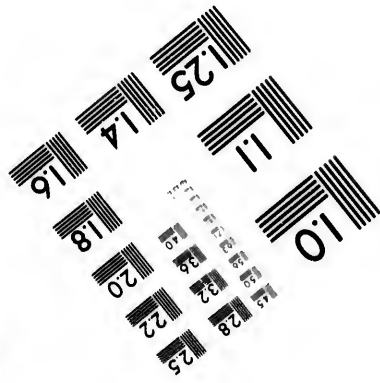
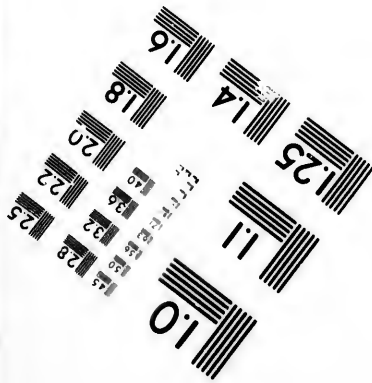
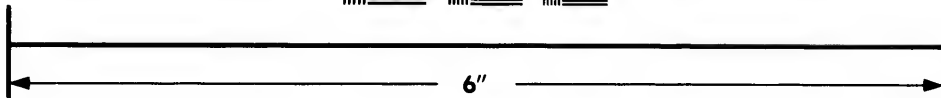
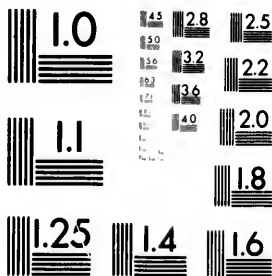


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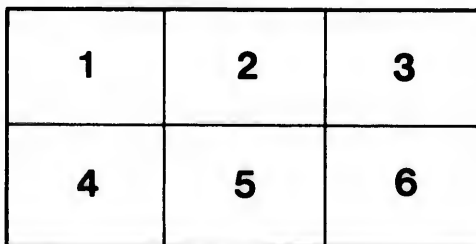
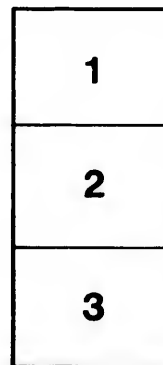
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## THE BALLAD OF P. BLOSSOM.

You never knew P. Blossom?—Gad, I really thought that he  
Was known as well by all the world as ever he was by me;  
He had money and youth and wit; and all of us are aware  
That either will do for a man at a pinch—he drove a spanking pair—  
While I—I drove my wooden horse whose stall was in the Square!

At all the routes and all the balls a central sun was he,  
Round which revolved of widows and maids a dazzling galaxy.  
And mothers fond his ear would seek, to praise their daughters fair;  
Oh, what a match, they said to themselves! (he was old Goldfinch's heir)  
And I—I drove my wooden horse whose stall was in the Square!

The Judge himself was heard to hint to Blossom that a wife  
Would dignify his station and smooth the path of life,  
And the Judge's daughter, Emeline, to her friends would oft declare  
She never saw such whiskers nor such a head of hair!  
While I—I drove my wooden horse whose stall was in the Square!

Oh, what a lucky, lucky dog! I never could explain  
Why he should never know to care nor feel the grip of pain;  
His path was always choked with flowers, his sky was always fair,  
He was courted, petted, flattered—he was welcome everywhere—  
And I—I drove my wooden horse whose stall was in the Square!

But Goldfinch died as all men must, after making a scoundrelly will,  
The tenor of which gave Blossom a stitch in his side and an aguey chill;  
It read, My housekeeper I make of all my wealth the heir!  
Then Blossom grew a passion flower—he stamped and tore his hair—  
While I—I drove my wooden horse whose stall was in the Square!

And Blossom faded out of sight—his hour of bloom was done—  
For other fish the nets were spread that were for Blossom spun—  
Though envied once by thousands his fate was hard to bear,  
But so doth run the world away with all its joy and care—  
While I—I drive my wooden horse whose stall is in the Square! E.A.

## STORIES WE HEARD AMONG THE PINES.

BY J. G. BOURINOT.

On a clear, cold night, one January, half a dozen men were seated around a roaring fire of huge logs, heaped on the rude hearth of a shanty, amidst the pines of the Ottawa. The pine knots crackled and sent up a vivid flame which lit up the little hut quite brilliantly. The atmosphere was certainly not of the clearest, for all were smoking energetically, only removing their pipes in the pauses of the conversation which was apparently of an interesting character. One of the party was an old lumberman, with a pleasant, frank expression on his

well bronzed face. Another was a partner of the former, and had been for many years of his life a surveyor. He had but recently arrived to explore some new "limits," situated in the vicinity of those where his own men were engaged in cutting down the pines which rose far and wide, in all their primeval majesty. Two of the party were visitors from the settlements, who had come up to see a little of shanty life, and one of these was the writer. The conversation had turned on adventures which the lumberman and surveyor had met with in the course of their journeyings through the forest or on the river. Two of these stories I shall attempt to relate.

#### DOWN THE "SNOWS."

I.—MARY MORTIMER.

When you call on me to contribute my share to the amusement of the company—it is the lumberman who is speaking—you must remember that I am only a homespun sort of old fellow, accustomed to the rough life of the shanties, and having little acquaintance with what you call book learning. My father was also a lumberman and my boyhood was generally passed among the pines with the axemen, or on the river with the raftsmen. My story will not be long, and has been recalled to my mind by some reference Miss Fanny made last evening to the "Snows" which you saw in the early part of last week. Of course it is connected with lumbering life, for I would not travel out of that path on which I have been going now for fifty years and more:

I need not tell you that the Ottawa Valley has passed through a very great change during the past thirty years; but no one can appreciate it except those who, like myself, have always lived by the banks of the great river. I can recall the time when a steamboat was never dreamed of on the river, and all our operations had to be carried on with canoes and batteaux. The Government now builds "slides" and canals for our commerce, but in old times the logs had hard work to run the rapids. The houses of settlers were few and far between, and the voyageur and lumbermen were the only persons you could meet for many hundreds of miles, after you had passed a certain point on the Upper Ottawa. I can even recollect when there were not a dozen houses to be seen near the lake, and when I often encamped on the shore, after running the "Snows," and cooked my own food, because it would take me too long to go to the nearest settler's cabin. The scenery is still very fine about the "Snows" and other rapids, with their white foam, so like the pure snow of a January storm; but forty years ago, the forest was richer, for the islands, and the banks of the great river were covered with noble trees which have long since disappeared before fires or the axe of the lumbermen or farmer.

You can still see close to the banks of the river, in the midst of a little grove of birch, about half a mile from the "Snows," a comfortable frame house, and alongside it a log-hut which answers for a barn.

The frame house is owned by the son of the same person who built and lived for years in the log-hut, for he was one of the first settlers in that part of the country. Thomas Mortimer was a raftsman, who some fifty years ago, took a fancy to the place, and commenced farming in the summer, while he and his boys went off to the woods in the winter. He was a rough, good tempered fellow, a Canadian by birth, and did very well in the course of time; for his land was good, and he could always sell his hay, potatoes, and oats at a good price to the shanties. But my story has little to do with my old friend, Mortimer, except so far as he had the good fortune to be the father of the prettiest and sauciest girl in the valley. Many a farmer and lumberman would go far out of his way to buy something from old Mortimer, just for the sake of getting a smile from Mary, who, at the time of which I am speaking, was about twenty years of age. Mary knew her power—what pretty girl does not?—but she had such a way of showing her dislike of all those whom she did not favour that many said she was too proud of her good looks and thought herself above her father's friends and visitors. She frequently made visits to the older settlements, and it was on one of these occasions that she became acquainted with two young men, who were employed as foremen in mills during the summer and in the shanty during the winter. Charles Marston was a hard-working young man of twenty-four years, with a bright, honest look in his large blue eyes, which would make you say 'here's a fellow that I can trust.' Philip Simond, the other young man, was the son of a French Canadian widow who had suddenly died in the house of the elder Marston. The wife of the latter was also a French Canadian and was an old friend of Simond's mother. Though Mrs. Marston had several children of her own, she did not hesitate to adopt the boy at the bedside of the dying woman. "One mouth more," said Marston to me afterwards, "won't hurt us, for we have enough and to spare; and then it more than repaid us to see the joyful look in a poor creature's eyes when my good wife promised to take care of little Philip."

