle under the bed—rattle, rattle over the hardwood floor, a regular bowling match. Again I emerge, bang the edge of the bedstead, scream "scat" louder than ever, and at last seize the chair by the side of the bed and pound the floor with it. This seems to have the desired effect. I fancy I hear

them retreating, so once more get under cover. I am beginning to feel warm again when I hear a faint purring; it comes nearer and nearer, "He-brew, she-brew" louder and louder, then I feel a dead, heavy weight on my lower limbs, followed by a soft prodding all over my body as if I were dough and two or three bakers were kneading me. At last I can stand it no longer. I spring up in a rage, and striking off in the darkness send one of them on to the floor like a cannon-ball, the sparks flying in every direction. I feel round for the other to do likewise, but she has effected a rapid escape. Once more I try to sleep. Hark! what is that? A blood-curdling sound from the verandah just like a woman being murdered and a dozen children spanked at the same time—Bet's old Tom has arrived. In sheer desperation I jump out of bed and call the dog—Bet's dog, Nailer. He gets his name from a habit he has of sidling up to strangers and fawning on them; then when they are tempted to pat him he suddenly nails them. It isn't a pleasant habit, but to-night I am only anxious that he should succeed in nailing that cat, so I open the outer door. The cold rushes in—Nailer rushes out. There is a sharp skirmish; a great deal of scuffling and spitting, barking and swearing, and Nailer returns triumphant. "Good dog!" I say, "you have routed the enemy"; and I hasten to get my half-frozen limbs under cover and compose myself to slumber.

So the night passes away ; morning dawns at last. Don't, I pray you, think this story any exaggeration ; it is the reverse. The repetitions, the variations are innumerable, but I will have mercy on you, and end my tale, just remarking, ere I close, that if any of my readers feel they would like a "nice cat," with the greatest pleasure in the world I will give them their choice between "Spindly-tail" and "Dubby."

P.S.—One month later. Hurrah! I have disposed of "Spindly-tail." A certain young clergyman, who was belated here on a stormy night, took a violent fancy to her. He nursed her all the evening, and took her to bed with him when he retired. Tremblingly next morning I ventured to offer him the lovely creature as a present. He jumped to the bait ; and after a loving farewell I have carefully packed her in a oasket, and she has gone far away, thanks be praised!

CHAPTER XVIII.

WINTER IN MUSKOKA.

"What matter how the night behaved?
What matter how the north wind raved?
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
. . . . . .
Shut in from all the world without,
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
Content to let the north wind roar
In baffled rage at pane and door,
While the red logs before us beat
The frost line back with tropic heat."

—*Whittier.*

I MUST fulfil my promise of telling you something of our Muskoka winters, and I just fancy I hear you saying, with a shudder, "Augh! it must be horrible, 'winter in Muskoka,' and this particular winter (1903-04) above all others. Surely the cities have been bad enough, what with 'frozen water pipes,' 'slippery sidewalks,' and 'draughty street-cars,' but Muskoka!! why, we heard you had more than thirteen feet of a snowfall there." And you shiver again at the very thought as you plant your feet on the fender in front of your blazing coal fire and resume your reading. But don't you know, my

BEN'S BOY—"THE LITTLE HUNTER."

friend, that in this world there is a law of compensation, and that though we dwellers in Muskoka may be deprived of many comforts you enjoy in the city, I want to point out some things you miss by never seeing Muskoka in her garb of snowy white. Oh, the loveliness of some of these wintry days, the matchless purity of the snow, like the finest icing, with which no confectioner's art could vie. The trees, every twig outlined with frosty diamonds, sparkling in the sunshine, and standing out in bold relief against the blue sky. The effect is absolutely dazzling, and one has to shade the eyes with the hand before the glittering splendor of the scene. Then, the moonlight nights, the merry young skaters, the toboggan slides, the sleigh-rides, and, in the evenings, the roaring wood fires, the snug cosy corners, the happy family gatherings round the hearth, the day's work done, and all prepared for enjoyment. "Ah!" but you say, still incredulous, "that is the bright side; show us the other." Well, what if we do have to go to the lake to fetch every pail of water, tumbling down the steep banks through the snow, searching for the water-hole in the ice, only to find it frozen over solid, and, after repeated efforts to break it, first banging the handle off the dipper, and then hammering with the water pail, all to no effect, have to reluctantly scramble up the bank again to get the axe? What if we do have to take our walks abroad in a narrow rut, one following