Philip was the very opposite of his foster brother in appearance, for he had the dark hair and eyes of his French Canadian parents; but both were handsome, sturdy lads, very popular among their associates, whether rough lumbermen or gentle women. Philip was of less regular habits than the other, and as he was exceedingly passionate he was often brought into trouble among the rough companions he met in the woods, and who are always ready to make the blow follow the angry word. He was, as I have just said, of a roving disposition, without any great liking for steady work; his delight was to wander in the forest, and none of the half-breeds in the numerous shanties of the Ottawa and the smaller rivers, had a keener eye for an unsound tree or for hunting out the finest groves for timber; but this was not strange in one who could number on his mother's side many famous *bois-brûlés*, and voyageurs, whose adventurous exploits in forest and river were still remembered by the old raftsmen and formed the material for many a story on the long winter evenings when the men gathered round the roaring fires of the shanties.

It was of course very natural that a fine young fellow like Charlie Marston should fall in love with a pretty girl like Mary Mortimer; but he was very modest and bashful and could not muster up courage enough to come to an understanding with her on the subject. We can have little doubt, however, that Mary knew that he was hopelessly in love with her—young ladies we all know too well, have a wonderful cleverness in finding out such things; but certainly she did not for a long while give him any more encouragement than she gave to her other admirers who were plentiful enough, you may be sure, in a settlement where pretty girls do not grow on every pine tree. Mary, I may as well tell you at once, always liked the young man from the beginning of her acquaintance with him, for he was much superior to the rough, and rollicking fellows who made up the majority of visitors at the house; and besides he was an industrious, intelligent man who could offer his wife a comfortable home.

#### II.—SIMOND'S JEALOUSY.

Mary's love for admiration soon led to what became a very unfortunate misunderstanding between the two young men who had been always taught to consider themselves as brothers. In justice to Philip, I must say that, from what I have heard, he had come under the influence of Mary's bright eyes before he had any knowledge of the state of the case between her and his foster-brother. He was a good looking lad, and Mary could not resist trying the effect of her artillery upon him, without thinking as to the results that might spring from such an indiscretion in the case of a fiery, uncertain temper. Philip's feelings were, as I have before hinted, liable to take the direction of affection or hatred, on very slight provocation. When he asked Mary at last to be his wife, she only laughed at him, and wondered how he could even have supposed she cared the least for him. Hot words passed between them, for Mary had a temper of her own, and Philip rushed out to look for his brother in a fit of ungovernable rage. He accused Marston of treachery towards him, and swore a fearful oath that the girl would marry him or none at all.

"Who but a sneak," he added, "would have taken the girl from me; perhaps some day, you'll find I've not forgotten it."

Marston tried to reason with him, but it was useless to say that he had not even asked her to be his wife.

"You know you love her, or else you would promise not to see her again."

Marston could not tell a lie—his face, indeed, gave a sufficient reply to the indignant question.

"I knew you dared not promise; you'll act the sneak to the end. If you are not a coward, you'll speak out."

Then the young man, thus appealed to, confessed that he loved the girl, but he had no reason to know she returned his love, for he had never said a word to her up to that time.

Philip thereupon taunted him with telling a falsehood, saying:

"When I asked her if she loved some one else better, she would not



tell me, but her face became suddenly red like a flame. Then the suspicion came across me, you might be the man, for no one went there so frequently as yourself. I asked her if it were so; but she would not answer me at first. I put the question again, and then she said, her face redder than ever, if she did care for you, she would care for a better man than I could ever hope to be. Both you and that false girl have been only playing with me."

Marston, though excited by the unjust accusations of his foster-brother, could feel his heart jump with joy at those words which seemed to him to prove that Mary cared for him; but he still went on to remonstrate with Philip who was walking up and down in a fit of ungovernable rage.

"Nothing," said Simond at last, "can make me believe that you've not been acting unfairly towards me; but if you will promise not to ask the girl to be your wife for a year, and then let us both try our chance again, I may think better of you."

What was Philip's object in making this offer, it is difficult to say; perhaps he thought the girl might get tired of waiting when she saw Charles did not ask her to be his wife; perhaps he had a faint hope that Marston himself might see some one he would like better; but no doubt Simond's uncontrollable jealousy was forcing him to do something that would prevent Mary marrying another. As respects Charles Marston, anxious to keep on good terms with his foster-brother, he gave the promise after some hesitation. Perhaps he was not a little comforted by the assurance that Philip had given him, in the excitement of the moment, that Mary was favourably disposed towards him, and was also buoyed up by the hope that she would not forget him in a few months, during which he would see her more than once; for Simond had not made absegee from the house one of the conditions of his agreement with him.

A year passed by, and when the woods wore their scarlet and crimson and russet—all the bright hues of autumn tide—Charles Marston was free to try his luck with fair Mary Mortimer. The two young men had seen little of each other during the year, except at the shanty during the winter, and then Philip had a moody, irritable way with him, which his comrades noticed but could not account for in one who had generally been the gayest among the men when song and story wiled away the evenings. Charles Marston tried more than once to return to the friendly relations which existed before Mary disturbed them so unheedingly, but to very little purpose, for Simond studiously avoided everything like the brotherly intercourse of former years. Each of them had seen Mary during the twelve months, on several occasions, but neither had much reason to congratulate himself. The girl always treated Philip, after the conversation referred to, with a coldness which burnt into his very soul, and was disposed at first to encourage Marston to make the proposal which probably she began to expect from him; but when he continued silent she was perplexed for a while and at last so piqued as to receive him apparently with the same indifference which she certainly felt towards Philip. More than once young Marston was ready to ask his foster-brother to release him from the promise he had so cruelly extorted, when he saw Mary surrounded by other admirers and was treated

by her with such cutting coldness. He felt that Philip had acted most ungraciously and that he might be excused for breaking a promise given under such circumstances; but nevertheless he had about him a deep sense of honour, and kept his word most loyally for those long, weary months.

When the year was out Simond suddenly left for the upper part of the Ottawa, and then Marston followed and called to see Mary, on his way. He met her, as it happened, walking by the banks of the river, not far from "The Snows," with her hands full of bright autumn leaves, some of which she had carelessly arranged in her dark hair.

She was passing him with that cold nod of the head, now usual with her whenever they met.

"Mary, don't pass me by like that," said Marston hurriedly, "I've long wished to speak to you, and —"

"It seems to me," interrupted Mary, "you have not shown such fancy for my company, for a year and more. I am not sure now who is the most disagreeable—you or Philip?"

"Perhaps, Mary, you can tell why Philip is so altered of late?" replied Marston, provoked by her cold tone.

"I am not to be called to account for all the fancies you young men may take," answered Mary with a saucy shake of her pretty curls; "but I must make haste home, for it is getting late."

"You can surely spare me five minutes," exclaimed Charles, eagerly.

"How much you seem to value my company now," said the girl, as she pretended to walk on; for I didn't believe for a moment that she intended to provoke Marston to the extent of driving him away, but only wished to punish him a little for what she had reason certainly to think was great neglect on his part.

Then Marston, unable to keep silence longer, out of the fullness of his heart, told that story as old as the world itself. What he may have said I cannot say—I suppose he could not have repeated it himself; but at all events his defence was most successful. If the effect of a speech is weighed by the sympathy it excites in an audience, then Marston possessed the elements of a most effective orator; for the result of his appeal was to win Mary's willing consent to be his wife.

### III.—RUNNING "THE SNOWS."

But business had to be attended to, and Marston was soon freed to leave the company of his betrothed and hasten to the woods, where he was the foreman of a large gang of men employed in taking out timber on one of the smaller streams emptying into the Upper Ottawa. You may be sure that he left with a gayer heart than he had for many months: so joyous was he, that he thought little even of the first meeting with his foster-brother, to whom he carried a conciliatory message from Mary who now began to regret that she had ever trifled with the passionate young man. Marston hoped that Philip had become nearly cured of his attachment and would gladly meet his friendly approaches. It was about a week after the important event just mentioned, before the two young men met each other at the shanty, and then Charles Marston told Simond

the successful issue of his courtship and hoped that now they would be better friends than ever. Philip heard the story in silence, and without taking the hand that was held to him, turned abruptly into the woods. Charles, however, was too full of his own happiness to pay much attention to the moody demeanour of his old associate and comforted himself with the thought that a few months would soon bring Simond to a better frame of mind.

During the busy months that followed, neither saw much of the other, except when they assembled in the evening with the men at the shanty. Marston worked, perhaps more energetically than ever, for he had now additional stimulus; Philip, still moody and reserved, seemed to find only pleasure in the deep forests, but his associates had long since ceased to wonder at his manner as something entirely beyond their ken. It was, however, very evident to Charles, and much to his sorrow, that his foster-brother avoided him; but he felt that the fault was not his own and that he could not repair the mischief whilst Simond would not meet him half way.

Winter passed, and Marston saw Mary twice when he had occasion to make trips down the river for fresh supplies. The season had not been good for lumbering operations, the thaws having been unusually frequent and heavy snow-falls having occurred during February and March. Not only had it been difficult to get the timber down to the stream, but the season had been hard on the men, for fresh provisions towards the close of winter failed entirely and could not be supplemented by supplies from the settlements or by game which was scarce that winter. Under such circumstances you may be sure that all hailed the disappearance of the snow and the freeing of the rivers in April. Marston had worked hard all winter and had suffered perhaps as much as any of the others from the privations of the camp; but he bore it uncomplainingly, for he knew the effect of his example upon others.

The men now commenced to drive the timber, and Marston found it necessary to make a visit immediately to head quarters at Bytown. Whilst he was getting ready, to his surprise, Philip came to him and said that he would like to accompany him. Marston considered this as an attempt on the part of Simond to make up friends and resume their old relations towards each other, for they had always worked together in the past before Mary's pretty face came between them. Perhaps if Marston's mind had not been so much taken up with issuing orders and with the thought of seeing Mary after an absence of many weeks, he might have noticed, as others did at the time, I have heard, the strange manner of Simond, when he made the offer of accompanying him down the river. For some time those who had been working in the woods with Simond had noticed at times a strange, unusual, look in his eyes, which was undoubtedly the reflection of some strong feelings which were warring in his heart. If Marston noticed anything peculiar he attributed it to the same causes that affected the others—the hard winter which had caused a great deal of sickness in the camp.

The Ottawa was now rapidly filling up with the surplus waters of its numerous tributary streams, at the rate of seven or eight inches a day—

I have sometimes seen it rise more than a foot after spring rains in twenty-four hours—and Marston lost no time in starting as he had to be back when the men had got the timber out of the creek and on the main stream. The two men took a small canoe, which they could easily handle, and soon got down to the Ottawa without any difficulty. The weather was warm and springlike; the nights were chilly, but Marston and Simond found shelter, the first night, at the cabin of a settler, close by the banks of the river. Marston did not feel particularly well, his eyes were inflamed a little, and he was therefore anxious to reach his destination where a change of air and food would soon bring him round. Simond said very little on the trip, but Marston cared little as long as he had his pleasant thoughts to occupy his mind; for he told his companion that he hoped to be married as soon as all the timber was out and he could get a few days' leave. Simond muttered something in an undertone which Marston did not hear, and his eyes shone with a passionate glare as his companion went on speaking of Mary Mortimer. No doubt Simond was tortured by the most intense jealousy, and a fierce contest was raging in his breast—the affection for his foster-brother was not entirely dead but it was rapidly dying away under the strong passions which had only gathered strength during the long winter, when he had nursed his wrath in the solitude of those grand woods which ought to have calmed and soothed him, for I know that I have often found rest and peace in the forest when wearied with many cares. Perhaps if Marston had said less about his approaching marriage with Mary, it would have been more prudent, for every time he referred to the girl he was adding fuel to the demoniac spirit which was struggling for the mastery in his comrade's bosom.

It was not far from dusk when the two men reached the vicinity of "The Snows." The day had been fine when they started, but it had clouded over towards the afternoon; the wind came round to the south-east and it seemed cold enough for a fall of snow, which is not uncommon in the uncertain spring-time of this northern country. Marston, however, persisted in pushing forward and running the rapids before dark, as he was very anxious to reach Mary's home that night. Both the men had often run the Snows when they were more swollen than they appeared to be at that time, but it had been invariably on fine, clear weather. However, his anxiety to see his betrothed that evening overcame any hesitation he might have had in consigning himself to the snow-white flood which danced and whirled amid the green isles of the river. Simond said nothing about the peril they might run, but apparently nerved himself for the encounter with the mad waters. As the canoe neared the rapids, the expected snow came down in heavy, blinding gusts, and it suddenly became so dark that it was difficult to see many yards ahead. As they darted by, they recognized the danger of proceeding further and Marston seized hold of a small tree and brought the canoe alongside a rock which was partly under water at that season when the water was rising rapidly, he held on whilst Simond steadied the canoe with his paddle, for perhaps twenty minutes or half an hour, when a heavier squall than ever came rushing down the river and the canoe was

instantaneously whirled into the current. Recovering themselves immediately, the men seized their paddles and courageously grappled with the wild waters that leapt around them. Another gust seized and whirled them in an eddy for a minute or two, and the darkness continued to creep over land and water. Suddenly, Marston, as he was aiding the efforts of his comrade to keep the canoe steady, exclaimed in a tone of horror:

"Good Heavens! Philip I am blind; I cannot see you, close as you are."

"You are right blind, then," replied Simond almost exultantly. "I've seen it coming on you for the past three days. We are lost, for a man must have a steady hand and a clear eye to run the Snows on an evening like this."

"Philip," exclaimed Marston, "turn the canoe towards the island which was on our left a moment ago, and we cannot yet have passed; I can still use my paddle if you'll guide me. For the love you've had for Mary and for me—for the sake of our old friendship, work as never before."

To this appeal, uttered in a tone of the deepest agony—for was it not a horrible thought to be lost, as it were, almost within sight of Mary's home?—Simond made no answer. Simond afterwards confessed that at that moment the unhallowed plans which had been maturing in his mind took form and shape, and he determined to let Marston hurry on to death. Both might have been saved by him, for the canoe had entered the least dangerous channel and, at the time Marston was struck blind, was hardly more than a dozen feet from a point of rock on which Simond might run the canoe and where they could remain until morning when they would be rescued by some raftsmen or settlers. Simond struck his paddle into the water frantically and brought the canoe close to the piece of rock, and then sprang upon it like a bird. As he sprang, the canoe was whirled off into the fierce rapid, and as it disappeared he shouted after it like a mad man:

"Charles Marston, I swore to you a year ago, that you would never wed Mary Mortimer; your wedding-night will be among the icy Snows—Philip, I've paid my debt!"

The snow came down in heavy squalls, dense darkness swept over the swollen waters; but the keen eyes of Simond could still see the pale, horror-stricken face of the unfortunate Marston, whiter even than the snowy foam amid which he was whirled by the furious current. Simond watched him without pity—all his best feelings had yielded at last to the uncontrollable passion and jealousy that had so long been fighting for the mastery in his heart—and saw the canoe carried into an eddy and the next instant tossed bottom upwards to the crest of the snowy billows of the rapids.

#### IV.—THE VOYAGEUR'S GRAVE.

'Twas a month later, the shanty was deserted, and the timber on its way down the Ottawa, but the men were still kept constantly busy driving the logs on the smaller streams of which I have been speaking. The water had risen rapidly and then lowered with equal suddenness, leaving

a great many logs 'stuck' in the creeks and shallow places, and causing more than one very troublesome 'jam.' Among the men was Simond who had immediately returned to the shanty after the tragical event I have just related, instead of going on to the settlement. He had found no difficulty in getting off, some hours after he had left his comrade to his fate, when the moon had risen; for he knew every inch of the locality, and managed, by the assistance of logs jammed between the islets, to reach the isle nearest the shore where there was always a boat kept for the use of the voyageurs at that point, where difficulties in running the logs were of very frequent occurrence. He told the men on the river a story of the canoe having capsized whilst he and 'Marston were attempting to run the Chenaux, late in the evening, and of the narrow escape that he had whilst his comrade had been drowned. The lumbermen were sorry for the loss of their quiet, good-natured foreman, but they were not surprised at the manner of his death, for such occurrences were very common on the river in those days, when the voyageurs and raftsmen were exposed to more perils than they are now, when the navigation of the Ottawa has been rendered comparatively safe. The lumberman, then, as now, was proverbially reckless of his life, and such affairs as the drowning of a single man were too trivial in their eyes to create any excitement but were soon forgotten in the daily work of hurrying the drive and releasing the jams. Simond told his story nervously, and then relapsed into his ordinary moody ways—keeping to himself as much as possible and working desperately, no doubt with the hope of driving away that dread image of his murdered friend which was never absent from his guilty conscience.