behind another like a flock of geese, crossing our feet gingerly, knowing that to step an inch to the side means a sudden plunge into the beautiful? We can laugh at these things, because we have the health and spirits which our brave fight with the snow and wind imparts. "Dull in winter," say you? I trow not, my city friend. We know not the meaning of the word. Work is too plentiful for dulness to show its nose in Muskoka. We have no time to be dull, and go to bed at night tired out, sleep like tops, with the blankets well pulled up over our ears, and a small earthquake would hardly wake us.

The Muskoka settlers seem to reckon the length of the winter from the time the boats cease running on the lakes until they commence again in the spring. Thus, the length varies, as in 1902-03 the last boat ran on December 6th, and the first one came up on April 6th, making that year a winter of only four months, while last winter, 1903-04 (a record breaker in severity), the lakes were frozen up fully five months. The hunting season is from 1st to 15th November, and after the hunters have departed we may fairly say winter sets in. We then begin to look forward to Christmas and the Christmas tree. The children are all excited and busy with presents—home-made ones, of course, in Muskoka, as we have no stores to run to, except it may be one visit to Port Carling to see what Mr. Hanna has new in for the holiday trade.

Useful presents, too, rather than ornamental ones

are preferred; and as our olive branches here now number nearly twenty, it is no light task to provide for them all. Unluckily we cannot give the present to them all which little Willie thought of giving his mother. I must tell you about that. It was about two weeks before Christmas, and we were all busily working, when Willie came to me with a very serious face and said: "Auntie Nan, I want to make a Christmas box for my mother, all by myself." "Bless you, my darling," I said, "you shall." Taking him up in my arms, I continued, "What could you make, Willie, all by yourself, without anyone helping you?" Willie put his arm around my neck and considered very thoughtfully for a minute or two; then a rapturous look came over his face and he cried out: "Oh! I can make her a hole. I can make her a lot of holes," and then, in an ecstasy of delight, giving me a big hug, "and she can mend them!" But I'm afraid our young folks wouldn't be satisfied with Willie's presents. They require something more substantial, though I expect their poor mothers have received many such presents from them.

We have an acquisition to our family circle this winter, a cousin from England, who arrived in Canada last summer, after a "ripping" voyage across the Atlantic, as he informed us on his arrival. He is very tall and good-looking, but oh, so English! so unmistakably English! He belongs to the patrician branch of our family, and is only descended from the plebeian

Hathaways on the female side of his house. We thought him too tony for anything the first night he was here. "Gee!" said Tom, "but he's too tony for me," while Willie asked innocently, "Is his name really Tony?" at which we all laughed; but the remark was so *apropos* that "Tony" he became to us, and "Tony" he will remain to the end of the chapter.

Notwithstanding his aristocratic appearance and polished manners—such a contrast to our rough-and-ready Muskoka boys—Tony soon became a general favorite, and we were all delighted when we found he would stay the winter with us. The boys tried to scare him with stories of what he would have to go through when the cold weather came, but Tony was not to be daunted. He soon entered into all the work and the sports with a vim. He learnt to handle an axe, to milk a cow, to mend a fence, to make a jumper, to cut and haul ice, to wear moccasins and mitts, to pull his cap over his ears, and only once got his chin slightly frozen, which was not bad for a "greenhorn" who struck Canada in just such a winter.

Well, we had a fine Christmas and a marvellous Christmas tree, though the presents were so numerous and bulky that more than half of them had to be deposited on the floor underneath.

The children's eyes fairly podded out when they beheld its splendors. Auntie Sue excelled herself this year; her box from Toronto was cram-jam with nice things for everybody, and our poor home-made

presents blushed with shame at being in such fine company.

Fancy me, "old Aunt Nan," with my grey hair, almost white, getting a lovely pink silk blouse, so pretty I could almost eat it; but as for wearing it, what will folks say if I do?