Close to the spot where the men were encamped whilst freeing the logs from the creek, there was—and I daresay it is still there—an old cross rudely constructed out of a couple of small spruce saplings, and already moss-grown. This cross had been put up many years before,—no one could exactly tell when—over the grave of a voyageur, who had met his death in performing some act of reckless daring on the occasion of a tremendous "jam" which had resisted the efforts of the most skilled and courageous of his comrades. Such crosses are frequently met with on the banks of the Ottawa, and speak of the perils that beset the paths of the adventurous raftsmen of these North-western rivers. They are always held in high respect by the voyageurs and lumbermen, and many a time are they renewed and strengthened by reverent hands when storms or years have laid them low. With these crosses are associated many stories of heroic daring or of criminal passion ending in death. These stories will be told around the fires of the shanties, with all the exaggerations with which time and fancy have invested them, for the French Canadian voyageurs and lumbermen have no mean inventive faculty and have a great love for the marvellous and the ghostly, which often induces them to diverge very considerably from the truth with the view of producing a startling effect upon their listeners. So superstitious are many of the French Canadians that they will, under no circumstances, venture near these graves after night-fall, though I've seen large money re-

wards offered to them if they would go and remove some of the moss or bark. I do not know that there was any particular superstition clinging to the cross I am speaking of, or that Simond was any way affected by the fears of his comrades—on the contrary, I am sure that he was not: and in referring to the voyageur's grave now, I do so simply because it is connected with a somewhat striking incident which occurred a few weeks after Simond's return to the woods.

It was a beautiful Friday night, in the middle of May, the moon was just showing itself above the pine forests and lighting up their sombre tops, when Simond was walking slowly, with his axe on his shoulder, from the river to the camp. His comrades had gone ahead some time before, for he shunned the society of all of them, as I have before told you. He walked along slowly, with that fearful secret ever uppermost in his thoughts, and came at last to a spot where the shortest way to the camp took the direction of the voyageur's grave. Simond walked up that path unconsciously, and soon came within sight of the cross, around which the moon was shedding a silvery gleam. It was a sight which might make the most reckless spirit silent and awe-struck, to see that peaceful symbol arising in the moonlight, and the solitude of the pines. As Simond stood still for an instant, he felt an involuntary shudder pass over him, and at the same moment hear! what appeared to be a slow footstep coming up the path. Some belated lumberman no doubt: and he passed on quickly, for he had no wish for company in his frame of mind. He made a slight detour to avoid the cross, and then came out again upon the path, where he stood and turned back to see if he could recognize the person, whose steady footstep again struck upon his ear. Whoever it was his figure was wrapped in the shades of the woods; but Simond waited thirty seconds perhaps until the person came into the open, within a few steps of the voyageur's cross; and then, in the weird-like moonlight Simond saw the face. Was it the mere phantasy of a guilty conscience? There it was, the pale, white face of Charles Marston, as when he last saw it amid the snowy rapids. Simond stood for a moment rooted to the earth beneath the shadow of the pines, with the perspiration in drops upon his brow, and with fear and trembling in all his limbs; and then, with a mad shriek, he rushed wildly into the forest, thinking of naught but how he might save himself from the awful presence of the friend he had betrayed.

#### V.—THE RESCUE.

Now I must break the thread of my narrative for a few moments and ask you to go back with me to that same evening when Simond and Marston attempted to run the rapids, and the latter was left, as his companion believed, to meet certain death amid the wild waters of the "Snows." A little steamer, the Greyhound—so called, I suppose, because she had some of the swiftness of her canine namesake—had been delayed on her trip up the lake, and it was nearly dark when she reached the "Snows." The captain would not venture up at that late hour, but came to anchor under the shelter of one of the islands amid

which the waters were rushing with such impetuosity. During the night, which cleared up quite fine as soon as the moon rose, several persons on board the Greyhound were positive that they heard a call from the direction of one of the islands, but it was so indistinct and died away as the wind calmed, so that the sound was believed at last to be but the whistling amid the trees, or some break of the water upon a rock. Early next morning, the Greyhound was moved up the rapids, and hardly had she puffed and struggled a few yards, before the man at the bow saw a canoe bottom up, and firmly wedged between two sharp rocks, around which the water whirled and sent up its foam like spray. An accident had clearly occurred there some time the day before, and the men looked eagerly around to see if any one had been thrown upon the rocks or islands, but it was not until they had passed some distance further up that they saw a man, lying prostrate on a ledge of rocks, which jutted out from one of the islets. So far as they could tell, he was dead, for he made no movement to rise when the little boat steamed noisily by: but they were unable to take him off until the Greyhound had arrived at the head of the rapids, and then they sent a boat, in charge of four experienced raftsmen in the hope that the poor fellow might still be alive, and with the object at all events of giving the body Christian burial.

Marston, for you have of course guessed the body was his, had fainted from exhaustion, but when he revived under the restoratives that were applied, he gave the following account of the circumstances of his escape:

"It was not the spray from the rapids, or even the cold that I felt most while clinging to the rock on which I had been tossed after the upsetting of the canoe, and I had been carried by the rapids a few yards down the stream; but it was that fearful blindness that made my heart beat so fast. I knew when the moon rose, for I could see a faint glimmer amid the darkness that surrounded me; but otherwise had it not been for the splash of the water and the whistling of the wind amid the islands I could have thought that I was buried alive in my grave. The water, now and then, rushed upon my exposed body and drenched me to the skin continually. I could feel that the water was rising throughout the night, for when I first got upon the rock it had only been up to my ancles, but gradually it rose half way up to my knees, and it was only by rubbing myself constantly that I could keep my limbs from being paralyzed by the cold. Luckily for me the night was not severe, for when the snow squall passed away, it became quite mild: but the water—it was icy, icy cold! What would I not have given for the use of my eyes for a few moments that I might get an idea of my situation. Morning came, and with it the veil of darkness covering me, gradually lifted, until I saw perfectly well by the time the sun was rising. Then, to my great joy, I found that the rock to which I had been clinging that weary, weary night was not more than a dozen yards from a little rocky island, on which a few stunted trees were growing, and that it was quite possible for me, if I could muster up the strength, to reach the spot. I felt very weak and



dizzy from exhaustion and exposure, and my eyes were still inflamed and swollen, but I made up my mind quickly to get to the green grass under the trees where I would be warmed by the sun, and free of the cold waters. My legs were stiff, and I could hardly move, but after a few minutes I managed to stir them and stepped into the water which I guessed, from the appearance of the current, was not deep there; but hardly had I stepped on the shelving rock, which extended to the island as I supposed, when my limbs gave way, and the rapid current carried me down the stream. What followed I cannot tell, for I fainted and did not come to my senses till I felt myself being carried into the boat.

Marston remained in the steamer until it returned to the Chats on the next day, when he was carried to the house of his betrothed, whose grief cannot be described; and there he remained until he felt himself sufficiently recovered to venture again up the river. His exposure to the icy waters of the rapid, at a time when his system was so weak, shook him fearfully, and he arose from the bed of sickness very thin and pale, and it was not surprising that his foster-brother should have supposed him to be a spectre when he came up to the Cross on the voyageur's grave, on his way to the camp from the river where he and some others had just arrived with supplies.

Marston long concealed the story of the treachery which had so nearly destroyed his life on that eventful night. He was always a generous, forgiving fellow, and he made a resolve to say nothing about Simond, but to try and reclaim him for he believed the act had been done by a madman; and indeed Simond's conduct throughout that winter had not been like that of one in the full possession of his senses. Mary, for a time, was Marston's only confidante, and she often reproached herself for having unwittingly excited such a revengeful spirit in Simond's passionate heart.

Simond was never seen by any of his old associates from the time he fled in such terror into the woods; but about fifteen years afterwards, a priest at Red River, was called to the bed-side of a dying hunter who had come to the country a long while before and settled on the banks of the Assiniboine. He had been known as a bold, reckless man, always hunting on the prairie, or on the distant hills of the Saskatchewan, and it was with surprise that the priest got his message. There, on his death-bed, amid Western wilds, Simond told the main facts of this story and died with the strong belief that he had really seen Marston's ghost. It was vain for the priest to reason with him—to tell him that it was probably the vain image of a guilty conscience. The priest knew nothing of the rescue of Marston and could not give the poor wretch, the only assurance that would have quieted his dying moments. Three years afterwards I met the same priest at Montreal, and when he heard that I came from the Upper Ottawa, he asked me some questions which led to further conversation and to the revelation of the manner of Simond's death.

My story ends happily for none of the actors in it; for Simond had been after all the murderer of Marston in fact. Though the latter

had been saved from immediate death in the icy Snows, his constitution received a shock from which it never recovered, and he died some eighteen months after his escape, leaving Mary a young widow, with an only child.

"That was a curious incident in the story, where Marston became suddenly so blind?" said the writer, "I've heard of night-blindness, but I have always thought it was like snow-blindness."

"Oh, no," replied the lumberman, "snow-blindness only comes in the day time, whereas the other, according to those who know anything about it, only arises as soon as night sets in and proceeds, from want of fresh food and a disordered system."

## THE MYSTERY OF BEECHNUT FARM.

### I.—THE FARM.

I think that I can safely hazard the remark, before proceeding to tell my story, said the Surveyor, after a short pause, whilst he laid aside his pipe, that few men, in a new country like this, have better opportunities for observing the habits and peculiarities of the rural population than the Surveyors who are engaged in laying out the settlements. The pursuit of their laborious avocation necessarily brings them into contact with all classes, and is not unfrequently attended with considerable difficulty, arising from the ignorance and obstinacy of the settlers. Farmers will quarrel about their division lines, and if they do not come to blows they are sure, in nine cases out of ten, to find their way into court and carry on litigation for months, and sometimes for years, which is sure to end in the ruin of one of the parties at least. A patient and good tempered Surveyor may, in many cases, prevent a great deal of trouble in the future by his tact, in managing the contending parties, and an erasible, careless man will of course only add fuel to the flame. Squatters are perhaps the most troublesome class we have to deal with, for many of them are very ignorant and cannot understand why it is that they are dispossessed of lands, which are left in a wilderness state by the owner. I remember, on one occasion, being waylaid by a tall, rough-looking fellow of this class, who presented a rifle at me, with the significant warning that if I did not very quickly leave his clearing I would receive its contents; but such cases are of rare occurrence, and when they do arise there is generally law enough even in the new settlements to dispose of them.

The profession is also attended with many hardships of no insignificant character when it is carried on in a rough country, where there are necessarily few comforts to be had at any price. Your Civil Engineer, in the large towns and cities of the old and thickly populated districts may pursue a rich and lucrative business, compared with the humbler members of his profession like myself, who have cast their lot in the new settlements, where the work of civilization is only in its infancy. The great part of the time is passed in the solitude of the forest, tramping through almost impenetrable thickets or over dangerous swamps. His only home for weeks may be the rudely constructed

camp, beneath the shade of tall pines or sombre spruce. Yet the life, rude as it is at times, has its compensating charms, for it is a life of freedom. With your gun on your shoulder, your hatchet in your belt, and plenty of ammunition you can wander where you please when you are weary of your companions and wish for solitude, and enjoy nature in all its primeval beauty, without troubling yourself about your wardrobe or the conventionalities of society. Game of all kinds is always to be found in the new districts—though it is rapidly becoming scarce here on account of the extensive lumbering operations—and as all of us are obliged to know something of the art of Soyer, we are seldom without what would be considered dainties in the city. When a party gather around the fire (which is necessary even in summer to keep off the flies) with our pipes, some one has generally a story to tell, drawn from his personal experience; and indeed when I look back to the past thirty years, I am sorry that I am not a short-hand writer, for the stories that I have heard in camp would equal in interest many that I have read.

But your uneasy movements warn me that my preface is longer than it should be, and that you are becoming impatient to hear the story you have asked me, and I have made up my mind to tell to the best of my ability which is not remarkable in this particular way. Fifteen years ago, I was engaged in the Western country, laying off a new road which was to run through some settlements just opening up, and to give them easier communication with the principal villages, where the farmers had their only markets. One evening I was obliged to put up at a small frame house, at the remote end of the settlement, in consequence of a heavy rain storm which prevented me going on to my usual lodgings three miles further. The only inmates of the house were a man of some sixty years, an old woman, and a young girl of very attractive appearance. The old man gave a very churlish reply to my request for a night's lodgings, somewhat to my surprise, for the people, thereabouts, were always glad to see a stranger who could tell them something of that busy world from which they were so distant in that remote section. I paid little attention, however, at the time to my host's abrupt manner, for I was only too happy to get under shelter. Perhaps I was more content with the fact that the girl received me with a pleasant smile and asked me to take a seat by the fire which looked and felt comfortable on that stormy September night, while she prepared me some supper. The old farmer seemed little disposed to enter into conversation with me before I had partaken of the plain, though substantial repast which the two women soon laid out for me on a snowy, home-made table-cloth; but when I resumed my seat and offered to share the contents of my tobacco pouch, he "thawed" considerably, particularly when he found out the nature of my occupation and that I was not such a suspicious character as my dirt-stained, bedraggled appearance would indicate when I first spoke to him. The young girl also joined us in the conversation, and I was surprised to find her voice and manner so much in harmony with the pretty face. Her dark, hazel eyes, shrouded by deep lashes,

were full of softness, and the wealth of her dark, brown hair would be envied in these days of chignons and pads. Her complexion was of a beautiful, clear olive tint, and her figure was lithe and graceful, though little set off by the poor cotton gown which she wore. The dress of all, indeed, was of the poorest kind—the coat of the old man having been mended until it was a good deal like Joseph's garment, so far as it was of many colours. The furniture, too, was of the rudest kind, though everything was very neat and clean. The apparent poverty of the surroundings seemed hardly in keeping with the general appearance of the farm and its buildings; while both the old man and his daughter were decidedly superior in many ways to the people I had met in that neighbourhood. One does not generally wonder at such things in a new settlement; but at all events these were my first impressions, and they were strengthened by my subsequent visits to the farm.

Next morning I took my departure at an early hour, but my business obliged me to call at the house more than once, and though the old man never became more friendly or confidential with me than he had been on the first evening of our acquaintance, I was invariably received most kindly by the female inmates. Now, I hope that you do not imagine that you are about to hear a love passage in my own life, for I see Miss Fanny smiling at my frequent references of Mary Manning. I may as well say at the outset that my part in this story is only that of a very inferior actor—perhaps not more than that of a spectator at times. But Mary Manning had her admirers, as I soon found out before I had made many visits to the cottage. With one of her lovers, Henry Gordon, a well-to-do farmer, who lived closer to the village than Manning, I became well acquainted in the course of time, and recognised his amiability and honesty, which, to my mind, would make him a good husband to any girl. On the score of property, too, he would be suitable for Mary, as he was the only son of one of the most respectable farmers in that section, who was a widower. Of the other young man, Robert Sutton, I knew little, and that was not in his favour. He owned a grist mill on a small stream in the vicinity, and was a dark, morose man, who was by no means liked by his neighbours.

Manning was for a long time a mystery to me as well as to his acquaintances. No one seemed to know anything about his past history, for he had come from another part of the country twelve years before; but he was a good farmer, and had succeeded in making his farm, which was partly cultivated when he bought it, one of the very best in the district. He was penurious in the extreme, and was believed to have saved some money, though he was never known to spend any in the village, but always paid for anything he wanted in farm produce. His daughter was always very poorly clothed, and had more than once confessed to her few friends, myself among the number, that she did not know what her father did with his money; but neither she nor the other women ever made any remarks about their previous life. When either was questioned on the subject, they replied that the old

man did not wish them to say anything about it. It was, however, whispered that the farmer had lost a large sum of money many years before, by the failure of a bank in the place where he had previously lived; but nothing positive was known on the subject for many years, until the events of which I am about to speak happened, and startled the whole community. But long before, he had become known among the farmers as Miser Manning of Beechmatt Farm.