Gladys got a doll nearly as big as herself, and Willie a rocking-horse covered with real hair; and as parcel after parcel was unwrapped and each one's pile was getting large, the excitement and fun became uproarious.

Winnie was presented with a big cardboard box, in which, after removing innumerable wrappers, was a large bottle of castor oil, labelled, "To be given to the children next day to prevent any ill effects from over-eating." I got a big doctor's book from Tony, in which was written, "Old Mother Hathaway, so that she can doctor the district." Fancy such an insult to an "old maid." Oh! we had a fine Christmas, and on New Year's Day we all went to Bet's. Her entertainment, of course, exceeded everything. The table was a sight to behold. I believe if we had all stayed a week and eaten steadily we could hardly have cleared it. Then, after dinner, we had charades, at which Winnie and Ben excel, and we laughed till the tears ran down our faces over their comical performances. One of the best charades was the slang phrase now so common, "Search me," and they had a custom house scene which was most ridiculous. We

finished up with all kinds of games for the children, till Willie remarked, with the greatest look of satisfaction, "This is the place where children 'joy themselves." Thus ended a happy day, the first, we hope, of a happy year.

The next business on hand, after the Christmas parties were over, was cutting the ice and filling the ice-houses. This proved to be a hard task for everybody this year, on account of the great depth of snow. Old settlers say they scarcely remember such a year for snow, and it commenced to fall so early, while the ice was thin. And though we tried to keep a space shovelled off, so that it would freeze thicker, our labor seemed all in vain, for either there would be another snowstorm or else a wind storm, and we would see our small clearing on the lake obliterated in an hour.

It was some weeks before we succeeded in getting the ice, and even then it was poor in quality, so much snow frozen in with it that we had to pack a double quantity, as it melts so much more quickly when the warm weather comes. The men had the same difficulty cutting firewood in the bush. The snow was so deep that when they felled a tree it sank completely out of sight, and they had to dig it out of the snow before they could saw it. All this was a novel experience to our tall English cousin. The boys used to joke him, and say, "it was a mercy he was so tall, or they would have lost him completely

in the bush." He himself told me he sometimes sank up to his armpits in the drifts. All our gates and fences were covered. We did not see them for months, and were quite delighted to see the posts begin to peep out in the spring.

I did not have the pleasure of seeing the snow disappear, though, this year, for about the end of March my sister Sue sent a most pressing invitation for us to spend Easter with them in Toronto—that is, my brother Ben, Tony and myself. For my part, I was very unwilling to undertake the journey in the winter. I had heard such dreadful tales from Bet and my mother of these winter journeys—the long, cold drive to Bracebridge, the awful roads, the upsets, etc.—that I had always vowed I would never attempt it, though Bet mocks at my fears and goes herself every winter. However, both the boys were so determined I should go, that I had at last to give a reluctant consent. Ben arranged that we should drive with a neighbor of ours across the lake, who was sending his two sons and team of horses to Bracebridge for a load of hay.

We left Hathaway's Bay the Monday before Easter, about three a.m., to cross Lake Joseph to this neighbor's house. We were only able to take a small valise each, and Ben and Tony packed me, with these, on a small hand-sleigh, which had been used to draw the blocks of ice, and proceeded to pull me along at a fine rate, crunching and bumping in the cold and darkness, and mightily glad was I when I saw the

dim light in the distance, which showed we were approaching our destination.

When we arrived we found them all astir, and I went in to get warmed while the horses were hitched up. When they called me out I found they had arranged the valises to form a kind of back for me to lean against, and I had to sit flat on the rough, loose boards forming the bottom of the sleigh, which had two sets of runners. My brother and cousin sat at the back, one of the two young fellows driving and the other running alongside with a lantern to look out for dangerous spots on the ice. We drove on Lake Joseph for some distance, and then turned across the land on a rough track, which had been used for hauling wood, in order to reach Muskoka Lake, down which we were to travel. The road was so bad, and the horses went so slowly, though the driver kept calling out to them, "Hurrah! Hurrah!" (a substitute for our English "gee up" which I had not heard before), that Ben and Tony, feeling very cold, dismounted and walked ahead. There was a firm crust on the snow, which was hard enough in most places to walk upon. Not for the horses, though; if one of them chanced to step off the narrow track down he went.