I had not paid many visits to the house before I discovered that Henry Gordon was the favourite lover of fair Mary Manning, and that she was ready to become his wife whenever he asked her and obtained the consent of her father, to whom she was always a very affectionate daughter. Robert Sutton, however, was always present with his rival, and appeared equally a favourite with the father. Indeed, Sutton took every pains to win the old man's confidence, though with no satisfactory result so far as I could judge. He would take every opportunity of consulting with Manning about the farm, and offered more than once in my own hearing to assist him in certain little jobs, but Manning always curtly refused his aid. On the whole, I saw no reason to despair of the successful issue of Gordon's suit, when a little cloud appeared on the horizon and threatened to blight all his long cherished hopes and plans.

The elder Gordon had bought a tract of land—partly wilderness, partly cultivated—adjoining the farm owned by Manning, and I was called on to lay it out; and in doing so, I found that I must cut off a part, a very considerable part, of the land which was claimed and actually enclosed by the latter. On looking more closely into the matter, it was quite clear that Gordon's specifications were wrong, and I endeavoured to bring the parties to amicable terms; but both were equally headstrong, and resorted at last to the courts, which in the course of time decided, as I had told Gordon must be the case, in behalf of Manning. Gordon was extremely irate, and, like most obstinate people when they find themselves in the wrong, vented his wrath on all those who happened to be near him. He told his son that he would never leave him an acre of his property if he kept "hanging about the daughter of that old rascal, Manning." The young man met me in the village on the very day that his father had used this threat, and seeing his gloomy countenance, I questioned him and soon found out the secret of his trouble. I advised him to wait patiently, with the hope that his father would eventually come to a better frame of mind.

"I cannot give up Mary," he said. "If father does not yield I must leave him and try my fortune elsewhere, until I can get enough to start us on a small farm; but I fear to go away when I think of leaving Mary subject to the persecutions of Sutton."

"You need have no fear of Mary," I replied, in my anxiety to soothe him, "she cares nothing for Sutton."

"The worst is that I dare not even go near Manning's house; for he has forbade me darkening his door, after the insult he received from my father to-day."

It was news to me that the disputants—as I soon ascertained from young Gordon—had, on the close of the trial, really come to blows in the tavern, and that Manning had refused to listen to the son when he attempted to make excuses for his father, and had warned him never to set his feet again inside his doors. His position was certainly very embarrassing, and I did not very clearly see how I could help him. However, I promised to see both the old men when I thought they had time to cool down, and attempt to bring about a friendly understanding; but before I could carry out my intention I was called away to a distant part of the country.

#### II.—DEAD UNDER THE BEECHES.

I was absent for a little over three weeks, and returned some time in the middle of October. Some ten or twelve miles from the village—I mention this circumstance in connection with the events I am about to relate—I passed a rough-looking labouring man, with a pack on his back. As I bade him "good day," I saw his face, over which his hat was slouched, and it appeared to me strangely familiar; but he went on, and I soon forgot all about him in the excitement of the news I heard at the village an hour or two later. I do not suppose I would then have thought anything more about him, for I am accustomed to employ a good many of his class in the course of my business; but what puzzled me was the fact that I could not recollect his name, though his face was known to me. His manner, too, was a little peculiar; for he passed me quickly, and did not seem disposed to stop and talk, though I reined up my horse with that object.

It was a cold day for the time of the year, and well do I remember now, though thirty years have passed, every trifling thing that happened on that occasion. I recollect thinking what a dreary appearance the muddy street of the village presented, with the trees already denuded of their leaves, which lay about all withered and sere.

"You must be a reader of Poe," interposed the writer, as the storyteller paused for a moment. "Don't you recollect the lines?—

The skies they were ashen and sober,  
The leaves they were crisped and sere—  
The leaves they were withered and sere.  
It was night in lonesome October  
Of my most immemorial year."

No, continued the surveyor, I never read the lines you recite. But I must go on with my story. I was referring to the gloomy appearance of the village on that dull October day, as I rode slowly through it. Few persons were moving on the principal, and in fact only street; but as I drew near the inn where I was living, I saw a great many people assembled about it—some standing in the road, others on the doorsteps or on the little gallery that ran along the front. I wondered at so much excitement; but as soon as I rode up to the door I had a dozen persons around me, all equally anxious to tell me the news that was now the absorbing topic in that generally quiet village.

A coroner's inquest had just closed its enquiries into the manner of

the death of old John Manning, whose dead body had been found, only the day before, in the woods, about a quarter of a mile from his own doors. He had been shot through the lungs by a rifle, and the medical man who had examined the body was of the opinion that death could not have been instantaneous, but that he had bled to death—an opinion corroborated by the position in which the body was found. But who was the murderer?—and what was the motive that instigated the deed?

The evidence brought forward at the inquest pointed unmistakably to the elder Gordon, whose quarrel with Manning was now too well remembered. The old woman in the employ of the deceased stated that her master, on the afternoon of the day he had been murdered, left for the woods with his gun, saying that he would try and find some partridges in the birch grove which commenced about a quarter of a mile off and stretched for some distance to the rear of the farm. He had hardly left the house when the elder Gordon came in and asked for Manning, not a little to the surprise of the woman who was the only person at the time in the house, Mary having gone to the village in the morning and was not expected to return until the next day. Gordon offered no explanation of his unexpected call, but seemed very restless, and soon left when he found there was no prospect of the speedy return of Manning. The old woman noticed that, instead of taking the direct path to the main road he went off by the same path which her master had taken, and which led past the birch grove and finally came out close to the road, but as it was a short cut she thought nothing of it for the time. The woman then went into the house, and whilst engaged about her work heard the report of a gun about a quarter of an hour afterwards, in the direction of the birch grove. This was all the evidence that the woman could give, but a man, who was on his way to the village testified that he had seen Gordon come quickly out of the woods on Manning's farm, just where the short cut ended, and disappear up the main road, about ten minutes after the report of the gun which he had also heard, but thought nothing about it at the time as hunting partridges was then very common.

Gordon volunteered the explanation that since his quarrel with Manning he had thought much about it and began to regret that he had acted so hastily. He confessed that he might not have made up his mind to renew his intercourse with his opponent, had it not been for the earnest persuasion of his son who had appeared very unhappy since the difficulty, and had more than once stated it to be his intention to leave the farm and seek a living elsewhere unless his father agreed to his marriage with Mary. That very morning his son came to him and said that he had finally made up his mind to go away in the course of the next week, as he had a chance of getting employment in a large flour-mill which was just commencing operations in the neighbouring county. Gordon, who was known to act very much on impulse, then resolved to bury his pride and approach Manning in a friendly spirit, for he felt that he could not allow his only son to leave him, and besides he had always liked Mary above all the other girls in the neighbourhood. When he had once resolved on his course, he lost no time in

starting to see his neighbour. The woman, he said, had correctly described his conduct; but the reason of his restlessness was his doubts as to the manner in which Manning would receive his friendly advances. He acknowledged that he felt almost glad when he found that his meeting with his opponent was deferred over for a few hours, for his mind was fully made up to call again the next morning. He had taken the path through the woods, not with the hope of coming across Manning, but simply because he had always gone that way, on previous visits, as it shortened the distance to his own farm by at least a quarter of a mile. To his surprise he did meet the old man close to the beeches, who received him very angrily, and in fact drove him away with the harshest language. He had only restrained himself with great difficulty from retaliating with equally strong language, from the conviction that it would only increase the breach between them, and still further defer that reconciliation which he now so anxiously wished, for his son's sake. He had left the old man hurriedly—in fact, ran away from him for fear that his feelings might overcome his prudence at the last; and this fact would account for the excited manner in which he had made his way homeward. These explanations were plausible enough, and were corroborated by the son so far as they referred to the willingness of his father to make friendly advances to Manning; but they availed little on the opinion of those who remembered his quarrel with the old man, and the threat he had used, in the presence of a number of persons, that he would "pay him up some of those days." It was certainly mysterious that the gun could not be found, but it was generally believed that Gordon, in the squabble, succeeded in getting possession of the weapon and instantly shooting Manning with it, and that he had then concealed it somewhere in the woods after he had committed the terrible crime. Several instances of the elder Gordon's passion, when he was once aroused, now came up in array against him, rather than many acts of generosity he had displayed when his neighbours had suffered from short crops or family afflictions. Under all the circumstances, the Jury had no alternative except to bring in a verdict which led to the arrest of the elder Gordon and his subsequent commitment for trial by the Local Magistracy.