The horses were perfectly aware of this, too, and jostled and pushed against each other on the icy ridges, balancing themselves and picking their way more like cats than horses. While I was watch-

them with amazement we met with our first adventure, happily not a very serious one. Our scout with the lantern, who was examining the ground some fifty feet ahead, turned back and told his brother, the driver, he would have to turn off the road, as there was a big hole ahead. This he refused to do; said it was impossible to turn off—the horses' legs would be cut to pieces with the sharp edges of the crust, and that we must keep right on, no matter what was ahead.

In a moment we were at the edge of the hole. In plunged the horses, broke through the ice, and were floundering in the water, the sleigh, meanwhile, perched on the edge of the steep incline, ready to fall upon them. This catastrophe the driver pluckily prevented by lashing out furiously with his whip on the backs of the poor horses, and sending forth at the same time such a volley of "Hurrahs!" that they made one tremendous spurt, and jumped up the opposite bank, we and the sleigh at the same moment plunging forward into the hole they left vacant. The old boards cracked and crashed. The two upon which I was seated parted company, letting me partly through in a most uncomfortable fashion. For a moment I thought my end had come, but only for a moment, for with another sharp lash and a frightful "Hurrah!" the horses leaped again, and up the bank went the shattered sleigh, and we with it.

driver, after turning round and asking if I was

hurt, calmly dismounted, and the two brothers proceeded to pull the sleigh together and patch it up in the best way they could. Part of it, however, had to be left on the roadside, and then once more we went forward.

After journeying about a mile we came upon Ben and Tony, sitting on a log waiting for us and wondering what had happened, for they knew nothing of our mishap. They climbed in behind again, and before long we saw Muskoka Lake, and very thankful we were to get on to its comparatively smooth surface.

It seemed so queer to me to be trotting over the water and passing the summer hotels—"Beaumaris," and others—which I had only seen previously from the deck of the steamboats. When we neared the Bracebridge River we had to turn aside and take to the roads again, as we had heard the ice on the river was not safe in many parts, the current was so swift, and a team had broken through and been drowned while driving on it two or three days before.

No sooner had we left the lake for the road than our troubles commenced again. The ridges of ice and snow were terrible, and to make matters worse a howling wind and snowstorm came on. I had a big hood to my cloak, which I pulled right over my head, and my brother behind improvised a tent out of a big rug which Tony had brought with him from England. Under this they both lay, comfortably sheltered, and making great fun of it all. Once we met another team, and our driver thought we should have to turn

off the road. Out I jumped in double quick time, for I did not want a repetition of my former experience, but happily the men found they could arrange it without either team having to turn out, for there was a small flat space near where the other driver could stand with his horses while we passed by, so I thankfully scrambled back into my place. The last few miles were the worst of all, up and down hills the whole distance, and we not only got very cold, but dreadfully hungry, too. I had proposed bringing some lunch with us, but Ben had scoffed at the idea, saying we should be in Bracebridge soon after nine o'clock, and then get a good hot breakfast at the hotel, instead of which it was half-past twelve when we drove into the town. We had been eight hours and a half doing the twenty-seven miles—rather slow travelling for a cold day. Of course the delay meant we had missed our train, which was due at eleven, and we could get no farther until two o'clock next morning, so we had to telegraph to Sue, who would be expecting us in Toronto that afternoon.

Our driver put us down at the hotel, and the smell of dinner saluted our nostrils as we entered the door, so we hurried upstairs to take off our wraps and make ourselves a little more presentable. Goodness! what a face I had when I looked in the glass, red, swollen, stiff, I hardly knew myself. I hated going down to the dining-room, but hunger proved stronger than vanity, so down I went. When the bill of fare was

presented to my cousin he startled the waitress by saying, "I'll take everything; bring everything." Oh, we did enjoy that dinner! I forgot my red face, and did my best to rival Tony in appetite. After we were satisfied I went to my room, covered myself up on the bed and fell fast asleep till after five o'clock; then I went out to take a look at the town, for I had never been in Bracebridge before, though I had often been up the river on the boats. It is a bright, lively place, growing fast, and has some very good stores. I went into two or three of them, and then back to the hotel to tea. In the evening Ben and Tony wanted to visit the skating-rink, so I went to spend an hour or two with the clergyman and his wife, who were old friends of our family.