Acquainted as I was with all the parties, I took much interest in this singular case from the outset. Whether Gordon was guilty or not, I could not but deeply sympathize with the son who seemed fated to be so unhappy in his love. My impression, at first, was that Gordon had committed the deed under very strong provocation, and that it was quite possible that he had sought out his neighbour with the object of coming to some friendly arrangement; for it was very improbable that any one in his sober senses would have acted as he had done, had he premeditated the crime. But when I had seen the accused in gaol more than once, I came to the conclusion that if he were really guilty then he must have a remarkable command of language and demeanour, for he did not show any of the signs of a man who had stained his hands with the blood of a neighbour.



## III.—A CLUE.

The public sentiment of our little community, it is true, did not agree with me as to the innocence of Gordon, but I did not on that account alter my opinion, for I knew too well that public sentiment is sometimes based on false premises, when their prejudices and passions are excited. Perhaps I was aroused into becoming a warmer advocate of Gordon than I otherwise would have been, by the fact that Robert Sutton was among the loudest in denouncing him as the guilty man. I had never liked Sutton and did not wish him to win Mary away from his rival who, whatever his father might be, was in every way the best fitted to make her a good husband.

Then one day as I was riding slowly up the road, to a spot where the men were employed digging a drain, the thought darted across my mind—of a strange, suspicious looking fellow I saw on the very morning of the inquest. At last, I remembered where I had seen him—it was on Manning's farm at harvest time.

I gave some hasty directions to the men and went on immediately to Beechnut Farm where I questioned the old woman with respect to this man: and she recognized him immediately from my description. He had been employed about the farm at the busiest time and received his discharge previous to her master's death. He was a surly sort of fellow, she said, and not a bit too honest, for she had missed several things since he had left. She had forgotten all about him, and never mentioned him at the inquest, simply because no one asked her; but she did not believe he killed her master, for he had left at least a day before. I began to entertain a different opinion, however, and lost no time in setting the authorities on the alert to bring him back. When I had done this, I felt easier in my mind.

I saw Mary a few days after her father's burial, which was largely attended by people from far and near—so intense was the interest created by the case—and despite her great grief I was amazed and not displeased to find her make the first reference to the accusation under which the father of her lover was now lying in the village jail.

"Nothing," she said sobbingly, "can make me believe that poor Harry's father could ever have murdered my dear, unhappy only parent. The Almighty will bring the murderer to light, I feel as sure as I see you now before me."

Mary was likely to be well provided for, as the farm was large and in capital order. Curious to say, however, no will was to be found, though both the women were under the belief that he had made one some months previously. Neither could any money be found anywhere about the house. Mary said her father must have saved considerable, for he had always been penurious in the extreme since he had come into that part of the country. The shop-keepers with whom he did his business stated that at one time or other they had paid him a good many dollars for his grain and other produce; but they did not know any more than the members of his own household what he had been in the habit of doing with it.

Whilst we were still puzzling our heads about this complicated case, the will was discovered in the hands of the last person we would have suspected of having it, and that was the Episcopalian clergyman, of whose church the deceased had been only a fitful visitant. The Rev. Mr. Everett was absent, when the tragedy occurred, on a visit to his son in a distant part of the country bordering on Lake Ontario; but as soon as he returned, about a fortnight before the trial, he quieted our apprehensions with respect to the will.

"Poor Manning," said the Rector, "I'm sorry to say was not a professed christian, but I had had more than one conversation with him on religious subjects and was hopeful of winning him to the church at last. In his daughter, who was a frequent attendant in our little church, which, unfortunately for her, was distant from her home, I felt a deep interest and made my wife invite her to our house though she had only been able to accept the invitation on one occasion, and that only for a part of the day. Nearly six months ago—you see the exact date on the outside of the package with my initials—I was surprised by a visit from the old man who brought me this bundle with the request that I would promise to take charge of it in case of his sudden death at any moment, for he said that it contained his will and that he did not always feel as well as he did a year or two before. I asked him why it was that he did not leave it in the hands of some lawyer, but he replied that he had more confidence in me as a Minister of the Gospel. After some little hesitation, I accepted the trust on the condition that he would soon come and have some serious talk with me, and he promised and even requested me to call and see himself and daughter occasionally. I called two or three times, but he was always out, and I have never seen him from the day he placed this will in my hands."

When the will was opened and read, the contents were such as to surround the tragedy with still deeper elements of interest. The public, for once, had not been wrong when it suspected that Manning possessed considerable money for a man in his rank of life. It appeared that he had lost a large sum of money by the rascality of his own brother who was employed in some Western bank, and this had so preyed on his mind that he was obliged to leave his home and seek a new one. Then he formed the resolve never to trust any living man with his savings, which, in the course of time, amounted to several hundred pounds, including a small sum left over after the purchase of his new farm.

But where was the money all this while? A natural question, and I will not provoke your curiosity much further. He had exhausted his ingenuity to devise what he considered would be the most effectual means of concealing its whereabouts from curious eyes. In fact, the loss of his money, many years previously, appears to have developed a sort of monomania for secreting his savings. He had given the will, safely sealed, into the custody of the only man in whom he had anything like confidence, but even that confidence appears to

have been only partial; for the will did not reveal the place of concealment, but simply indicated a place where there was a paper which gave the necessary clue. After some search, this paper was found in a little drawer to which nobody ever had access except himself, and which would have been unintelligible to any except those who first saw the will. On this slip of paper were simply the words:

"The big rock—old clearing  
N. E. side."

We had little difficulty now in finding the spot, but you may imagine our perplexity and astonishment when we could see no sign of the money. At first we thought that we might have mistaken the directions, but a little patient investigation showed that we were quite right, and that some one had been there before us or else Manning had secreted the money elsewhere after he had written the will. But it seemed most probable that the money had been stolen; and if that were the case, who was the robber. Whoever it was, he was most likely the murderer. The whole matter gave us plenty to think about; but whatever the others thought, I could not believe that Gordon would have murdered the old man for his money.

My own suspicions were still turned to the surly fellow I had met on the road, and who could have easily followed the old man, and discovered the hiding place, whilst he was employed about the farm. When he had been discharged he might have lurked in the woods and then came upon the old man whilst secreting the money, and shot him in the tussel that probably ensued when Manning saw him. The constable, with whom I had talked a great deal about the whole case, agreed with me that it was very important that we should catch this suspicious fellow; but so far no news of him had come from the different places where the authorities had been put on the alert to arrest him. I was much worried at our want of success in this particular; but I buoyed myself up with the hope that he might turn up at the last moment, and that in any event Gordon's counsel might strengthen his case by bringing out the facts concerning the missing individual.

The first day of the Assizes arrived whilst we were still in the dark. Court week is always a busy time in the towns and villages of the country, and only yields in excitement to election time; but never in the history of our little village—a history, it is true, not extending beyond twenty years—had the "oldest inhabitant" seen such a throng as assembled to hear the trial which had been for weeks the absorbing topic at every fireside. The best counsel had been engaged for Gordon, and he was quite confident the jury would hardly convict on such purely circumstantial evidence; but I had my fears of the result for the Queen's counsel was a very able and popular lawyer, never allowing any personal feelings to interfere with what he considered his duty. The Grand Jury were called together in due form, and lost no time in bringing in a true bill against Gordon, and the trial was put down for the next day. That same evening—I mean of the day before the trial—I

was seated smoking in my room, and thinking over the approaching trial, when I was disturbed by the entrance of the constable I have before mentioned. Had he at last received some news of the stranger?