We got back to the hotel shortly after eleven, and the waiter promised to call us in time for the 2.15 train. This meant only about two hours' sleep, so I did not think it worth while undressing, and it was lucky I didn't, for the waiter called my brother and cousin, but forgot me! So I was waked up by my brother coming to see if I was ready. We were very near the station, though, so we had plenty of time. When we boarded the train we found it very crowded, hot and stuffy. Ben and Tony walked through the cars until they found one vacant seat for me by the side of an elderly gentleman, and then they departed to see if there were any more seats in the smoking-car, my cousin insisting on leaving me his famous

rug, much against my will, for I did not need it, having my own warm cloak. After the train had started I noticed how tired and worn the gentleman beside me looked, and, feeling sorry for him, offered the use of Tony's rug as a pillow. After a while, I suppose, we must have gone to sleep, for my cousin says it was so cold and uncomfortable in the smoking-car on the hard wooden seats that he thought he would come and see how I was getting on. He came upon me soundly sleeping, and to his surprise and indignation, beside me, on his rug—sleeping, too—another man, actually another man! He was kind enough not to wake us, notwithstanding, which showed his self-control, but he was never tired of telling this story to our friends in Toronto, and I got laughed at more than enough.

But our journey comes to an end—the Union Station at last—and we were soon on the street-cars off to my sister's. As we turned the corner of her street we saw her on the verandah looking out for us, and I need hardly say we were given a hearty welcome.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR SUPPLY BOATS—THE "CONSTANCE" AND THE "MINK."

"Which do I like the best, the *Constance* or the *Mink*?
I'm 'fraid I don't quite know, I'll have to stop and fink;
I heard my mamma say last week to Auntie Nan,
'I get some things off each,' so just you try that plan.
I know the candy squares on board the *Mink* are grand,
And *Constance* man, he gives me apples in my hand;
So guess I love 'em both, they bring us everyfink
To eat and drink and wear, the *Constance* and the *Mink*."
—"*The Immortal William.*"

WHEN strangers have rented a summer cottage and are coming up to the Muskoka Lakes for the first time, the question they invariably ask is, Where shall we obtain our supplies? Where shall we buy our meat, our butter, our groceries? Are there any stores near we can go to? And we reply with a laugh, No! there are no stores near, but the stores come to you instead of you going to the stores; they float up to your very doors, bringing you "everything under the sun," or, as that may be going too far, we will say, "everything we mortals can possibly need in Muskoka."

These supply boats are stores indeed! veritably

so. As closely packed from stem to stern as a bundle of pressed hay, they contain a little of everything—Eaton's in miniature—butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker combined.

The *Constance* and the *Mink* are the boats which run exclusively on Lakes Joseph and Rosseau, the *Constance* owned by Homer, of Rosseau, and the *Mink* by Hanna, of Port Carling. I believe there are others run on Muskoka Lake, but I don't know their names. The fresh meat department on both the *Constance* and the *Mink* is under separate management. The butcher's shop in both cases is situated in the bow of the boat, the grocery counter in the centre, and the dry goods and fancy department more to the stern.

These boats commence their trips as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring, and continue running till the ice forms thickly enough to stop them in the fall. Their harvest time is in July and August, when Muskoka is crowded with its summer visitors. At that time they are busy indeed. No sooner is their whistle heard in the distance than the people begin to gather at the wharf, expectant. First there are the children, clutching fast their five-cent pieces and coppers, in a perfect fever of anxiety to exchange them for the coveted candy; then the anxious housekeepers, scanning the bits of paper with their lists of wants, to see if anything had been omitted; the boys stand waiting with their coal-oil cans and syrup or

vinegar jars to be replenished. Look out! here comes an active young fellow trundling a big wheelbarrow laden with garden stuff, monster cabbages, bunches of onions and lettuces, baskets of peas and beans, for all is grist that comes to the supply boat's mill.