#### IV.—A STRANGE REVELATION.

"I have found something which puzzles me wonderfully," said the constable as he wiped his forehead, which was wet with perspiration; "and as I know how much interest you take in the matter, I've come to talk it over before I've seen the Sheriff. I've always had my doubts, you know, about Gordon being the murderer, and have been very anxious to put my hand on that suspicious fellow you saw that morning on the road. I have hunted everywhere for the gun, but to little purpose; and I've no doubt that the murderer was a green hand, or he would have left the weapon by the old man's side to make folks believe he had shot himself. But that's not what I want to talk to you about at this late hour. I had a talk yesterday with the men who first found Manning, and questioned them again about the way the body was lying and then I learned that when it was lifted up, a piece of bark dropped out of his hand. I asked whether they had picked it up. They said that they had kicked it aside. 'I s'pose,' said one of them, 'that he must have fallen against the tree close by and grasped some of the bark, which is all loosely curled about it, in his dying throes.' I guessed the speaker was right, but somehow this little circumstance kept tossing about my head all night, and once I woke up with a start, for I dreamt that old Manning was standing by my bed. Well, this morning, I got up at daylight, and poked about the rubbish in the woods, but I found nothing. This afternoon, when the court rose, I had an hour or two to spare, and so I went off again to the same spot, and hunted about till my back ached just as it does with the lumbago sometimes in winter; but at last, when I was thinking I'd come on a fool's errand, I stumbled upon a piece of birch bark, not a dozen paces from the spot where the body was discovered, hidden by the branches of a small spruce tree. See, here it is, can you make anything out of it? I've puzzled over it and am afraid to tell you what I think."

Were we on the brink of some fearful discovery? Was the veil of mystery to be at last lifted from this tragedy?

It was only a scrap of soft, white bark of the canoe birch, a little soiled with blood, but otherwise uninjured from the fact that it had been under the spruce.

"See those scratches," said the constable, as he laid it flat on the table, "don't they look like writing to you?"

True enough, I could decipher some irregularly formed letters, as if scratched with the point of a knife or sharp stone. We sat down together and patiently worked to unravel the mystery, if it were any. Some letters were hardly decipherable in places, and others entirely defaced by clots of blood. Here a letter would be deeply scratched and its jagged edges would show that the instrument was a sharp

stone; but a little further on, the writing would be fainter, as if the fingers failed, from want of strength, to perform the task.

For two hours and more we pored over this message from the dead, and at last we were able, with the assistance of a microscope which I had among my surveying instruments, to make out these letters:

Murder  
by Robert Sutton

We looked at each other silently, when we had made this astounding discovery. Each of us could easily supply the few letters that were defaced in this extraordinary manuscript, and no time was to be lost in following out the clue and arresting the murderer. In our minds there was not the shadow of a doubt that we had got on the right track at last. We had both seen Sutton that day in the village, but not to speak to him, and the constable had noticed him driving off homeward about dusk. We went immediately to the Sheriff, who lived only a few houses distant from the inn, and told him of the remarkable revelation. At first I think he was inclined to laugh at us, but we soon made the message as intelligible to him as it had been to us: and then, he put a revolver in his pocket and told us to wait for a few minutes whilst he ordered his buggy to be got ready.

It was past eleven o'clock when we drove off to Sutton's place, which was only two miles from the village, and the night was exceedingly dark and rain was threatening, but the road was good and quite hard at that season, and it did not take us more than twenty minutes to reach the turn in the highway where we had decided to stop. We got out of the buggy and tied the horse to a tree a few feet from the road and then made for the mill, from which we could see the glimmer of light.

The mill was some fifty paces off the road, at the edge of a small stream which afforded the necessary water power. Sutton had no relatives in that part of the country, and the only inmate of the house besides himself was an old woman he had hired in the village. We heard no sound whatever about the premises, except the splash of the water from the mill sluice: and the only sign of life was the solitary light burning in an upper room which we supposed to be Sutton's. The constable proposed to reconnoitre and climbed a tree which grew up against the side of the mill, and overlooked the room.

"We're just in time," he said hurriedly, when he got down and rejoined us. "he's packing up his clothes in a big leather valise—about to cut the country, I guess. What's best to be done?"

"Wait till he comes out," replied the Sheriff, laconically, as he took out his revolver and tried it: "there's only one door and as he cannot suspect anything at present, he will not escape us."

Twenty minutes went by, though they seemed to me the longest hour I had ever passed in my life; but at last we were rewarded by hearing him step down stairs and show himself at the door, with a lantern in his hand. In an instant he was hand-cuffed and a prisoner. So surprised was he that he dropped the lantern instantaneously and

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made no attempt to resist but stood like one paralyzed when he heard the Sheriff say :

"It's no use trying to resist, Sutton, it's all up with you."

"What's the meaning of all this?" he said at length, when he had somewhat recovered himself.

"You'll know soon enough," replied the Sheriff.

Leaving the constable to watch the prisoner, we went into the house, and ascended to the room where we had seen the light burning, and there we found that he had everything packed up for leaving the mill. In a portmanteau, we found an old leather bag all soiled by the damp and age, and containing a quantity of gold coins, sovereigns, doubloons and eagles—all the hoard which the unhappy miser had been accumulating for years.

Sutton never said a word from the time we drove off from the mill until we handed him over to the custody of the gaoler. Then, when he heard how he had been suspected, he shuddered, and burying his head in his hands, remained silent and depressed for hours.

"Was he hanged?" asked the lumberman.

No, he cheated the gallows after all. Before the crown officers could bring on his trial, he was found dead in his cell; for the morning after his capture he was taken by a series of fits, and died at last from disease of the heart, according to the attending physician. No doubt, the excitement had overcome him and hastened a disease which had more than once laid him up for weeks. Before he died he left a confession behind him, which explained many circumstances which may not seem very clear to you. He had suspected, like many others, that Manning had considerable money hid away, and his frequent visits to the cottage were not so much to see Mary—for she soon discovered she had no liking for him—as to try and obtain some clue to the hiding place of the treasure. His business was not very profitable and the mill was already mortgaged to its full value, and he wanted to get away from that settlement and live in some large city. The idea of killing the old man never entered his mind, though he had no hesitation in robbing him of any money he might have. In the course of time he had noticed that Manning made many visits to a particular part of the farm, and had commenced a regular system of espionage, which was at last rewarded by discovering that a large rock, in a particular clearing, was the place where he generally brought up whenever he had been to the village and sold anything. The day previous to the murder, he had made up his mind to rob the old man, now that he was certain he had discovered the right place. Accordingly the next day he commenced his search, and was not long in discovering the bag of coin, in a deep hole between a tree and the rock. He had not more than left the rock, when he heard footsteps behind him, and was brought to a stand by Manning himself, who accused him of the robbery and threatened to shoot him unless he gave up the money. Sutton threw the bag at his feet, and at that same moment the old man, who was trembling with excitement, stumbled forward over a broken stump and let the gun fall out of his hand.

Then Sutton seized the gun and poured its contents into Manning's prostrate body. "I was disgraced forever," said Sutton, "if that man went out alive from the woods; I had gone for the money and was determined to have it. I did not wish to take his life, but when I saw my chance, some demon whispered to me to shoot him. When I had fired, I was horror-struck, for all the consequences of my crime came up in an instant before me. I seized the bag of gold that had cost me so dearly, and fled into the forest, entirely unconscious that I had still kept the gun on my shoulder; but when I discovered my mistake, I was some distance from the spot and was afraid to return. I cursed my folly in not having so arranged the gun as to create the belief that the old man had accidentally shot himself. Then I hid it away in a deep ravine, under the rocks, at least a half a mile from the place where the old man lay. When I heard that Gordon was taken up, I knew that I was safe; all that I cared for then was to save myself; what did I care if an innocent man were hanged. I dared not, however, leave the country then, for fear it might draw suspicion on me, so I waited until the trial was to commence. I had disposed of my mill to the mortgagee, and was on the point of leaving in my buggy when the Sheriff seized me. Then I knew that the avenger had followed me, and that I must die." Sutton also added in his confession that he had been much perplexed by the fact that the body was discovered some hundred yards distant from the spot where he had fired the fatal shot. The evidence of the medical man together with the position of the body, all went to show that Manning must have lived for some hours after he was mortally wounded. He had probably tried to crawl towards home, but his strength had gradually ebbed away, and then he had scratched that message which had brought the guilty to account and saved the life of an innocent man.

My story is now ended, for all that remains for me to say is that young Gordon married Mary Manning, some months after the terrible occurrence which, for a time, overshadowed their young lives. The old farm, however, was sold, as Mary could not bear to live on a place fraught with such sad memories.

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### THE THREE AGES.

THE AGE OF SPECULATION, 1000, A. D.—1500, A. D.

#### RISE OF BACON.

By PROFESSOR CAMERON, Kingston, Ontario.

(*Second Paper.*)

We have seen in what a sad condition the world was at the close of the last period, how fearful of the gloomy prospect that seemed awaiting it, how the innumerable channels of activity were frozen over, and how

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