Here is a young girl coming in a boat with two or three pails of summer apples, red and rosy; there are the little berry pickers, waiting to dispose of their spoils. Now, picking their way daintily along, come some of the fair tourist blossoms, with their attendant butterflies, anxious to join the throng and see the fun. It happens to be the *Constance* this time.

No sooner is the boat made fast than there is a general rush for the interior, and this is the kind of thing you hear from the white-aproned individual behind the counter: "Well, Johnny, how much do you want for those cabbages a dozen? Don't say too much, now. Here's three left over from those I bought last week," kicking out from a corner three withered old heads. "No! not lettuce this time, it's a drug in the market. You can give 'em to your cow." Then suddenly turning to an enquiring butterfly in immaculate white ducks, "Any chocolate creams? You bet," thumping a box down on the counter. "Best in Canada, fit for the Queen." "Seventy-five cents." "Thank you." "Good morning, Mrs. Tidy, what for you?" "Corset laces?" "Warranted to stand any strain you can put on 'em without breaking?" "Butter?" "Yes, just out of the churn. Ten

pounds, did you say, Mrs. Screw?" looking over with a wink at a hatchet-faced woman who was gingerly tasting every roll in the refrigerator. "What, only *one* pound. Why, you could put that in your old man's eye. Better say *two*. You'll be sorry if you don't." "Here, you boys, don't be fingering those plums. You're fetching all the bloom off, and then who do you think'll buy em?" "Sam," to one of the other hands, "Put off those three bags of flour and that bag of potatoes. Shoes don't fit?" snatching a pair from a boy, who was dangling them by the strings. "Two sizes larger? Will bring 'em Saturday. Want your bill, Mrs. Centless? Here it is, made up to date. Sharp cheese, did you say, Mrs. Roberts—try that, it would cut your tongue off." So it goes on, the butcher, sawing and chopping away for very life, handing out the beefsteak and joints. "No," he says to one lady, "I can't give you a hind-quarter of lamb to-day, you'll have to take the fore-quarter. You had the hind-quarter last week. Everybody has to take their turn, for we can't grow lambs with four hind-quarters even in Muskoka."

At last everybody is served, and the laughing, joking crowd step off the boat, the whistle gives a toot, the engine starts and they are off to their next stopping place, where the same scene, with sundry variations, will be played over and over again till late at night, for the hours these men on the supply

boats have to put in are very long. Just in the rush of the season they scarcely get any rest at all, and it is a wonder to me they keep so good-tempered and jolly with all they have to encounter. They must be thankful when Sunday comes round.

As regards the quality of the goods sold on these boats and the prices charged, I believe they compare favorably with any good general store in a country town. They endeavor to carry on the boats the articles most in demand and for which there is the readiest sale, and if they do not happen to have what you require they will procure it for you and bring it on the next trip. They are also very willing to accommodate their customers by bringing boots or articles of clothing on approbation, which is a source of great convenience to both settler and tourist.

We have two visits a week from each boat at our wharf during the summer months. After the tourists have departed they come only once a week. Little Willie is much interested in their visits. His mother has forbidden him going on the wharf, as she is afraid of him falling into the water ; but he comes down to the shore as near as he can get, and there perches himself up on a rock, where he watches the proceedings and patiently awaits our return. I generally bring him a banana, if there are any on the boat, for he dotes on "nanas," as he calls them. But I must tell you here that the "Immortal William" scorns baby talk. He speaks distinctly and unusually well for a

child of his age, only he has a habit of leaving out the first syllable of long words, and says "randah" for verandah, "frigerator" for refrigerator, "boggan" for toboggan, and so on. Only last week he was talking about his "boggan," which he left outside on the "randah," and I, mildly correcting, said, "to-boggan, Willie." "Toe-boggan!" he cried indignantly, his blue eyes flashing with scorn, "mine is no toe-boggan, but a real big-boggan. You can ride on it with all your body, every bit of it. Toe-boggan, indeed!" and he rushed off to the "randah" in a rage. So, you see, we old aunties have to mind our p's and q's or we shall get into trouble.

The *Constance* and the *Mink* will also carry a limited number of passengers on their daily trips around the lakes. They have nice comfortable chairs on the upper deck, and if the day is not too hot, there can be nothing pleasanter than these excursions. They call at a great many more places than the large steamers, and they stay just long enough at each place for the passengers to have a good look round or to go ashore for a few minutes if they please. I think in no other way can one get such a good view of the pretty homes and private residences on the islands and shores. About three years ago I went with a party of friends on the *Mink* for the trip around Lake Joseph. We had a lovely day. We made a regular picnic of it, taking our provisions with us, the men on the boat kindly giving us boiling water for our tea.

We had with us Winnie and her family and my brother Ben's wife and children.

Winnie, who has learned a few wrinkles in the years of her married life, brought her baby (the " Immortal William ") enthroned in a large wicker clothes-basket furnished with a couple of pillows and various small articles to amuse the young gentleman on the way. The boys bore it up on the deck and he sat or slept in it the whole day, not being a mite of trouble to his mother nor anyone else. I recommend this basket business to some of you weary mothers, lugging round your heavy babies whenever you go out for a day's pleasure. Just try it and see if it does not relieve your aching arms and prove a great success. Going up the lake we called at Stanley House, and they gave us half an hour there, so we climbed the steps to see the hotel. I thought the situation most lovely, the view on every side grand, but I think I should be rather afraid to stay there if I had children, for the rocks are so steep and it stands at such a height above the water I should never be easy if they were out of my sight.

We had an hour's grace at Port Cockburn, so we had a nice time wandering round. I thought it rather a pity that the front of the hotel should be so much hidden from the lake by the trees. I think if the house could be more plainly seen as the boat approaches, it would be far prettier ; but, of course, tastes differ in this world.

There is an American now building his house on Lake Joseph in the midst of a dense bush, mostly evergreens—hemlocks and pines. He is determined, I hear, that not one shall be cut down ; he will hardly let daylight in. His only outlook is to be a kind of small arbor at the top of a large tree, to which you climb by a ladder if you want to see the lake. I am afraid if his wife is anything like our friend Mrs. Carrington she won't see it very often ; but we will hope she is nimble and thin.

At one place we called at on our return, a private residence, there was a row of fair damsels standing on the edge of the wharf in bathing costume chanting one, two, three, before taking a dive all together into the water. The arrival of our boat stopped the pretty play, but we saw them resuming their fun before we were out of sight.

The summer cottages were, many of them, very pretty, and nearly all of them with gardens in front, bright with blossoms, flowers evidently being cultivated in preference to vegetables by their fair owners.

A settler who is the happy possessor of a greenhouse told me that he is fairly besieged in the early summer by ladies wanting geraniums and other plants for their gardens. It is difficult to carry plants a long distance, and there are generally so many necessary things to be brought that flowers stand a poor chance of being remembered.

But to return to the supply boat. We were all fairly astonished at the quantity and variety of the stuff they sold on this trip. You see, their trade has gradually grown to meet the demand, which is increasing every year, and in consequence they seem nearly always able to supply just what is needed. Of course, the stock they carry varies considerably, according to the season. I was amused to see on board, when they made their last trip in the fall, snow-shovels, shoe-packs, moccasins, ice-tongs, skates —in fact, all we required for the cold winter, to last until they visited us once more in the spring.

As we were nearing home on the day of our excursion I was talking with my brother's wife (who is the daughter of an old Muskoka settler) and we were contrasting the present with the past. She said how little the young ones growing up around us can realize the hardships their fathers and grandfathers endured in the bygone days. She told me that, when almost a child, she used to walk once a week, all through the winter, across the lake to Port Carling and carry the family groceries back with her. Then I thought of my own dear father (who had all his life, previous to coming to this country, been accustomed to something so different), how he toiled in clearing the farm, how he worked year after year, living on the barest necessaries, enduring cold and heat, for the sake of making himself a home. Should we not cry shame on ourselves if we dare to grumble

when we are enjoying in comfort the fruit of their labors.

I will now close this chapter and with it these rambling reminiscences, which I hope have not been wholly without interest for my readers. The winter is nearly over; it is the first of March. A few more weeks and the ice and snow will disappear, the reign of old King Frost will be past, and we shall once more hear with thankful hearts the whistle of the *Constance* and the *Mink*.